

Oregon Traffic Control Devices Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2002

McMenemins Kennedy School, Portland, Oregon

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

Members Absent: Gordon Reskers, OSP

Others Present: Orville Gaylor, Rick Wood, Doug Bish, Chris Monsere, Julia Wellner, ODOT Traffic Management Section; Del Huntington, Doug Norval, ODOT Planning Section; Bob Morast, Washington County; Bruce Robinson, Kittelson & Associates; Somkeart Sartnurak, Aaron Manley, City of Corvallis; Eric Niemeyer, Jackson County; John Replinger, Multnomah County; Pam Maki, City of Beaverton; Bill Kloos, Mike Coleman, Curt Nichols, City of Portland; Rick Nys, Chris Christofferson, Clackamas County; Dan Keifer, Advanced Traffic Products; Brian Genovese, Chris Henry, City of Eugene; Ralph Lambert, City of Salem; Tom Tushner, City of Lake Oswego; John Irwin, JRH Engineering; Walt Clay, Lancaster Engineering.

Introduction – Additional Agenda Items – Approval of March 2002 Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Charles Radosta called the meeting to order. He asked for any additional agenda items. Rob Burchfield suggested a future agenda item regarding Oregon Revised Statutes that need to be cleaned up or revised. Eric Niemeyer suggested a future agenda item to review left turn signal phasing. Ed Fischer added for the current agenda a report on an AASHTO ballot on changes to MUTCD to be voted on. He agreed it would fit in with the discussion of Rob Burchfield's agenda item on the MUTCD.

✓ Action Item/Future Agenda Items: ►review ORS's for possible update such as the fact that stop signs are required to be reflectorized but not other signs, signs installed prior to 1975 are not required to comply with the manual while another requirement says that signs should comply within a "reasonable time period after 1975"; ►review of guidelines for left turn signal phasing

Regarding the discussion on the ODOT Traffic Line Manual at the March 15th meeting, Orville Gaylor clarified that the pavement marking "ONLY" is no longer required by the MUTCD in trap lanes, however the sign legend is required. The Committee then voted approval of the March 15, 2002 meeting minutes.

Update to Sign Policy and Guidelines

Orville Gaylor went through the proposed updates to the subject publication for committee approval. There was some discussion regarding the meaning of new Sign OR4-21, UNLAWFUL TO IMPEDE TRAFFIC WHEN PASSING. Ed Fischer pointed out that it was closely worded to reflect state law and that the signs will only be placed on an as-needed basis. A minor typo was noted in the description of the PULL OUT sign.

Decision: Charles Radosta moved and Randy Wooley seconded approval of the update to the Sign Policy and Guidelines as amended. The committee then unanimously approved the update.

Orville then brought up riders WHEN FLASHING and WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT on school speed assemblies. He said in accordance with the new Oregon Supplement to the MUTCD he wanted committee consensus on form and wording. The committee discussed various possible meaning in using or not using "OR" and other word choice/placement, economics of being able to just add to current rider, and economics of minimizing total words used. Note: This is in addition to the options of only using a WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT rider or only using a WHEN FLASHING rider.

Decision: Rob Burchfield moved and Ed Fischer seconded using Orville's middle option, WHEN FLASHING OR CHILDREN PRESENT on one rider and to bring back to the committee two additional 2-rider designs, incorporating WHEN FLASHING and WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT in either order with the word, OR placed between them on one sign or the other. The committee voted approval without any dissent.

✓ Action Item - Orville will bring back the two additional WHEN FLASHING OR WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT rider designs for final approval at the July meeting.

