



# National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

## Chair's Message

**MESSAGE 2022-#2**  
**July 12, 2022**

**Gene Hawkins**  
**NCUTCD Chair**

The June 2022 meeting is behind us. It was great to be able to resume our midyear meeting in a face-to-face format after 3 years. As we have not yet seen the final rule for the 11<sup>th</sup> edition, we spent the meeting focusing on the 12<sup>th</sup> edition and other key traffic control device issues. Now that we are back home, I wanted to touch on some highlights from the meeting and what stands ahead of us over the next year.

### **June 2022 Meeting Review**

The June meeting is in our rear-view mirror and by all accounts, it was a good meeting. There, were 274 attendees which is approaching the pre-pandemic attendance level. We continued with the schedule we implemented in January while waiting for the MUTCD final rule. This schedule devotes Wednesday to task force meetings, Thursday to technical committee meetings, and Friday to the Council General Session. There were a lot of task force meetings this time around and we may need to look at changes on how we hold in-person task force meetings in January due to room and projector availability (see January meeting section). During the General Session on Friday, the technical committees and several joint task forces presented their thoughts on the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the MUTCD (see separate section).

### **Newest Honorary Member**

The highest recognition that the NCUTCD can bestow on a member is that of “Honorary Member.” This designation is awarded to individuals who have contributed to the NCUTCD in an outstanding manner in a leadership role as Members, Associate Members, or Technical Members over a period of at least 20 years. During the June 2022 meeting, I announced that the Executive Board had approved the nomination of our newest Honorary Member, Scott Wainwright. During his 39 years of service to the NCUTCD (including 11 years as a member of the FHWA MUTCD Team from 2001 to 2012), Scott has served as Chair (1998-2001) and Vice-Chair (1990-1998) of the Signals Technical Committee, Vice Chair of the Edit Committee (2013-current), NCUTCD Treasurer (1988-1998), and 26 years as a Member or Associate Member of the ITE Delegation. Since his first NCUTCD meeting in June 1983, Scott has not missed a single meeting. He continues to serve as an active member of the Signals Technical Committee, Edit Committee, CAV Joint Task Force, NCUTCD Budget Committee, and other multi-committee task forces. Scott joins the seven current Honorary Members, one living Emeritus Honorary Member, and three deceased Honorary Members.

### **MUTCD 11<sup>th</sup> Edition Final Rule**

We continue to await the final rule for the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the MUTCD. As indicated on the FHWA MUTCD website, Congress established a deadline of May 15, 2023 for publishing an update to the 2009 MUTCD. We have no idea of the actual date that the final rule will be published. It could be considerably before or after the deadline. Once the final rule is published, we will immediately focus our attention on reviewing the final rule to identify the changes from the NPA and evaluate the extent to which those changes are consistent with the rulemaking process.

### Final Rule Pool

To add a little intrigue to the final rule publication, the NCUTCD will be sponsoring a final rule pool for members to participate in. To keep this legal, there is no money involved. It is simply for recognition. Richard will send out an email in the near future with details on how to enter. The email will provide a link on our website where you can enter the date that you think the final rule will be published. The deadline to enter your guess is November 15, 2022 (six months before the final rule deadline) and you must log into your NCUTCD membership account to submit a guess. We will post everyone's guesses at the January meeting. We plan to recognize the winner(s) at the first NCUTCD meeting after the final rule is published.

### MUTCD 12<sup>th</sup> Edition Planning

A significant portion of our June meeting was spent talking about plans for the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the MUTCD. While the IIJA requires FHWA to update the MUTCD every four years, the current thinking is that the timeframe for the 12<sup>th</sup> edition is further into the future. While we await the 11<sup>th</sup> edition final rule, various groups within the NCUTCD are thinking about the future of the MUTCD beyond the 11<sup>th</sup> edition, asking some fundamental questions about what the MUTCD should be, what should be in it, and how it can be delivered. There have been some very good discussions in the last two meetings. During the June meeting, various chairs gave short reports to Council describing their groups' thoughts on the 12<sup>th</sup> edition. We have captured those thoughts and are using them to work toward an NCUTCD plan for the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the MUTCD.

