



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Chair's Message

MESSAGE 2020-#1
February 5, 2020

Gene Hawkins
NCUTCD Chair

The January meeting is now behind us. It was a busy, but productive meeting. There is a LOT of information to share with our members and I hope you will take a moment to look over all of this.

Anticipating the NPA

The big news of the January meeting was that we did not see the MUTCD NPA as we had hoped. The wait is challenging. I hope that we will see publication of the NPA early enough this spring so that we can address it in a productive manner at the June meeting. If not published early enough, it will be difficult for our member volunteers to review the NPA and develop responses before we meet. Knowing that our members will want to make travel plans to minimize their travel costs, I will make a decision by mid-March on whether we will extend the June meeting through Saturday. Once the decision on extending the meeting has been made, it will not be revisited if an NPA is published after a decision is announced. This could mean that, if the NPA is published late, we could still be dealing with the NPA after the June meeting and could even be dealing with controversial issues at our January 2021 meeting, although I hope that will not be the case. We will respond to the NPA to the best of our ability, but I will not sacrifice our face-to-face consensus building process to rush our docket comments. I welcome suggestions on how to best prepare for the NPA.

June 2020 NCUTCD Meeting Information

- **Mid-Year Meeting Info:** The June meeting will be held June 17-19 in Virginia Beach, VA. We will make an announcement in early March regarding extending the meeting through June 20.
- **Hotel Information:** The host hotel will be the Founders Inn and Spa. The hotel is relatively small and room availability might be a little tight on Tuesday evening due to the overlap with CTE. We have identified an overflow hotel and will provide details with the meeting announcement on the website.
- **Expected Recommendations:** The following proposals will be sent to sponsors for review and comment this spring:
 - ♦ Edit: 1 item
 - Edit-01: Speed Terminology
 - ♦ RW: 2 items
 - RW-01: STOP/SLOW Paddle LED Lights
 - RW-02: Speed Advisory Signs for Changes in Horizontal Alignment
 - ♦ GMI: 1 item
 - GMI-01: Publicly Accessible Off-Street Parking General Service Signs
 - ♦ Bikes: 1 item
 - BIK-01: Buffered and Separated Bicycle Lane Extension Markings
 - ♦ Markings, Signals, TTC, and RR: no items

Future NCUTCD Meeting Information

- **January 2021:** The January 2021 NCUTCD meeting will take place on January 27-29, 2021 (Wednesday-Friday). Our meeting will conflict with the annual meetings of two organizations. The extent of the conflict is unknown at this time and will depend partly on the date that the NPA is published and whether we will need to extend the NCUTCD meeting through Saturday.
 - ♦ *TRB Conflict:* The TRB Annual Meeting will be January 24-28, 2021 (Sunday-Thursday). After the NCUTCD had signed a hotel contract for this meeting, TRB elected to move their meeting up a week from the originally announced schedule. As a result, the NCUTCD meeting will be Wednesday-Friday of TRB week. This may pose scheduling challenges for some of our members. However, TRB will be implementing a reorganized committee structure at the January 2021 meeting. Therefore, we will not know the full details of conflicts until after TRB publishes their meeting schedule in November 2020.
 - ♦ *ATSSA Conflict:* The ATSSA Convention and Traffic Expo will be January 29 - February 3, 2021 (Friday-Wednesday) in San Diego.
- **June 2021:** The 2021 summer meeting will be held in the Seattle, Washington area. The date and hotel will be determined by the AASHTO CTE at their June 2020 meeting.
- **January 2022:** The Executive Board voted to hold the January 2022 meeting on Wednesday-Friday the same week as the TRB Annual Meeting. The dates will be January 12-14, 2022. Moving the meeting to the week before TRB would have resulting in the NCUTCD meeting starting on January 5.