Short Term Traffic Control Handbook

Ed Fischer substituted for Jan Gipson regarding the two handbooks on short term traffic control, Traffic Control on State Highways for Short Term Work Zones and Short Term Traffic Control Handbook. The former is specific to work on state highways, while the latter is more for utilities and cities on local roads. Ed has been desirous of combining the two books. However things have grown and the amount of information that users are asking for in the books is far greater than is currently in the books. Maintenance crews, striping crews, utilities and people doing mobile operations all have desires for more information, which would add up to too big a book to fit in a back pocket. So the concept is to put out a book with different chapters that define specific activities. The concept is to have a chapter on mobile operations, short duration work, urban and multi-lane roads, intersections, rural roads, freeways and expressways, incident management and night operations. They would be combined in a three ring binder so chapters can be removed from the book and each chapter can be ordered separately. Ed says other states and countries are doing this in one way or another. He suggested chapters could be updated more easily in this format as well. The proposed chapters will be placed on the ODOT website so that folks can see and comment on them via interactive feedback survey. Ed said the delay at the moment is due to rumor that the MUTCD Chapter 6 is about to be significantly revised. He hopes to have definitive word after the national committee meeting in July. Cynthia Schmitt expressed concern that it would all end up being too big to be useful and she hoped the chapters would be more in name than length. She hopes to see something balanced between more specificity and manageable size. Ed encouraged her to provide feedback to the website as the proposed chapters come out.

✓ Action Item - Members and other interested parties should stand by to review the new proposed publication as it comes out on ODOT's website.

Update on ODOT Traffic Line Manual

There hasn't been a lot of response to the draft put out at the last meeting. Members were supposed to have gotten any input back to Jan Gipson or Doug Bish by April 30th. Doug suggested that it be put on the agenda for the July meeting and that folks who have any input on the draft get it in as soon as possible.

✓ Action Item - Members should get comments on the draft Traffic Line Manual to Jan Gipson or Doug Bish as soon as possible and it will be put on the July OTCDC meeting agenda.

City of Beaverton's Flashing Yellow Signal Project

Randy Wooley reported on the city's progress in joining the national experiment. Choosing a location was easy since they only had three intersections with the protected/permissive phasing in place for three years (sufficient to accumulate accident data). All three were converted less than a month ago. The city sent news releases out but publication in the local news was still under-whelming. The police were

notified so they wouldn't think the signals were malfunctioning. All three conversions were also near schools so the school district was asked to advise bus drivers and school principals to expect the change. There's been very little response from citizens. There has been no opposition and no overwhelming support at least in part due to the low accident experience prior to the conversions. They are using a 4-head signal like Woodburn uses and unlike Jackson County uses. They have had some technical glitches such as issues with Opticom preemption in which the left turn signal wants to go black during the clearance phase that they are working out. So the experiment seems to be successful thus far (2-3 weeks of operation).

Appreciation for Gary Judd's Service

Ed Fischer expressed the appreciation of the committee for ten years of service to the OTCDC by Gary Judd, representing Deschutes County on the occasion of his last meeting in that position. Gary was given a plaque signed by Charles Radosta and Ed Fischer, and the hearty applause of all present. Eric Niemeyer will be filling this county position on the OTCDC starting with our July meeting.

Countdown Timers for Pedestrian Signals

Joe Marek introduced Dan Kiefer of Advanced Traffic Products to demonstrate the subject timers for the committee. Joe wanted the committee's blessing for Clackamas County to experiment with these visible timers at several locations where there is a history of complaints. The timer displays a count down on the WALK interval, and can do so from the beginning of the interval or start up when it goes to the flashing DON'T WALK phase, giving pedestrians more precise information to help decide when it was okay to start crossing an intersection. It is being tested by various jurisdictions outside Oregon and appears to be well received. Ed Fischer reported a caveat from Nick Fortey of FHWA that at least on state highways, the signal hasn't been adopted in the new MUTCD and therefore requires approval under experimental status, which usually includes a commitment to follow up with research reporting. Rob Burchfield said he thought the signal was going to become one of those standards by acclamation. He said everybody likes it and Portland was looking at doing a couple of locations within a week. Some jurisdictions will have problems scratching up the resources to do research reporting.

