National Committee on
Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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Item Number: 26B-GMI-02

NCUTCD PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO THE MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

COMMITTEE / TASK FORCE:	Guide and Motorist Information Signs Technical Committee
ITEM NUMBER:	26B-GMI-02
TOPIC:	Proximity of Traffic Control Devices
ORIGIN OF REQUEST:	Guide and Motorist Information Signs TC
AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD:	2H.13, 2K.06

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:
Approved by GMI TC: 06/25/2026
Approved by NCUTCD Council: .....

This is a proposed change to the MUTCD that has been developed by a technical committee, joint committee, or joint task force of the NCUTCD. The NCUTCD is distributing this to its sponsoring organizations for review and comment. Sponsor comments will be considered in revising the proposal prior to NCUTCD Council consideration. This proposal does not represent a revision of the MUTCD and does not constitute official MUTCD standards, guidance, options, or support. If approved by the NCUTCD Council, the recommended changes will be submitted to FHWA for consideration for inclusion in a future MUTCD revision. The MUTCD can be revised only through the federal rulemaking process.

SUMMARY:
This proposal revises the provisions on locating Acknowledgment signs (Section 2H.13) and Tourist-oriented directional signs (Section 2K.06) to avoid unintended interpretations.

DISCUSSION:
The MUTCD's provisions on permissible locations of Acknowledgment signs and Tourist-oriented directional signs (TODS) are virtually impossible to meet. Because the wording is imprecise, agencies are likely to violate the MUTCD any time such signs are placed, which could expose the agency to liability. The provisions are proposed to be reworded to be more reasonable, while maintaining the signs as low priority.

Following are the specific changes proposed in Section 2H.13:

- Item A of Paragraph 5 prohibits Acknowledgment signs "around any other traffic control device." The word "around" is a poor choice in a standard because it is so vague. It is also not true that these signs shall not be located "around any other traffic control device," considering that traffic control devices include pavement markings, delineators, and temporary traffic control (TTC) devices. Every square inch of road is part of a TTC zone at some point, and it is impossible to avoid using temporary traffic control devices merely because they happen to be "around" an Acknowledgment sign. It would also be unorthodox to interrupt all pavement markings "around"

such signs. Or conversely, it would impose an unnecessary cost on agencies to remove or cover Acknowledgment signs merely because they happen to be within a TTC zone (which might include activities as benign as surveying, mowing, or a special event).

- This provision is proposed to be reworded to prohibit the signs "on the same support as or adjacent to any other sign or a highway traffic signal." This would still prohibit Acknowledgment signs where they are most likely to distract road users' attention from other critical devices without being so broad as to include pavement markings and TTC devices. Paragraph 12 would continue to provide specific spacing guidance, which is more actionable to MUTCD users.

- Item B is mostly redundant with Item A, because they both refer to "the front or back of . . . other traffic control devices." The reworded Item A is intended to address item B as well. Bridge piers do not appear to be needed in this prohibition. A bridge pier is not a traffic control device and is not a source of distraction to road users any more than other roadside infrastructure (such as fire hydrants, utility poles, transit shelters, etc.)

- In Item C, the long list of examples of "key decision points" is proposed to be retained, except that "temporary traffic control zones" is proposed to be removed. As noted earlier, it is not reasonable to expect agencies to discontinue TTC zones where Acknowledgment signs are posted or vice versa.

- In paragraph 6, the phrase "shall be independent post-mounted roadside installations only" is proposed for deletion because it is redundant. The prohibition of overhead mounting is conveyed by the rest of the sentence, and the permissibility of only independent mounting is conveyed by Item A of paragraph 5. The shortened proposed version of the sentence is worded like paragraph 7 of Section 2D.55, which conveys the same intent about a different type of sign.

- In paragraph 8, the overly broad term "traffic control devices" is proposed to be replaced with "signs and highway traffic signals" to be more consistent with the intent discussed above.

Following is the change proposed in Section 2K.06:

- The existing wording prohibits TODS "at least 200 feet from other traffic control devices." As noted above, this would prohibit a TODS within 200 feet of any pavement marking, delineator, or TTC channelizing device, which does not appear to be intended. The text is proposed to be reworded so it applies only to "signs and highway traffic signals."

RECOMMENDED MUTCD CHANGES:

The following present the proposed changes to the current MUTCD within the context of the current MUTCD language. Proposed additions to the MUTCD are shown in blue underline and proposed deletions from the MUTCD are shown in ~~red strikethrough~~. Changes previously approved by NCUTCD Council (but not yet adopted by FHWA) are shown in green double underline for additions and ~~green double strikethrough~~ for deletions. In some cases, background comments may be provided with the MUTCD text. These comments are indicated by [bracketed white text in shaded green]. Deletions made by a technical committee, joint committee, or task force after initial distribution to sponsoring organizations are shown in ~~highlighted red strikethrough and sans-serif text~~. Additions made by a technical committee, joint committee, or task force after initial distribution to sponsoring organizations are shown in underline blue and sans-serif text.

