



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Chair's Message

MESSAGE 2020-#5
September 15, 2020

Gene Hawkins
NCUTCD Chair

As the summer and the pandemic have marched on, the NCUTCD leadership has been busy behind the scenes evaluating the environment and making decisions regarding the January 2021 NCUTCD meeting. After considering issues and alternatives, the Board has unanimously decided to conduct the January 2021 meeting in a virtual format. While there are still many issues to resolve before we meet virtually in January, here is the information that we can share at this time.

MUTCD NPA

I have continued to communicate with FHWA on an as-needed basis. While they are not able to provide any information about scheduling or content of an NPA for a new edition of the MUTCD, FHWA has indicated that they are “very, very encouraged” by progress on the NPA. Based on that encouragement, the NCUTCD is scheduling the January meeting activities in a manner that will provide time for reviewing and approving docket comments on an NPA. If the NPA is not published in time to consider it during our January meetings, then we will downsize our January meeting schedule.

Our last experience in approving docket comments for a new edition of the MUTCD took place at the Mobile, AL meeting in June 2008. As the NCUTCD has added many new members since then, I wanted to remind our members that responding to an NPA requires a significant level of effort. Each of the changes identified in the NPA must be evaluated by a technical committee and the NCUTCD will submit a comment on each of the changes. Proposed changes that are consistent with previous NCUTCD recommendations do not require Council approval before submitting a docket comment. But those changes that are not consistent with a previously approved NCUTCD recommendation will have to have docket comments approved by the technical committee and then approved by Council. At the June 2008 meeting, the Council met for 14 hours addressing docket comments. I know that I was not alone in feeling that we did not schedule enough time to adequately discuss all of the proposed docket comments.

Until we see the content of the NPA, we will not know how consistent it is with our previous recommendations. As such, it is difficult to adequately schedule the time for due consideration of actions on the NPA. Once the NPA is published, we will evaluate and the need for adjustments in our schedule.

January 2021 NCUTCD Meeting

- **Meeting Schedule:** The Board has decided to spread the NCUTCD meeting activities over several weeks in January. The preliminary schedule for meetings is shown below. Chairs and officers of the task forces, joint task forces, technical committees, and Council will be developing more specific details on the scheduling for their activities in the near future. For now, I ask you to block out time in your

schedule according to the details below. All virtual meetings will be conducted between 1:00 - 5:00 pm Eastern Time.

- **First Week of January (1/4-8/21):** Task Forces and Joint Task Forces will meet.
- **Second Week of January (1/11-15/21):** Technical Committees will meet.
- **Third Week of January (1/18-22/21):** Council and selected technical committees will meet.
 - ♦ **Monday:** Federal holiday
 - ♦ **Tuesday and Wednesday:** Council will meet.
 - ♦ **Thursday:** Technical Committees with proposals needing revisions will meet.
 - ♦ **Friday:** Council will meet.
- **Fourth Week of January:** Potential for additional Council meetings if needed to address NPA issues.

Proposed Recommendations

The NCUTCD will be distributing 14 proposed recommendations to sponsoring organizations for review and comment as indicated below. These should be distributed in August with comments due two months after they are distributed. If the NPA is not published in time, the Council will consider action on these 14 items plus 3 previous recommendations that were scheduled for Council action in June 2020.

- **Edit**
 - ♦ 20B-EC-01: Speed Terminology
- **RW**
 - ♦ 20B-RW-01: Vertical Clearance of Large Signs
 - ♦ 20B-RW-02: Bus Transit/BRT Traffic Control - Signs, Markings, Signals
 - ♦ 20B-RW-03: Electronic Display Traffic Control
- **GMI**
 - ♦ None
- **Markings**
 - ♦ None
- **Signals**
 - ♦ 20B-SIG-01: Accessible Pedestrian Push Button Locations
 - ♦ 20B-SIG-02: Requirement for Accessible Pedestrian Signals When Leading Pedestrian Intervals are Used
- **TTC**
 - ♦ 20B-TTC-01: Typical Application Refinement and Stopping Sight Distance
 - ♦ 20B-TTC-02: Typical Application Coordination
 - ♦ 20B-TTC-03: Shoulder Work
 - ♦ 20B-TTC-04: Shoulder Lane Revision
- **RR**
 - ♦ 20B-RR-01: Grade Crossings Near Circular Intersections
 - ♦ 20B-RR-02: Advance Pavement Markings Near Grade Crossings
- **Bikes**
 - ♦ 20B-BIK-01: Buffered Bike Lane/Separated Bike Lane Extension Markings
 - ♦ 20B-BIK-02: Separated Bike Lane Definition

- **Previous Recommendations:** In addition to the proposals identified above, there were three proposals that were distributed in Spring 2020 that could be taken up by Council in January 2021.
 - ♦ 20A-RW-01: STOP/SLOW Paddle LED Lights
 - ♦ 20A-RW-02: Speed Advisory Signs for Changes in Horizontal Alignment
 - ♦ 20A-GMI-01: Publicly Accessible Off-Street Parking General Service Signs

January 2021 Meeting Arrangements

The NCUTCD leadership continues to evaluate various issues and develop plans for the January 2021 meeting. A number of decisions have already been made and I list those below.

