

Oregon Traffic Control Devices Committee

October 23, 2002

Meeting Minutes

Embassy Suites Hotel, Tigard, 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; Jim Rentz, OSP; Robin Lewis, City of Bend; Bill Ciz, ODOT Region 1; Eric Niemeyer, Jackson County; Rob Burchfield, City of Portland; Bill Brownlee for Cynthia Schmitt, Marion County

Members Absent: Cynthia Schmitt, Marion County

Others Present: Orville Gaylor, Rick Wood, Doug Bish, Paul Davis, Jan Gipson, Jerry Morrison, Tim Burks, Chris Monsere, ODOT Traffic Management Section; Robert Fynn, Willard Bradshaw, Katryn Cramer, Kathi McConnell, Craig Black, ODOT Region 2; Nick Fortey, Peter Eon, FHWA; Dan Keifer, Advanced Traffic Products; Lew Garrison, Terry Hockett, City of Salem; John Irwin, JRH Engineering; Gary Judd, Deschutes County; Robert Morast, Washington County; John Replinger, Multnomah County; Jim Jirek, Tarno Coleman, Marion County; Marvin Parker, Brookings Police Department; Steve Todd, Multnomah County Circuit Court; John Emmons, City of Eugene; Geoff Judd, NFI

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

Chairperson Charles Radosta called the meeting to order. The committee and other attendees introduced themselves. Ed Fischer welcomed Jim Rentz, the new OSP representative, who replaced Gordon Renskers. Additional agenda items were proposed by Randall Wooley (Access Board) and Orville Gaylor (signing). Randall Wooley then moved, Joe Marek seconded, and the committee approved the minutes from the [July 19, 2002](#) meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Update to Sign Policy & Guidelines

Orville Gaylor passed out proposed revisions to the Sign Policy and Guidelines manual for committee approval. The first was a new FINES DOUBLE (black on white) rider for use under the ROAD WORK AHEAD sign in work zones to eliminate the need for a separate sign. The second change adds wording to the direction for use of Divide Highway (Road) Ends Signs indicating that this is only on two lane (not multiple lane) highways. The dimensions listed for the CHAIN-UP AREA AHEAD sign was corrected to reflect the 36" actual measurement. The OTIA sign was changed to have the fluorescent Orange color replaced with non-reflective black for all but the OTIA Logo and sign border to improve readability. Finally, new optional LEFT TURN CLOSED AHEAD and LEFT TURN LANE CLOSED warning signs are proposed subsequent to an earlier committee opinion that regulatory signs would be too restrictive.

Decision: Ed Fischer moved, Joe Marek seconded, and the committee approved the revisions to the Sign Policy & Guidelines.

School Speed 20 MP Sign Riders

Orville displayed three examples of new optional riders for school zones: [when children are present/or when flashing], [when flashing or children present] and [when flashing/or when children are present] discussed at a prior meeting. He asked for approval to permit their use in the Sign Policy & Guidelines when appropriate.

Decision: Rob Burchfield moved, Joe Marek seconded, and the committee approved the three new rider designs. Orville will add them to the Sign Policy & Guidelines update.

➤ Note - Further discussion occurred later in the morning about the number of rider options available for use under the School Zone Speed signs. It was decided to discuss the options with the full OTCDC later in the meeting but time was not available. This topic will be a discussion/decision item on the next OTCDC agenda.

Orville then went on to present information regarding California Historic Highway 99W signs. He was approached by some folks regarding signing some historic routes for Highway 99E and 99W. Since ODOT doesn't own most of these routes anymore, they've been referred to the cities and counties because approval will probably have to come from the local jurisdictions if it's to be done on a statewide basis. He asked FHWA if they must approve redesignation of Highway 99 since most of it's been decommissioned. Their response was "No" because it's signed as a historic route rather than a highway route like Route 66. Orville provided an illustration of what the signs might look like. He just wanted members to know about this in case they are approached by local grass-root organizers.

