Chair's Message

MESSAGE 2024-#2　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Gene Hawkins**
June 5, 2024　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**NCUTCD Chair**

We will be meeting soon for the 2024 NCUTCD Midyear Meeting and I wanted to share a few items.

2024 Midyear Meeting
We will be returning to Portland, ME at the end of this month. This will be the third time I've been to an NCUTCD meeting in that city during my 30+ years on the NCUTCD and the fifth time for the NCUTCD since the early 1960s. This will be our first "normal" meeting since the 2019 Annual Meeting. And by "normal," I mean a meeting where we are reviewing sponsor comments to proposed changes, developing new proposed changes, and voting by Council on proposed changes. It is good to be getting back to our normal practices. It's what we do best!

Proposed Changes
There were 13 proposed changes that were sent to sponsoring organizations this spring for review and comment, as listed below. These proposed changes are on our website as are the comments submitted by sponsoring organizations. Some or all of these proposals may be presented to Council for possible approval during one of the General Sessions in Portland. If approved by two-thirds of the Council (28 votes), they become NCUTCD recommended changes and will be submitted to FHWA.
- 24A-PED-01: Pedestrian Definition
- 24A-PED-02: Pedestrian Clearance Interval with Preemption
- 24A-RW-01: No Turn on Red (R10-11 Series) Signs
- 24A-RW-02: Neighborhood Traffic Circle Yield Sign Guidance
- 24A-RW-03: Bus Symbol Option
- 24A-RW-04: Emergency Vehicle Weight Limit Signs
- 24A-TTC-01: Technical Correction – Removal of Duplicate Text in Fundamental Principles of Temporary Traffic Control (6A.02)
- 24A-TTC-02: Technical Correction – Conflict with the definition of Long-Term Stationary work duration
- 24A-TTC-03: Technical Correction – Figures 6B-1, 6B-2, 6B-3, 6L-1, 6L-2, 6N-1 and 6P-1 through 6P-54. Remove North Arrows from Part 6 Figures
- 24A-TTC-04: Technical Correction – Typical Applications
- 24A-TTC-05: Portable Changeable Message Signs and Arrow Boards
- 24A-TTC-06: Temporary and Portable Traffic Control Signals
- 24A-TTC-07: Stay in Lane sign (R4-9)

Length of Friday General Session
As we approach the Midyear Meeting, the most common question I get is "How long will we meet on Friday?" My response is always that I don't know. With the potential for 13 proposed changes to be presented to Council, there is the possibility that Council could be meeting into Friday afternoon. I don't know how many of the proposed changes will actually be presented to Council and I don't know how detailed the discussion will be on those that are presented. If you are a Council Member and cannot stay until we finish on Friday, please make sure that your Associate Member or someone from your sponsoring organization can serve as a voting delegate on Council.

ARTBA CTE-NCUTCD Reception

ARTBA will host its traditional event on Tuesday evening for both the AASHTO CTE and NCUTCD folks. ARTBA has chartered a boat that will pick everyone up at 5:00 pm and provide a cruise of Casco Bay on the way to Peaks Island. The boat will then dock at the island for a lobster bake. The boat will return about 8:00 p.m. Look for more information from ARTBA in the future, including information about RSVP details so that they will have an accurate count.

Bylaws and Operating Procedures

A reminder that the Bylaws and Operating Procedures that were approved at the Annual Meeting are posted on our website under the "About Us" tab. I strongly encourage our members to look through these documents as they provide valuable information on our processes and procedures. Now that we are back to our normal activities, this information is important to know. Part VI of the Operating Procedures may be especially helpful as it covers many of the parliamentary procedures that we use in voting.

I also want to remind everyone that the Bylaws and Operating Procedures are intended to be dynamic documents. We can, and should, revise them to meet the needs of our organization. Any member is welcome to develop a proposed change to either document and submit it to a member of the Executive Board. Feel free to contact me if you have ideas for changes/revisions, but be aware that while I'm willing to discuss pros and cons of an idea, I will expect you to do the work of developing the suggested language.

NCUTCD Survey

In late April and early May, the NCUTCD asked its members to respond to a survey that focused primarily on issues related to scheduling of our Annual and Midyear Meetings. We had 218 responses to the survey, which represents about two-thirds of our members. That's a great response rate and I appreciate those who took the time to complete the survey.

The most critical information we gathered from the survey was the member preferences for meeting dates for the Annual Meeting. The Executive Board relied upon the survey results to decide that the Annual Meetings in 2026, 2027, and 2028 will return to the Wednesday-Friday in the week prior to the TRB Annual Meeting. In 2029, we are expecting to meet at the end of TRB week due to the TRB Annual Meeting being held the second week in January as a result of the inauguration. These dates should be considered preliminary until we have executed a contract with the hotel. The upcoming 2025 meeting dates are set and will be at the end of TRB week.

The Board will use the findings from the other survey questions in making decisions on other issues in the near future. Of particular note from the survey is the fact that about half of the respondents became involved with the NCUTCD in the last ten years. And we have to keep in mind that we have been pretty limited in our ability to develop proposed MUTCD changes for the last four years. So we have a lot of members that have not really had the full NCUTCD experience of developing draft language, working it through a technical committee, sponsoring organizations, and Council. For those that are new to that process, I encourage you to read the Operating Procedures to give you a better idea of how the process is supposed to work.

Leadership Meeting with FHWA

In late April, we held a virtual MUTCD leadership meeting with FHWA. NCUTCD committee chairs participated as did most of the FHWA MUTCD Team and their bosses. I asked FHWA for this meeting to increase the communications between our groups and improve our ability to deliver useful recommended changes to the MUTCD. The meeting was essentially open discussion between those involved. I anticipate that we will hold these virtual meetings on a regular basis in the future.