- Registration will be required to participate in any NCUTCD virtual meeting. The registration fee will be announced soon. Exceptions to this policy will have to be approved by the Executive Secretary.
- Meeting registration is intended only for the person it is sent to. Individuals may not distribute a meeting registration to anyone else.
- All participants will be required to log into the virtual meeting through a computer and have both their first and last name show on the list of meeting participants. Phones can be used for the audio connection when logged into a computer but no individuals will be allowed to participate only by telephone. Participants who are listed as a phone number only will be disconnected from the meeting. There are no exceptions to this policy.
- The ability to speak verbally during the Council meeting will be limited to Council members and those presenting to Council. We are evaluating options for allowing registered members to attend the Council meeting and submit questions/comments through the chat feature so that thoughts and opinions from others can be considered as well. As you can imagine, a virtual meeting the size of one of our Thursday general sessions creates challenges for developing a consensus on a proposed recommendation if all participants have the ability to speak verbally while in an online format.
- Individual chairs have the ability to schedule meetings prior to January to accomplish business if they so desire.
- Individual meetings may extend before and/or after the 1:00 - 5:00 pm Eastern Time meeting window on a case-by-case basis.
- TRB Annual Meeting Schedule: TRB has also announced their annual meeting will be virtual and they are spreading the meeting activities over several weeks in January. Knowing that some of our members also participate in TRB AM activities, I want to share the latest from TRB on their anticipated schedule for January:
 - ♦ Committee meetings: January 5-8 and 11-15, between the hours of 10:00 am and 5:00 pm Eastern Time.
 - ♦ Sessions (of various types): January 21-22, between the hours of 10:00 am and 4:00 pm Eastern Time, and January 25-29, between the hours of 10:00 am and 5:30 pm Eastern Time.
 - ♦ Exhibits: January 25-29, between the hours of 10:00 am and 5:30 pm Eastern Time.
 - ♦ Networking events: January 25-28, between the hours of 5:30 am and 7:00 pm Eastern Time.

Terminology

The NCUTCD leadership is refining the terminology used to describe task forces, joint task forces, and committees as described below. Please adopt this terminology as you describe our various groups.

- **Task Force:** A task force (TF) is created by a technical committee (TC) and composed of members from only that TC. The TF would typically develop MUTCD language that would have to be approved by only the TC that created it before sending the language to sponsors. TFs report only to their parent TC. A TC chair appoints the members and chair of a TF.
- **Joint Task Force:** A task force (JTF) is created by the Board or multiple TCs and composed of members from multiple TCs. JTFs formed by the Board would address strategic or large-scale issues, such as Pedestrians or the Rules of the Road. JTFs created by TCs would be formed to address a specific need and then disband (such as SOPT), or address ongoing inter-committee issues (such as bicycle traffic signals). Current TFs that will be relabeled as JTFs include the Pedestrian JTF, CAV JTF, and ROR JTF.
- **Technical Committee:** One of the 7 technical committees (TC) that deal with specific content of the MUTCD. NCUTCD members belong to one of these 7 technical committees.
- **Joint Committee:** The Edit and Research Committees which are composed of members from all of the 7 TCs. Typically, there are at least 1-2 designated representatives from each TC.
- **Board Committee:** A committee created by the Executive Board to address administrative needs of the NCUTCD. Examples of Board Committees include the Nomination Committee, Bylaws/OP Revision Committee, and Budget Committee. Board committees are typically short-term to deal with a specific issue, although some may be long term to deal with an ongoing Board responsibility (like budgeting).

June 2020 NCUTCD Meeting

A summary of the technical committee virtual meeting reports and the Board meeting has been posted on the NCUTCD website. These summaries represent the reports that would have normally been given during the general sessions.