Ed said that one of the issues that was likely to get decided at the federal level is whether the countdown starts at the beginning of the WALK phase or the flashing DON'T WALK phase. It could be either guidance or a standard to start it at the flashing DON'T WALK. Discussion was had on the merits of each option. Joe Marek said that Advanced Traffic Products' device actually times the WALK and the DON'T WALK separately. It calculates and puts in the number from the previous cycle for the WALK interval but if a WALK interval changes, the counter will skip right down to the DON'T WALK interval timing. Dan Kiefer said the device has a standard 3-wire connection so that it can easily replace current pedestrian signals. Throughout the discussion, Dan Kiefer had the countdown timer displaying its operation, including both the full countdown mode and the flashing DON'T WALK countdown. An internal conflict monitor makes it impossible to display time on the display in the solid DON'T WALK phase. The committee was supportive of Marek contacting FHWA and getting their approval to experiment with the countdown signal.

✓ Action Item - Bill Kloos will call Scott Wainwright on Monday to check on procedure to get FHWA approval/instructions for Clackamas County going forth with an experimental project utilizing the countdown pedestrian signal.

City of Portland's LED Traffic Signal Conversion Project

Bill Kloos and Curt Nichols briefed the committee on this project which was also summarized in a hand-out. Bill said energy savings were significant no matter which LED product is used. LED costs have gone down and more information is now available on LED life than in previous years. The energy cost savings are particularly attractive with the current energy market. With added incentives from the utilities, through the Energy Trust of Oregon and the ability to lease the LED signal heads rather than buying them, avoiding capital budget issues, it's an attractive offer. There's even the ability to benefit

from tax credit savings passed through the leasing company. Furthermore, the state has since revised their administrative rules to allow for the tax credit's benefits to be shared without using a lease arrangement. Portland has realized a quick three-year payback on their investment and are pleased enough to recommend it to others.

Overview of MUTCD Millennium Edition

Rob Burchfield referred the committee to hand-outs in talking about how some of the different jurisdictions are starting to implement the new standards that are in the MUTCD. He said that now that the Manual and the Oregon Supplements have been adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission, it's a good time to discuss how it impacts various jurisdictions, and what decisions are made in implementing it. The OTC adopted the Manual and Supplements on April 12th, so it's official now and those who have held off on ordering it may want to do so. Everyone's supposed to be following the new Manual now as well as the Short Term Traffic Control Handbook that was also adopted in the administrative rule by the OTC.

Rob said he would like some committee discussion and help with interpreting some of the new rules. For example, he asked if everyone agreed that the first item on the compliance date list, regarding STOP signs, and supplementary plaques should be complied with on current installations by January 17, 2004, but that on all new installations, compliance should be immediate. There was no disagreement. He said he noticed that different jurisdictions found different requirements more or less of an issue in different jurisdictions. The committee went on to discuss various signing and striping rules and options and how they were being addressed, what could be delayed and what was best dealt with up front with capital funded projects.

Ed Fischer suggested if anyone was concerned about any costly changes, they might want to hold off on them for a while. He said he's gotten a ballot from AASHTO, in which there are a lot of proposed changes to the MUTCD next year. Subject areas include auxiliary signs, street name signs, passing lane signs, school signing, delineator applications, peak hour warrants, temporary pavement markings, shared lane symbol, proposed amendments to the NCUTCD bylaws. He said Jan Gipson has a small committee working on the ballot issues but he is asking her to include the people on the Oregon Supplements subcommittees so that they can provide input to ODOT, which may be taken into consideration on the way the ballot is marked.

✓ Action Item - Jan Gipson will get in contact and communicate with the appropriate people in continuing work on the AASHTO ballot.

Future Meetings, Including the ACTS / OTCDC Joint Meeting

Charles Radosta reminded members that the next meeting will be July 19th at Lane County Public Works. The September meeting has been changed to Wednesday, October 23rd at Embassy Suites in conjunction with the ACTS conference in Tigard.

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

Our next meeting is scheduled for July 19, 2002, at 9:00 a.m. at the Lane County Shops.