NCUTCD General Information

- **New Feature - Agency Practice:** In future Chair's Messages, I hope to highlight agency practices that have resulted from involvement of agency personnel in NCUTCD activities or agency practices that have evolved from an NCUTCD recommendation. If you have something to share, please contact me (gene.hawkins@tamu.edu). I'm looking for a half page or so of content. I hope one of you will be excited to be the first one to do this.
- **New Feature - Leadership Bio:** In an effort to help our members become more acquainted with the leadership, I will provide a brief bio on one of our leaders in each Chair's Message. I will start with myself and that bio is at the end of this message.
- **NCUTCD Member Database:** We are shifting our database to on-line version only. All members are responsible for maintaining their contact information in the database. Do not send corrections to the Executive Secretary.
- **Website and IT Features:** Marc Jacobson, our webmaster, continues to do a stand-up job at improving our IT capabilities. If you encounter any problems with the listserves, technical committee web pages, or website, reach out to Marc at webmaster@ncutcd.org. Recent improvements include:
 - ♦ *Technical Committee Web Pages:* Technical Committee members can now access websites that allow committees to share information and files. To access the websites, make sure you are logged in to the NCUTCD website and then go to Technical Committees under the About Us menu item.

- ♦ *Technical Committee Listserves:* The listserves are the primary means for reaching out to the members of the technical committees. Please make sure that you are able to receive and reply to listserve messages. This will be a critical tool in responding to the NPA.
- **Social Media Assistant:** Richard Moeur has been handling the NCUTCD social media accounts for the past several years. At the January meeting, Richard discovered that his Executive Secretary responsibilities limit his ability to post to our social media accounts during the meeting and he is looking for an assistant to help manage those accounts. If you are interested in helping Richard, please contact him at ncutcd@moeurgineering.com.
- **Guest Registration for NCUTCD Meetings:** The NCUTCD requires registration for all individuals attending an NCUTCD meeting, including those attending technical committee meetings. If you encourage someone to attend one of our meetings, make sure you tell them that they need to register for the meeting and inform them of the discount for early registration. If there are special circumstances regarding their attendance, please coordinate that with the Chair and Executive Secretary prior to the meeting.
- **Review of Bylaws and Operating Procedures:** In June 2019, the Executive Board established a new committee to review the existing Bylaws and Operating Procedures. Members are Bill Lambert (chair), Neil Boudreau, Lee Billingsley, Jonathan Upchurch, Gene Hawkins, Tom Heydel. Given some of the recent changes we have implemented and those suggested in the strategic plan, this effort is needed. It has been almost 20 years since the last thorough review. Please send any suggestions for changes to the Bylaws and/or Operating Procedures to Bill Lambert.

January 2020 NCUTCD Meeting Summary

- **Approved Recommendations:** The following items were approved by Council. They will be posted on the website soon. Two items that were sent to sponsors in the fall were held by the technical committees for further evaluation of sponsor comments.
 - ♦ 19B-RW-01: Street Name plaque with W1-10 and W10 Series Signs
 - ♦ 19B-MKG-01: Pavement Marking Standards for Automated Driving Systems and Improved Driving Safety
 - ♦ 19B-SIG-01: Use of Straight-Through GREEN ARROW
 - ♦ 19B-SIG-02: Alternatives to Traffic Control Signals
 - ♦ 19B-SIG-03: Pedestrian Pushbutton Locations
 - ♦ 19B-TTC-02: Use of Positive Protection in Work Zones
- **Officer Elections:** We elected individuals to two-year terms for the four officer positions. The newly elected/re-elected officers are:
 - ♦ Chair: Gene Hawkins
 - ♦ Vice-Chair of Programs: Bill Lambert
 - ♦ Vice-Chair of Research: Bryan Katz
 - ♦ Treasurer: Kathy Falk
- **Bylaws Change:** The Council approved a change to our Bylaws adding two sponsoring organizations. The updated Bylaws are posted on the website. The new sponsoring organizations are:

- ♦ National Association of City Transportation Officials: 3 members on Council in Group I.
- ♦ Intelligent Transportation Society of America: 1 member on Council in Group II.
- **Recognition of Retiring Individuals:** We recognized two individuals who have served the NCUTCD for many years:
 - ♦ Roger Wentz: stepping down as Treasurer after 6 years of service in the position.
 - ♦ Bob Garrett: stepping down as Executive Secretary on March 31, 2020 after 22 years of service in the position.
 - ♦ Bob Garrett: recognized as the newest Honorary Member of the NCUTCD (effective April 1, 2020).
- **NCUTCD Anniversary:** We recognized the 40th anniversary of the first NCUTCD meeting. Ken Kobetsky (2nd NCUTCD chair) spoke to Council and I read recollections from Dick Luettich (1st NCUTCD) chair and Jim Pline. All three of these individuals are honorary members with 50+ years of experience on the NCUTCD.
- **Attendance:** We set another record for attendance with 343 attendees. I repeat what I said in the Chair's Message a year ago: "I believe the attendance reflects the importance of our work and the contributions we are making to the safety and efficiency of our transportation system."
- **NCUTCD Leadership Meet & Greet:** On Thursday evening, the Chair and several technical committee chairs met in one of the hotel suites to be available to the NCUTCD for questions and general information. Those attending were mostly new or relatively new NCUTCD members. I hope to continue this practice at some of our future meetings.

NCUTCD Leadership Biography

Name: Gene Hawkins

Current NCUTCD position: Chair, elected January 2018, re-elected January 2020.

Where you grew up: Houston, Texas

Where you live: College Station, Texas

First paid job: Pulling weeds at a nursery when I was about 12 years old, I think at \$2/hr.

Current job: Professor at Texas A&M University

Previous professional positions: Consultant for Walton & Associates, Consulting Engineers, Inc., 1983-1986; Researcher for Texas A&M Transportation Institute, 1986-Present; Faculty in civil engineering at Texas A&M University, 2004-Present, Engineer at Texas Department of Transportation, 2019-2020 (while on sabbatical). I also provide expert witness services as an independent consultant.

Why you are involved in traffic control devices: My father was a traffic engineer who spent most of his career with the City of Houston. I learned to read from traffic signs. I remember watching the Houston Thanksgiving Parade from the top of a city sign truck on the side of the parade route.

How did you get involved in the NCUTCD?: In 1990, I acquired copies of all the editions of the MUTCD. In my spare time, I compared the changes over the editions and wrote a 5-page paper for the 1991 ITE Annual Meeting in Milwaukee, WI. Ken Kobetsky was the presider of the session I presented in and he convinced me to apply for membership.

NCUTCD positions: My first NCUTCD meeting was in June 1992. I was initially on the Signals Committee but was moved to the RW Committee after presenting my dissertation on warning signs to that committee at the June 1993 meeting. I moved to the Markings Committee in 2003 when I was appointed chair of the committee. I was also a member of the Research Committee for many years. I have served as secretary of the Edit Committee and RW Committee, chair of the Markings Committee, chair of the ITE delegation, chair of the Edit Committee, and Vice-Chair of Programs.

Family information: I have been married to Kathe for over 33 years and we have two children. Our daughter Hannah is a nurse in College Station with a husband and son. They live less than a mile from us and we get to spend a lot of time with our grandson. Our son will be graduating from college this summer. He is an IT professional and serves in the Army reserves.

Hobbies: Over my adult life, I have raced catamarans (before children), camped with our kids on a near monthly basis (through a YMCA parent-child program), and served as a bullpen catcher until my son's fastball got faster than my aging reflexes. My current hobby is cowboy action shooting.

Advice to young professionals: While a lot of attention is being given to automated and connected vehicles, intelligent transportation systems, and other high-tech transportation initiatives, the basic principles of traffic engineering will continue to be a critical part of our profession during your professional lives. There is no substitute for understanding the basic principles of roadway capacity, geometric design, signal timing, sign legibility, and related issues.

Future plans: I'm 1.5 years into my 5 year plan to figure out what retirement will mean to me. That means I hope I have a plan by 2023 that will include continuing professional work but at something less than 40 hours per week.