[For brevity, only relevant content is shown.]

PART 2
SIGNS

CHAPTER 2H. GENERAL INFORMATION SIGNS

Section 2H.13 Acknowledgment Signs and Plaques (I20 Series)

Support:

01 Acknowledgment signs and plaques (see Figure 2H-8) are a way of recognizing a company, business, or volunteer group that provides or sponsors a highway-related service. Acknowledgment signs include sponsorship signs for adopt-a-highway litter removal programs, maintenance of a parkway or interchange, and other highway maintenance or beautification sponsorship programs.

Guidance:

02 *A State or local highway agency that elects to have a sponsorship acknowledgement program should develop a policy on Acknowledgment signs and plaques. The policy should require that eligible sponsoring organizations comply with State laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, color, age, sex, national origin, and other applicable laws.*

Standard:

03 The State or local acknowledgment sign policy shall include all of the provisions regarding placement and design of Acknowledgment signs and plaques that are contained in this Section.

04 Because regulatory, warning, and guide signs have a higher priority, Acknowledgment signs shall only be installed where adequate spacing is available between the Acknowledgment sign and ~~other~~ higher priority signs. Acknowledgment signs shall not be installed in a position where they would obscure ~~the~~ road users' view of other traffic control devices.

05 Acknowledgment signs shall not be installed at any of the following locations:

- **A. On the same support as or ~~the front or back of,~~ adjacent to~~, or around~~ any other ~~traffic control device, including traffic~~ sign~~s,~~ or a highway traffic signal~~s, and changeable message signs~~;**
- **~~B. On the front or back of, adjacent to, or around the supports or structures of other traffic control devices, or bridge piers;~~ or**
- **C. At key decision points where a road user's attention is more appropriately focused on other traffic control devices, roadway geometry, or traffic conditions, including exit and entrance ramps, merging or weaving areas, lane terminations, intersections, grade crossings, toll plazas, ~~temporary traffic control zones,~~ and areas of limited sight distance.**

06 Acknowledgment signs and plaques shall have a white legend and border on a blue background. Acknowledgment signs ~~shall be independent post-mounted roadside installations only and~~ shall not be mounted overhead.

Option:

07 An Acknowledgment sign may be used to acknowledge the sponsor of a rest area or welcome center.

Standard:

08 Acknowledgment signs for a rest area, when located on the highway mainline, shall be limited to one sign per direction of travel from which the rest area is accessible, shall be located at least 500 feet from other signs and from highway traffic signals ~~traffic control devices~~, and shall not display names or representations of specific products or services provided by the sponsor within the rest area. Acknowledgment signs for rest areas shall display the legend REST AREA as the program activity, such as REST AREA SPONSORED BY. In accordance with Paragraph 5 of this Section, the Rest Area and Welcome Center Acknowledgment (I20-4 and I20-4a) signs shall not be combined in the same sign assembly with or substitute for the Rest Area General Service guide signs (see Section 2I.05).

Option:

09 An additional Acknowledgment sign may be used within the rest area provided that it is not visible from the highway mainline or ramps to and from the rest area.

10 If a State has officially adopted and is actively promoting a program to encourage the use of safety rest areas through the use of a program name, then that program name may be displayed in smaller lettering below the legend REST AREA on the Rest Area Acknowledgment sign.

Standard:

11 Program names or slogans, as described in Paragraph 14 of this Section, shall not be displayed on the Rest Area General Service guide signs or other ~~types of traffic~~ signs. [The defined term is *sign*.]

Guidance:

12 The minimum spacing between Acknowledgment signs and any other ~~traffic control~~ signs, except parking regulation signs, should be:

A. 150 feet on roadways with speed limits of less than 30 mph,
B. 200 feet on roadways with speed limits of 30 to 45 mph, and
C. 500 feet on roadways with speed limits greater than 45 mph.

13 If the placement of a newly-installed higher-priority traffic control device, such as a higher-priority sign, a highway traffic signal, or a temporary traffic control device, conflicts with an existing Acknowledgment sign, the Acknowledgment sign should be relocated, covered, or removed.

CHAPTER 2K. TOURIST-ORIENTED DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

Section 2K.06 Sign Locations

Guidance:

01 If used, the intersection approach signs should be located at least 200 feet in advance of the intersection. Sign assemblies should be spaced at least 200 feet apart and at least 200 feet from other signs and from highway traffic signals ~~traffic control devices~~.

02 If used, advance signs should be located approximately ½ mile from the intersection with 500 feet between these sign assemblies. In the direction of travel, the order of advance sign placement should be to show the destinations to the left first, then destinations to the right, and last, the destinations straight ahead (see Figure 2K-2).

03 Position, height, and lateral offset of sign assemblies should be governed by Chapter 2A except as permitted in this Section.

Option:

04 Tourist-oriented directional signs may be placed farther from the edge of the road than other ~~traffic control~~ signs.

Standard:

05 The location of other traffic control devices shall take precedence over the location of tourist-oriented directional signs.