Short Term Traffic Control Handbook

Jan Gipson said that there are now four sections and two of three appendixes of a new draft now available on the internet at [http://www.odot.state.or.us/traffic/draftstwz/stwz\(draft\).htm](http://www.odot.state.or.us/traffic/draftstwz/stwz(draft).htm), and subject to comments from interested parties. The hope is to get a broad cross-section of review/comment prior to it's adoption at some point after Revision Two to the MUTCD is adopted. All chapters have line numbers on every page to help with comments.

Jan said there were many minor changes throughout the text but one of the major changes that might be discussed was the change in the definition of "Very Short Duration" since the 1996 Handbook had this as 15 minutes or less. The MUTCD does a similar signing reduction, etc for one hour or less. Therefore, it is proposed that the Handbook be changed to agree with the MUTCD.

Jan then brought up a discussion, referring to Orville's presentation regarding whether fines can be doubled in all work zones (with or without signing) and she said it's been confirmed by court cases that they can. Signs aren't necessarily put up because some of these are of short duration and they don't want to bother with extra signs but they may be looking at the rider as optional in any case. Incident and event management are being considered for inclusion in the new book because they can be considered work zones. There was discussion regarding possible varied enforcement of the doubled fine in such work zones. Ed Fischer suggested getting more input from the maintenance folks and possibly the courts before going forward with the signing/double fining in incident management cases.

Rob Burchfield asked how the new handbook would be adopted and Jan said it would be by administrative rule after the OTCDC approves it. Jan hopes to finalize the book in January but it may slip into March. Ed Fischer said it was hoped to be available before the heart of the new construction season and Jan said the fact that it's on the internet should expedite it's availability when approved.

- ✓ Action Item – Jan will seek further information on enforcement of doubled fines in incident management from work crews and possibly from court cases. Chris Monsere will create a mechanism for posting comments electronically.

NEW BUSINESS

Oregon Railroad Signal Warrants

Rick Wood introduced his handout on the subject. Ed Fischer said he'd like to get feedback from the committee as to whether or not this is the kind of thing that could be adopted into the Oregon Supplements to the MUTCD. He noted the 1994 federal Hazardous Materials Transportation Authorization Act resulted in safety regulations that prohibit operators of commercial vehicles from driving on to rail grade crossings unless there is sufficient space to drive completely through the crossing without stopping. This can be problematic in the west when the railroads are parallel to highways without much more than 25 or 30 feet separating the rails from the highway. This can result in situations where if the truck stops behind the rail before entering the highway, there might not be enough visibility to see gaps in the traffic sufficient to safely cross the rails. So there's a need to identify when to install signals at such locations. Some would like to see signals at any such situation but current administrative rules require meeting a signal warrant in order to do so. ODOT would like to have such a warrant for these cases in order to be able to make rational decisions in these cases and control proliferation of signals beyond reasonable limits.

Ed said ODOT Traffic Management Section has proposed a traffic signal warrant that assesses the risk based on various factors found at highway-railroad grade crossings and includes assessment of train and truck frequency. This is a tricky assessment to make since such accidents are so rare as to make data collection difficult and because traffic volumes are so low in rural areas that typical warrants would not qualify many sites. A previous research request in 2001 to Oregon State University failed to receive funding. He indicated that ODOT would like to submit a research request statement to NCHRP in January at TRB. This issue has become much more important since FHWA has made the offense of driving through such crossings without sufficient clearance a commercial license-loss occurrence as well as subjecting companies to fines if their drivers don't comply with the law.

Rick has picked out some locations to study but they are subject to change based on input from interested parties on and off the committee, as well as the volume percentage reduction factor used for such warrants. Randall Wooley thought train speed and sight distance should be considered. Ed Fischer indicated the ODOT Rail Division has been pushing the Director to come up with something. Rick Wood said federal legislation never mentioned signal installation as a correction method. He thought closing roads and truck rerouting should also be considered at problem locations. Bill Ciz had other locations in Region 1 that he would like Traffic management to look at as possible signal installation locations.