Future NCUTCD Meetings

January 2021 will represent the second meeting in a row that the NCUTCD will have conducted in a virtual environment. While the June meeting was productive and we expect to be able to conduct business in January in a virtual environment, the NCUTCD leadership is committed to returning to a face-to-face meeting environment as soon as we can do so safely for our members. Our experience has shown that virtual meetings can be effective for conducting some of our business and I hope that more task forces and technical committees will use the virtual environment to conduct business between our annual and mid-year face-to-face meetings once we resume meeting in person. At the present time, we are scheduled to have face-to-face meetings as indicated below.

- **June 2021:** The meeting will be at the Founders Inn in Virginia Beach, VA on June 9-11, 2021.

- **January 2022:** The meeting will be held Wednesday-Friday (1/12-14/2022) at the end of the week of the TRB Annual Meeting.
- **June 2022:** The meeting is likely to be held in Seattle, WA. Dates and a hotel have not yet been selected.
- **January 2023:** The meeting will be held Wednesday-Friday (1/11-13/2023) or Thursday-Saturday (1/12-14/2023) at the end of the week of the TRB Annual Meeting.
- **January 2024:** The meeting will be held Wednesday-Friday (1/10-12/2024) or Thursday-Saturday (1/11-13/2024) at the end of the week of the TRB Annual Meeting.

NCUTCD Leadership Biography

Name: Bill DeSantis

NCUTCD Positions: Technical Member of Bicycle Technical Committee since January 2010. BTC representatives to Edit Committee from 2014 to 2017. Chair of the Bicycle Technical Committee since June 2017. I attended my first NCUTCD meeting in June 2009 in Manchester, NH and have attended all the NC meetings since 2009 save one.

Where you live: I have lived in North Attleboro since early childhood but this past winter we started spending winters on the Florida Gulf Coast.

Professional Positions: I have been professionally active for 51 years, starting in June 1971 working on a survey crew as a co-op student at Northeastern University in Boston, Mass. After graduating from NU, I continued to work as a surveyor then as a highway design staff engineer. In August 1980, I entered active duty in the US Coast Guard as a civil engineering officer. Our work included overseeing maintenance of existing support facilities and construction of new facilities in the New England. After discharge from active duty, I accepted a position with VHB. After 34 years, I am a Principal and Corporate Director of Bicycle & Pedestrian transportation Services. Projects have ranged from local streets to interstate highways and commuter rail stations to rehabilitation of historic light houses. I have been involved in the planning and design of transportation facilities mostly in the eastern US and the development of numerous FHWA bicycle-related planning and design guides.

Professional Affiliations: ITE member; registered Civil Engineer in several states; League of American Bicyclists Cycling Instructor.

Involvement with Traffic Control Devices: I first became interested in building and construction as a young child as my maternal grandfather was a boat builder. As a teenager, I worked with my paternal grandfather and father in a shipyard off-loading bulk cargo such as road salt, coal and fuel oil. I first became interested in traffic control devices in the Coast Guard learning the maritime navigation rules and system which pre-dates our vehicle code ("red-right-returning"). My passion for bicycle-related traffic control devices expanded when I began bike commuting and found that the US approach to bicyclist education is woefully lacking.

Family Information: I married the love of my life I have known since high school. Cindy and I have been married for 43 years. We have two adult sons, Chris (married to Michelle) and Patrick (married to Gina). We have two grandchildren by Chris and Michelle (Owen 3 ½ and Ava 2). Both boys are engineers, Gina is an engineer and Michelle is a registered architect.

Hobbies: Other than being grandparents, Cindy and I enjoy gardening, walking and bike riding. Tinkering with bikes, collecting (and using) old working and building hand tools, largemouth bass fishing, and reading take up the rest of my time. Hunting for shark's teeth in Florida is a new interest. I am a member of my local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to assist local emergency response agencies in times of public emergencies. As a National Weather Service Skywarn member, we provide on-site verification of significant weather events. I also recently began studying to obtain by amateur radio technician's license.

Transportation History: Growing up in Southern New England, I found a dense network of former railroads. Most are inactive, so we have a great deal of the 1800's RR infrastructure remaining. We've been fortunate to be able to convert some of the railbeds to trails. Last year, we did a 56-mile inventory of a former RR through central Massachusetts which made for a great summer.

Advice to Young Professionals: 1. Do what you love and you'll never have to "work" 2. In this age of computerized design, realize that the answer sometimes lies outside of a computer screen. The Pyramids were built thousands of years ago with a water level, string line and a plumb bob. Study the historical record of past engineering achievements, hone your understanding of science and apply it to the real-life natural world around you. Sometimes the answer doesn't have four decimal places. 4. Be open to new ideas and perspectives, but don't go along with an idea simply because it's popular. Popular opinion used to have the earth being flat!