To provide leadership to the 12<sup>th</sup> edition planning effort, I have appointed three individuals to serve as co-chairs. Those individuals are Elijah Ferrari, Ryan Lancaster, and Jonathan Upchurch. I am relying upon those three individuals to work together to consider their disparate thoughts on the future of the MUTCD, use the information developed by various NCUTCD groups, and create an NCUTCD plan for the 12<sup>th</sup> edition. This will be an ongoing effort and will not conclude until sometime after the final rule for the 11<sup>th</sup> edition. Contact me if you would like to support these three individuals in this effort.

### January 2023 Meeting Preview

The 2023 Annual Meeting will bring new changes to the NCUTCD. We will be meeting during the same week as TRB and we will be meeting at a new hotel. The NCUTCD meeting is January 11-13, 2023 at the Double Tree Crystal City. I consider it unlikely that we will see the final rule before we meet in January, so we will continue with the schedule that we have used for the last two NCUTCD meetings. We want to minimize conflicts with TRB, so task force meetings will begin at noon on Wednesday. At this point in the meeting planning, task force chairs should plan on being limited to a one hour in-person meeting for each task force, using one or more virtual meetings prior to January to accomplish other work. Technical committees will meet on Thursday, and Council will meet on Friday. I am working with our 21 sponsoring organizations to arrange for those with an interest to make a short presentation to Council about their organization.

### June 2023 Meeting Preview

The 2023 Midyear Meeting is less than a year away but we are not yet ready to announce the dates and location. For those that may not know, the summer meeting location is determined by the AASHTO Committee on Traffic Engineering and we coordinate with them in identifying a hotel that meets the needs of both organizations. Washington State DOT intends to host the 2023 summer meeting. The original plan was to have the meeting in downtown Seattle, but with the pandemic behind us, many organizations are booking conferences and there are no hotels in downtown Seattle that meet our needs and are available in May or June. So we are expanding the search to other cities in Washington and hope to have details to share in the near future.

Although we hope to announce the dates and location for the meeting in the near future, we will not announce a specific schedule for meeting activities until next spring. It is my hope that this will be our first meeting after the final rule is published. Although subject to change, we will likely increase the amount of time for technical committee meetings in order to provide time to review the final rule and begin development of future recommended changes.

### **NCUTCD TCD Research Journal**

At the January meeting, we announced the launch of the Journal for Traffic Control Device Research (JTCDR), which is being led by the Research Committee under Bryan Katz's leadership. The Journal will be maintained by the Research Committee and invites authors to submit technical papers and case studies for consideration in this inaugural journal. Unlike other journals with which you might be familiar, papers in this journal are intended for use by practitioners who are looking for evidence-based data to inform recommendations for the use of traffic control devices and changes to the MUTCD. Therefore, the focus will be on practices that provide direct input to MUTCD considerations and assist our technical committees who are considering new practices. For more information, please feel free to contact Bryan at [bryan.katz@toxcel.com](mailto:bryan.katz@toxcel.com).

### **NCUTCD Leadership News**

During the May 26 Executive Board meeting, the Board approved new leadership for the Temporary Traffic Control Technical Committee. Starting with the conclusion of the June 2022 meeting, the new chair is Neil Boudreau and the new vice-chair is Ryan Lancaster. Neil is with the Massachusetts DOT and Ryan is with the Idaho Transportation Department.

I want to express my personal thanks to the outgoing chair, John Leonard, for his six years of service in the position. I also want to thank David Church for his service as co-vice-chair with Neil over the last few years.

This change in leadership provides a good opportunity for me to remind our members that I welcome suggestions for people who might be good leaders in the future. If you think someone you know has what it takes to serve in any kind of leadership position (or you think you do), send me an email (see next section for contact info) and let me know their name(s). I will see what options may be available to help prepare them for a larger role in the future.

### **Communication with Chair**

While I retired from Texas A&M University at the end of January, I recently was recognized with an emeritus title, which enables me to retain access to my TAMU email in perpetuity. Although I'm working for Kittelson LLC doing expert witness work, I am still using my university email address for all NCUTCD communication. If you want to email me about something, please use either [gene.hawkins@tamu.edu](mailto:gene.hawkins@tamu.edu) or [chair@ncutcd.org](mailto:chair@ncutcd.org). Your cooperation will be appreciated.

### **NCUTCD Merchandise**

Here's one more example of how a suggestion from a member can lead to direct action. One of our members asked Richard if we could provide NCUTCD merchandise, such as a hat or shirt. Several NCUTCD members have offered to investigate the idea with Richard and we will see what the options are for offering something with the NCUTCD brand for purchase. We will keep you posted.