



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Chair's Message

MESSAGE 2023-#3
July 19, 2023

Gene Hawkins
NCUTCD Chair

While some (including me) may have had travel challenges related to our June meeting, hopefully everyone made it back home safely. I spent a week on the Texas coast the week after our meeting relaxing and recovering. With a fresh mind, I want to reflect on a few key thoughts from that meeting and what lies ahead for the NCUTCD.

Midyear Meeting Summary

The NCUTCD's 2023 Midyear Meeting is in the books. While everyone had hoped that we would be dealing with the new edition of the MUTCD, that was not the case. Instead, our technical committees and joint task forces pivoted to developing new proposed changes for a future revision/edition of the MUTCD. Some of those proposed changes may be sent to the sponsoring organizations as early as this fall for review and comment (see Proposed Changes heading).

We had 265 registered individuals attending the meeting. This is less than we usually have at a summer meeting. I believe it reflects the disappointment in not having the new MUTCD to review and the challenges in getting home on Friday from the west coast. Even with the lower attendance, there was a lot of energy among the attendees. As the Council meeting was canceled, I asked the technical committee and joint task force chairs to provide written reports of their activities. Those reports are in the meeting summary and it includes the other reports normally given during a Council session. The meeting summary is (or soon will be) available in the "Meetings" tab of the website.

MUTCD Rulemaking

As we all know, the final rule for the 11th edition of the MUTCD was not published in mid-May. During the Midyear Meeting, Duane Thomas and I visited all of the technical committee meetings. Duane announced that the federal government is still committed to issuing a final rule and working toward that goal but that there are some aspects of the process that are out of their hands. After our Midyear Meeting, the FHWA MUTCD Team Leader, Kevin Sylvester, provided a report on the MUTCD, which echoes the message that Duane shared with the technical committees. For those that are interested, the FHWA report is included in the Midyear Meeting summary. Near the end of our meeting, the federal government updated the unified agenda for this rulemaking, indicating a final rule date of 8/00/2023. This does not necessarily mean that the final rule will be published in August, but it does indicate that the rulemaking effort is moving forward.

Final Rule Pool

A number of individuals asked me if there were any people left in our final rule pool. The answer is that there are 9 left with dates ranging from 7/21/23 to 4/26/24. You can see the list in my January 31, 2023 Chair's Message (located on the "From the Chair" tab of the website).

PROWAG Rulemaking

The Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) rulemaking is a separate rulemaking effort that will have an impact on the MUTCD. As explained by FHWA staff, the PROWAG rulemaking is also advancing toward a final rule. The Access Board is responsible for the rulemaking, not FHWA. Once the PROWAG final rule is issued, both the US DOT and DOJ will need

to conduct rulemaking to adopt PROWAG into the federal regulations. Once that rulemaking is completed, the FHWA will conduct another rulemaking to revise the MUTCD to adopt the pertinent aspects of PROWAG. We do not know the timing of the PROWAG rulemaking any better than the timing of the MUTCD rulemaking.

Bylaws/Operating Procedures Update

The Board will soon begin a review of the draft changes to the Bylaws and Operating Procedures (BOP). I've provided information about this process in both of my prior Chair's Messages this year. Once the Board approves the BOP documents, they will be distributed to our sponsoring organizations for review and comment. That could happen as early as this fall. A key reason for the updates is to better align these documents with our needs and activities. I also believe the updates will increase the opportunities for individual members to make substantial contributions to our activities. Look for more information about the changes in a future Chair's Message.

Proposed Changes to MUTCD

In mid-May, I told the technical committee and joint task force chairs that they were free to begin developing proposed changes to the MUTCD, using the NPA content as the base for moving forward. I encouraged them to focus on new content that was not covered in the NPA to minimize corrections once the final rule is published. Based on input from TC/JTF chairs, the items below may be going to sponsoring organizations this fall for review and comment, depending upon the status of the final rule and the BOP revisions.

- Regulatory/Warning Signs:
 - ♦ 23B-RW-01: Emergency Vehicle Weight Limit signs (2B.66)
 - ♦ 23B-RW-02: Unusual Vehicles Sections 2B.46, 2C.54, 2D.xx and 2M.09
- Guide/Motorists Information Signs:
 - ♦ 23B-GMI-01: Clarification of "Diverging Movement"
 - ♦ 23B-GMI-02: Advance Guide Sign Spacing Option
- Signals:
 - ♦ 23B-SIG-01: Replacement of Phrases with "Shall/Shall Not Be Permitted"
 - ♦ 23B-SIG-02: Midblock Pedestrian Signals
 - ♦ 23B-SIG-03: Traffic Signal Warrants
- Temporary Traffic Control:
 - ♦ 23B-TTC-01: Temporary and Portable Traffic Control Signals
 - ♦ 23B-TTC-02: Stay in Lane Signs
 - ♦ 23B-TTC-03: Chapter 6P Tables
 - ♦ 23B-TTC-04: Rumble Strip Warning Signs
 - ♦ 23B-TTC-05: Work Zone Duration Relocation

Elections and Reappointments

The NCUTCD will hold officer elections at the January 2024 Annual Meeting. The current Chair, Vice-Chair for Programs, and Vice-Chair for Research have all indicated that they would like to be nominated for reelection. The current Treasurer will be assuming a different position on the Executive Board, meaning that no one is running for reelection for Treasurer. A Nominating Committee has been established and will be seeking nominations for all offices from the Members and Associate Members of Council. Steve Oliver is chair of that committee and other members are Tony Bellamy, Lee Billingsley, and Kathy Falk.

At the January Executive Board meeting, the Board will reappoint Technical Members to new two-year terms. Technical committee chairs recommend reappointment of their members based

on participation, activity, contributions, and the ability to work with other members. Individuals who will not be reappointed will be notified prior to the Annual Meeting.

Future NCUTCD Meetings

The next NCUTCD meeting will be the Annual meeting on January 10-12, 2024 at the DoubleTree in Crystal City. This is the same hotel that we met in last year and the meeting will be at the end of TRB week, the same as last year. AASHTO has not yet selected a site for the 2024 Midyear Meeting.