NCUTCD Leadership Changes

During the March and May Executive Board meetings, I asked the Board to approve several changes in NCUTCD leadership positions. In the table below, the yellow highlighted name indicates the person that will be assuming the indicated leadership position at either the end of the 2024 Midyear Meeting (*) or the 2025 Annual Meeting (**). The name above the yellow highlighted name is stepping down from that position. I will talk more about these changes during the Thursday General Session in Portland.

Unit	Chair	Vice-Chair	Secretary
RW	Tom Heydel	Lee Rodifer James Sullivan*	Bob Seyfried
GMI	Tom Honich Jason Hyatt*	Jason Hyatt Ryan Hoyt*	Heather Schmidt
Markings	Jody Colvin Paul Carlson*	Dave Woodin Jody Colvin*	Tom Grant James Kratz
Signals	John Hibbard	Matt Duncan	Dee Taylor
TTC	Neil Boudreau	Ryan Lancaster	Tim Cox
Railroad	Rick Campbell John Dinning*	John Dinning JoNette Kuhnau*	Nicole Jackson
Bicycles	Bill DeSantis	Mike Cynecki Rock Miller*	Stewart Robinson
Research	Bryan Katz	Scott Kuznicki	TBD
Edit	Bill Lambert	Scott Wainwright	Jonathan Upchurch
CAV	Paul Carlson Roxane Mukai*	Roxane Mukai TBD	Melodie Matout
Pedestrians	Randy McCourt	Eagan Foster	TBD
Roundabouts	Brian Walsh Scott Zehngraff**	Scott Zehngraff TBD	TBD
Rules of the Road	Ronnie Bell	Robert Saylor	TBD

Formatting Proposed Changes

Given the number of new members that have joined in the last few years, it is worth commenting on the formatting of our proposed changes. Proper formatting of proposals is the responsibility of the technical committee, not the NCUTCD administration or the Edit Committee. If we (Richard and I) receive proposed changes that are not property formatted, we will send them back to the technical committee chair. Given the tight deadlines that we have after a meeting, this likely means the proposed change will not be distributed to sponsoring organizations as part of that review cycle.

    We recently received the Word file of MUTCD text from FHWA. We are in the process of formatting this text to consistently use the Styles feature of formatting in Word. If you are tasked with writing a proposed change in your committee, your first task is to become familiar with using and applying styles in Word, in order to effectively write and edit the proposal. Our plan is to have a template, instructions, and a training video in the password protected portion of our website in the near future to help our members prepare properly formatted content. We welcome the assistance of a few "super-Word users" in developing the guidelines. Until we have the 11th Edition MUTCD text fully formatted, members who are writing proposed changes will need to apply the appropriate styles to the MUTCD text themselves. See the recommended instructions below.

Recommended practice for editing the 11th Edition plain text for use in proposed changes:

1. Copy and paste the MUTCD content into the proposal in the "Recommended Changes" area of the proposal template.
2. Apply the Section Title style (in the Styles pane) to the section titles. You will need to manually underline the actual title until we come up with a way to automate this.
3. Apply the M-Standard style to all Standard content.
4. Apply the M-Guidance style to all Guidance content.
5. Bullets and numbered lists will need to be indented and have hanging indents applied for text.
6. For now, we're not going to ask for special formatting for paragraph numbers. If you want to apply the "Paragraph Number" style to them, that would be great, but not mandatory.
7. Don't use spaces in lieu of indents or justification. Use tabs and margins. Using the top ruler and "reveal codes" feature in Word can help if needed.
8. When denoting deletions / additions / revisions to MUTCD content, apply the appropriate styles to the text in the document, not hard formatting (bold, italic, color, etc.). And please don't use "track changes".

Joint Task Force Enhancements

Joint task forces (JTFs) have been a part of the NCUTCD for over two decades. In the past, the JTFs were primarily a means of communicating information on a specific topic to interested NCUTCD members. Any proposed MUTCD changes by a JTF had to be run through the affected technical committee(s) (TCs). One of the most significant changes in the recent Bylaws and Operating Procedures (BOP) revisions is the ability of JTF to develop proposed changes on their own and send them to sponsoring organizations for review and comment without requiring approval of a TC(s). The BOP revisions also require that a JTF obtain approval of a proposed change from the affected TCs before it can be presented to Council. This change in the BOP was made to take advantage of the technical expertise of the members in our JTFs to improve the quality of our proposed changes without entirely disconnecting from the affected TCs.

This BOP change primarily affects how three of our JTFs can function: Connected/Automated Vehicles (CAV), Pedestrians (PED), and Roundabouts (RAB). I look forward to seeing how the new process works for these three going forward and identifying any changes that may be needed to the BOP. The fourth JTF, Rules of the Road, has a different focus as it is developing an independent document that is separate from the MUTCD. Now that the 11th edition is out and the MUTCD definitions are set, I expect the ROR JTF to play an important role in providing a framework for supporting MUTCD content. That framework used to be the UVC, but the UVC is no longer maintained and has become out of date, hence the need for the ROR JTF.

A critical feature of a JTF is that it has equal representation from all of the TCs. To the greatest extent we can, we are trying to avoid having a single person be a voting member of multiple JTFs. Each TC chair should devote some of their meeting time in Portland to identifying the voting members of each JTF (an alternate member for some JTFs) and the members of the two Joint Committees (Edit and Research).