Ed Fischer reiterated his request that members study this subject with an eye towards developing Oregon Signal Warrants for rail crossings for inclusion in the Oregon Supplement to the MUTCD. This will not happen until after January, so this will come back to the OTCDC prior to then for decision.

- ✓ Action Item: Members will study the possible warrants and be prepared to make a decision at a later meeting as to whether something can be included in the Oregon Supplements to the MUTCD.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Ed Fischer handed out three documents: a set of plans provided by the Lane Transit District/JRH Engineering, a position paper prepared by ODOT, and Ed's letter dated 10/04/02 stating that ODOT can't approve the request to use LRT signals for the BRT project. He said the issue is whether or not we should use the LRT type of signal display for the bus rapid transit in Lane County. In the MUTCD the

indications are all white, Portland has a variation where they use a yellow for the horizontal bar. In Lane County/Eugene-Springfield, the situation is that they are installing a bus rapid transit that has some exclusive bus ways and some situations where it's commingled with other traffic and crossing intersections. The question is: can this LRT type of signal be used for BRT's? When the request was first received, ODOT requested more information and asked to see a layout and information on proposed operations. The position paper was prepared after looking at the ORS's and at the type of vehicle involved. The BRT's have rubber tires and steering wheels. ODOT's interpretation of the Oregon Vehicle Code is that makes these busses requiring commercially licensed operators.

The three main reasons Ed cited in the 10/04 letter for not approving the use of the LRT signals for the Lane County BRT were (1) The BRT vehicles are busses; (2) The MUTCD says that LRT signals shall only be used for light rail transit movements; and (3) Oregon law would need to be changed to define the appropriate response to the LRT signals. Ed then referred to the plan sheets, where orange highlighted lanes are shared use lanes with mixed traffic (normal vehicles and BRT [bus] vehicles). The gray highlighted lanes were exclusive bus use lanes. He said ODOT looked at the phase diagrams at the intersections to address the contention by JRH that LRT signals would eliminate confusion of motorists by a colored indication from a standard light that was actually for the BRT vehicle. JRH thinks that the confusion, could lead to a collision between the turning vehicle and the straight ahead bus. Ed noted phasing concerns as illustrated at Alder Street where a Phase 6 left turn from the westbound onto southbound at Alder Street might conflict with BRT Phase 2. Ed concluded his comments by summarizing his October 4 letter conclusion that approval for the use of the LRT signal indications for the BRT on a state cannot be given now for the three reasons cited above.

Jim Hanks then gave a presentation regarding the Bus Rapid Transit project in Eugene. He stated that the primary objectives of his presentation was to insure the safety of the motoring public and to provide for a uniform approach to BRT-Auto Intersections. He stated that the Lane Transit BRT System is in final design and that passenger and motorist safety must be provided. He acknowledged that ODOT has the responsibility to assure proper application of traffic control devices. He agreed that the MUTCD does not discuss BRT issues, but argued that standard signing and traffic signal heads may cause motorist confusion. He hopes an adequate solution can be agreed to in order to not delay BRT Line service scheduled to begin in 2004. He went on to give more background and details on the plan in Eugene-Springfield. He thought system uniformity is important in terms of using the same signals for the BRT line whether in exclusive or shared lanes and didn't think shaded or louvered signal heads were foolproof.

Rob Burchfield asked what we are really asking for, a statewide policy or approval project by project. Rob said they are using a mixture of light rail and streetcars with passenger vehicles in the City of Portland and it seems to be working okay. Rob shared his concern that cars could get in the exclusive BRT lane. Jim Rentz also had this concern. Jim Hanks indicated LRT signals are currently being used in San Francisco. Rob suggested this should be submitted as an FHWA experiment. Ed Fischer asked for consensus to see who wanted to proceed with this.

