National Committee on
Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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Item Number: 26B-RR-02

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

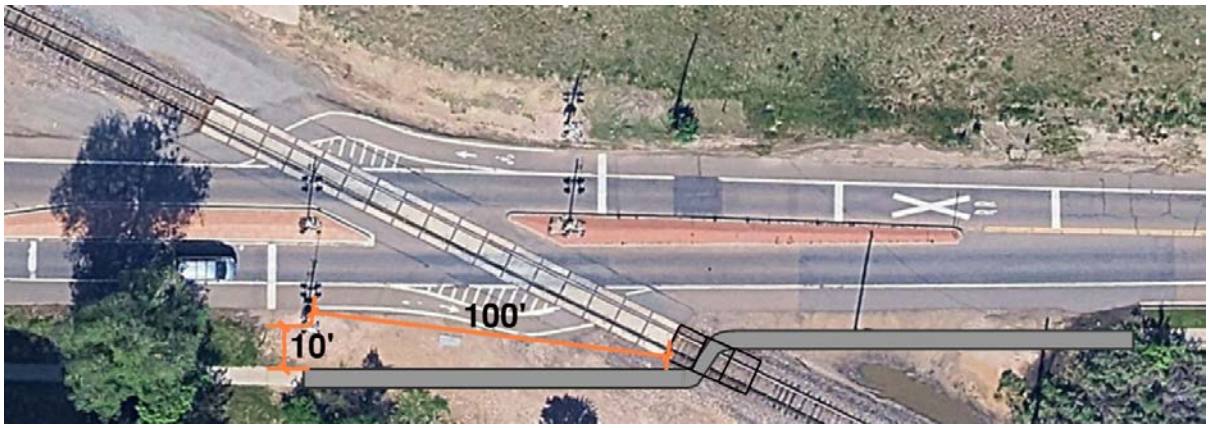
COMMITTEE / TASK FORCE:	Railroad & Light Rail Transit Technical Committee
ITEM NUMBER:	26B-RR-02
TOPIC:	Active Devices at Sidewalk and Pathway Grade Crossings
ORIGIN OF REQUEST:	Railroad & Light Rail Transit TC
AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD:	8E.02, 8E.05, 8E.07, Figure 8E-2

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:
Approved by RRLRT TC:.....01/08/2026
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:
The proposal clarifies the installation of active warning devices at sidewalk and pathway grade crossings, especially for skewed grade crossings. The proposal also changes from Guidance to Standard the language regarding the Diagnostic Team's role in recommending traffic control devices at sidewalk and pathway grade crossings, for consistency with the Standard in Section 8A.03.

DISCUSSION:
The need for active devices to provide warning at sidewalk and pathway grade crossings are affected by the unique geometry of the roadway, sidewalk or pathway, and tracks at each crossing. Practitioners' interpretation of the 25-foot dimension shown in Figure 8E-2 have resulted in inconsistent applications, especially at skewed grade crossings where the highway and sidewalk or pathway crossings of the tracks may not be adjacent to each other. An example of a skewed crossing is shown in the image on the following page. In this example, an active warning device at the highway crossing of the tracks would be 10 feet from the sidewalk but this device would be ineffective for providing warning to pedestrians due to the 100-foot distance between the warning device and the location where the sidewalk crosses the tracks.



The interpretation of the 25-foot dimension in Figure 8E-2 and Section 8E.07 at skewed crossings contributes to inconsistent and ineffective application of warning devices for sidewalk and pathway users. The proposed changes in Figure 8E-2 more clearly illustrate where additional warning devices could be needed for sidewalk/pathway users at skewed crossings.

In addition, the existing Standard statement in Section 8A.03 paragraph 2 states that the Diagnostic Team shall make a recommendation on traffic control devices at new and changed grade crossings. The current Guidance statement in Section 8E.02 conflicts with this Standard, and the proposal revises the statement from Guidance to Standard to make it consistent with Section 8A.03. The proposed Standard in Section 8E.02 also provides additional information about the elements that the Diagnostic Team needs to consider in developing its recommendations at sidewalk and pathway grade crossings. The changes in Section 8E.05 and Section 8E.07 are proposed to eliminate references to Figure 8E-2 and the 25-foot dimension, and to remove language that is no longer applicable based on the proposed changes in Section 8E.02.

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.

