



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Chair's Message

MESSAGE 2021-#3
October 5, 2021

Gene Hawkins
NCUTCD Chair

NPA Status

As all of you know, the docket for the MUTCD NPA closed on May 14, 2021. Thanks to a lot of hard work by our members, leadership, and Executive Secretary, we were able to submit our docket comments by the deadline. It is fortunate that we submitted the materials on time as FHWA closed the docket after the deadline and it remains closed to comments. A few notes about the docket comments:

- The NCUTCD made 85 submissions to the docket, one for each chapter of the NPA. The NCUTCD submissions can be accessed on our website under the Approved Changes tab.
- Each of our submissions contained two files: one that is a markup of MUTCD text, tables, and figures and one that is the summary table of comments.
- There were over 17,250 submissions to the docket.

FHWA is processing the comments. There have been no statements regarding when to expect a final rule.

January 2022 NCUTCD Meeting

Plans are underway for the January 2022 meeting at the Crystal City Hilton in Arlington, VA. Registration will open for the meeting in October. At this time, we expect the meeting to be a face-to-face meeting. That will change only if local restrictions prevent us from having the meeting in-person. If we do meet face-to-face, there will be no provisions for remote participation in the meetings. We will be face-to-face or all virtual. No hybrid meeting.

The meeting will be held Wednesday-Friday, January 12-14. For the first time that I am aware of, we will not be meeting the week prior to TRB. A couple of years ago, TRB announced it was changing the dates for the 2022 Annual Meeting, moving it up a week. The TRB Annual Meeting will be Sunday-Thursday, January 9-13. The NCUTCD had already signed a contract at the time TRB changed the schedule and we were committed to our original dates. For those of you that attend both the TRB and NCUTCD meetings, it will be a busy week, with some possible overlap of activities on Wednesday.

The overlap with the TRB meeting, combined with the fact that there are no proposed changes to the 2009 MUTCD for Council to consider, has led us to change our normal schedule for the meeting. After consulting with the technical committee chairs, here is the preliminary schedule we will follow:

- Wed (1/12): 1-5: Task Forces and other NCUTCD groups (other than technical committees and Council) meet. Some may choose to meet Wednesday morning.
- Thu (1/13), 8-5: Technical Committees meet. Task Forces and other meetings may also be scheduled.
- Thu (1/13), evening: NCUTCD social event at the hotel. This is a one-time social event that provides an opportunity for members that haven't seen each other in two years to interact and catch up. This is currently a tentative event, but we are working to make it happen. It could be moved to Wednesday evening. More details will be announced at a later date. Concept is a cash bar event with light hors d'oeuvres.

- Fri (1/14), 8-12: NCUTCD General Session. Agenda items are expected to include a report from the Chair, FHWA report, other reports, NCUTCD officer elections (see election section of this message), and Council action on a Rules of the Road document (see ROR section of this message).

NCUTCD Elections

At the January 2022 Council General Session, we will have our officer elections. The Nominating Committee (Lee Billingsley-chair, Patrick Baxter, Eagan Foster, and Steve Jewell) recently completed its charge of developing a list of Members who have been nominated for the four NCUTCD offices. Those nominations are:

- Chair: Gene Hawkins (incumbent) and Jonathan Upchurch.
- Vice-Chair of Programs: Bill Lambert (incumbent).
- Vice-Chair of Research: Bryan Katz (incumbent).
- Treasurer: Kathy Falk (incumbent).

Officer terms are for two years beginning with the adjournment of the Annual Meeting in even-numbered years. Additional nominations may be made by the petition process described in NCUTCD Operating Procedure #6. Candidates for contested offices will have an opportunity to make brief remarks to the audience, followed by remarks from those Council Members and leadership who wish to make a statement. Since there is at least one contested office, the election will be by a written ballot.

If a quorum is not present at the Council General Session, the elections will be postponed to a future date to be determined. Selection of the election date would be based on a poll of Council member availability for a virtual meeting. Current officers will continue to serve in their positions until such time as the elections can be held. Any postponement of the election will not reopen the petition process.

NCUTCD Rules of the Road

At the June 2021 Executive Board meeting, the Board approved the concept of the NCUTCD publishing a "Rules of the Road" (ROR) document to support the MUTCD. The purpose of this document is to provide a living version of those portions of the Uniform Vehicle Code (UVC) that address traffic control device issues. As most of you are aware, the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances (NCCUTLO), which maintained the UVC, disbanded more than 10 years ago and the UVC has not been updated since 2000. At the January 2022 meeting, it is my hope that Council will approve a document that essentially provides an NCUTCD version of the ROR that replicates the pertinent parts of the 2000 UVC. The ROR Joint Task Force (Ronnie Bell, chair) will then begin the more challenging process of identifying needed updates to that document. It is our hope that by publishing the NCUTCD ROR document on our website, states will use it as a resource in updating state traffic/transportation laws. More information about this process will be sent to sponsors for review and comment this fall.

MUTCD Strategic Planning

Although it has been only a few months since the docket for the 11th edition closed, it is not too early to start thinking about the 12th edition of the MUTCD. I have asked the technical committee chairs to start some email discussion among their members regarding critical issues related to the 12th edition and several TCs have already started that process. A significant amount of technical committee time will be devoted to the 12th edition during our

January meeting. Use the time between now and then to think about what the MUTCD needs to be later this decade and all of the related issues.

MUTCD and NCUTCD Videos

If you haven't noticed the new Videos tab on the NCUTCD website, head over there and check it out (<https://ncutcd.org/videos>). This past summer, I started creating a number of videos that address various aspects of the MUTCD and NCUTCD. So far, I have completed two of them, but more are under development and will be posted in the months ahead. We have also posted these videos on the new YouTube NCUTCD channel. Just search "NCUTCD" on YouTube and you will find them. My goal is to post about one video a month in the future.

Retirement

After what will be 39 years of service with the Texas A&M University System, I have decided to retire from academic activities at the end of January 2022. While I have very much enjoyed my teaching and research activities over the years, I am at a good point to change my professional and personal direction. As you saw earlier in this message, it is my desire to serve another term as the NCUTCD Chair, as I still have a number of things that I have not yet been able to implement as the Chair to make the NCUTCD an even better organization. I am grateful for all the support that the Zachry Department of Civil Engineering at Texas A&M has provided me over the last 17 years and the support of the Texas A&M Transportation Institute for 18 years before I joined the faculty. I won't be headed to a rocking chair, but I do plan to enjoy some other aspects of life that have been largely eluding me for too long.