Decision: Rob Burchfield made a motion to have the BRT apply to FHWA for an experimental project. Bill Ciz seconded and the motion passed with only Ed Fischer in opposition. Ed Fischer said ODOT will not oppose this but will not spearhead it either. Jim Hanks asked if he could consult with ODOT on the details of the experimental project request and, after considerable hesitation, Ed consented to a minimal review.

Driver Response to Traffic Signal Power Outages

Terry Hockett of the City of Salem discussed this in reference to an outage in Salem last summer. Radio stations were telling drivers to treat traffic signals as four-way stops. There was even at least one city

employee telling drivers this when the current law technically says these become uncontrolled intersections and the driver on the right has the right of way. He suggested asking the legislature to change the vehicle code to reflect the four-way-stop philosophy. Discussion ensued on how some folks on the major cross street don't yield at all to the minor cross street, how the 4-way stop treatment aligns with when the light malfunctions rather than going out and therefore turns into a flashing stop treatment and what happens if somebody doesn't see the signal when it's off and might think they've got the right of way at an unsignalized intersection.

Decision - Rob Burchfield moved, Joe Marek seconded, and the committee agreed that ODOT look into what neighboring states are doing and verify what the Uniform Vehicle Code has to say and bring it back to the committee

✓ Action Item: ODOT Traffic Section will do the required research and return to the committee with a future agenda item.

Changes to ORS's Regarding Traffic Control Devices

Rob Burchfield thought legislation to delete ORS 810.200(2)(d) and 810.220 was needed since they don't apply any longer. He suggested ODOT be asked to prepare legislation for the next session to that effect. Further discussion found nobody in opposition to removing the subject language.

Decision - Rob Burchfield moved, Randy Wooley seconded, and the committee agreed that ODOT should prepare the legislation.

➡ Note - Doug Bish later observed and Ed Fischer agreed that ODOT might not be able to introduce this legislation so close to the start of the 2003 Legislative session. He suggested other jurisdictions may have more luck with this.

Blue Bike Lanes

Randy Wooley said that the City of Beaverton had been wanting to use blue pavement for bike paths in some situations in the city as is being done in Portland. He thought the fact that colored pavement in crosswalks (within the painted lines) was considered supplemental to but not actually traffic control devices would apply equally to bike lanes. Then recent email discussions seemed to challenge that opinion and he wanted the panel to discuss it. Rob Burchfield said that Portland also uses the blue pavement in some bike lanes supplemental to the painted or thermoplastic lines and signing and doesn't consider it a traffic control device. Salem (Lew Garrison) and Eugene (John Emmons) agreed. The committee discussion concluded that the confusion was due to some folks thinking the blue pavement was in place of, rather than supplemental to the approved traffic control devices for bike lanes. Consensus was that the committee didn't need to take any action at this time on the subject

NON-AGENDA ITEM

Access Board

Randy Wooley opened the discussion as follow-up to the October 8th meeting of the Access Board. Bill Kloos said there is a website (<http://www.access-board.gov/news/prow-release.htm>) where comments can be read. He said Portland is preparing their comments. Salem already has sent in comments. Ed Fischer said ODOT was also preparing comments. Ed said that AASHTO has put out some excellent, professional comments. Committee members expressed general interest in receiving copies of both ODOT and AASHTO comments.

✓ Action Item: ODOT Traffic Section will see to it that AASHTO and ODOT comments to the Access Board are provided to all members/interested others. (Note the AASHTO document can also be seen at the following site: <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/comments/AASHTO.htm>)

Future Meeting

The committee agreed that a further meeting this year was not necessary, that the next meeting would be held as scheduled January 17, 2003 at the Marion County Shops.

New Officers

Since there will be no further meetings this year, committee members needed to elect new officers for the coming year. After no unseemly electioneering, mudslinging or raucous debate, the committee selected Joe Marek to serve as the new OTCDC Chairperson and Eric Niemeyer as the new Vice Chair.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned for lunch.