PART 8

TRAFFIC CONTROL FOR RAILROAD AND LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT GRADE CROSSINGS

CHAPTER 8E. PATHWAY AND SIDEWALK GRADE CROSSINGS

Section 8E.02 Use of Standard Devices, Systems, and Practices

Guidance:

01 *The pathway or sidewalk user's ability to detect the presence of approaching rail traffic should be considered in determining the type and placement of traffic control devices at pathway or sidewalk grade crossings.*

~~02~~ ~~*The traffic control devices, including the appropriate traffic control system to be used, and other physical treatments at a pathway or sidewalk grade crossing should be determined by a Diagnostic Team that includes the agency with jurisdiction over the pathway or sidewalk.*~~

Standard:

02a **Traffic control devices for pathway or sidewalk grade crossings shall be determined by the Diagnostic Team. The Diagnostic Team shall consider curvature, skew, line of sight, multiple tracks, and other characteristics of the grade crossing.**

Guidance:

03 *At skewed grade crossings, the adjustment, re-alignment, or relocation of existing sidewalk grade crossings should be considered when determining the placement of traffic control devices for roadway users.*

Support:

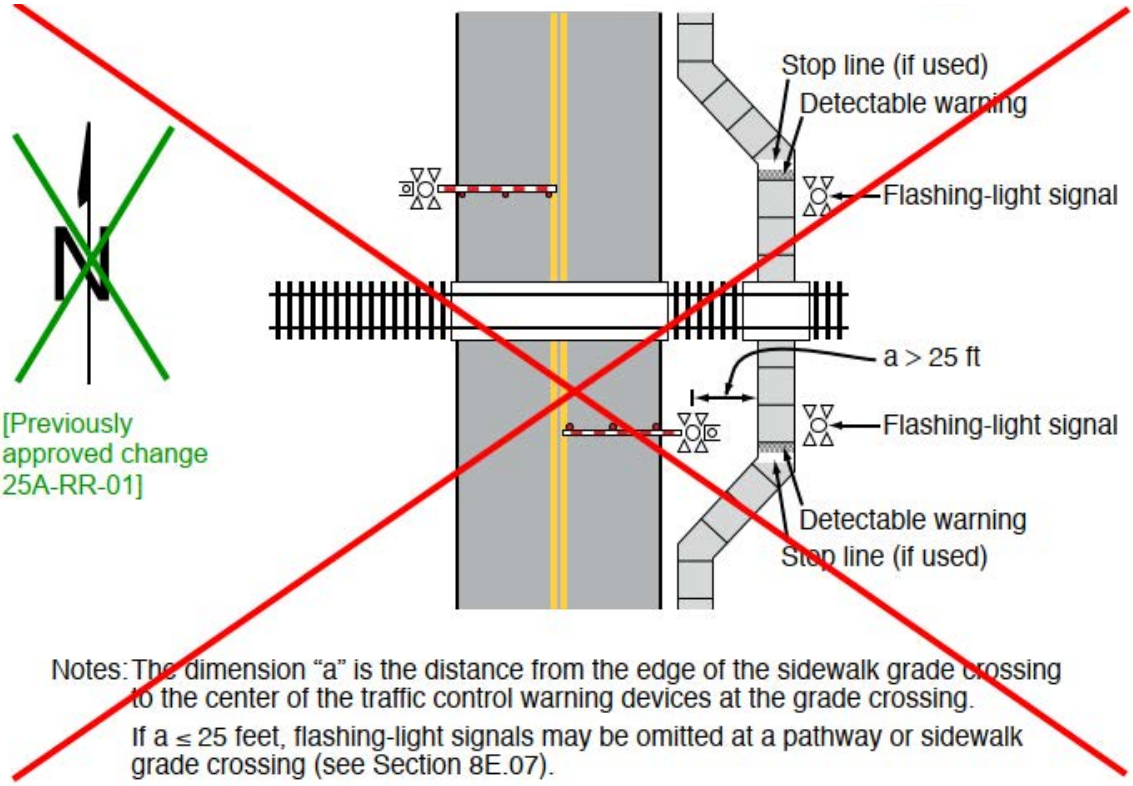
04 The safety of pathway and sidewalk users is enhanced when pathways and sidewalks are designed such that they do not cross the tracks at a narrow angle. The casters of wheelchairs and the wheels of bicycles could fall into and might be constrained in the flangeway gap at a skewed crossing. The flangeway gap is typically 2.5 inches wide at LRT grade crossings and 3 inches wide at railroad grade crossings.

05 It is desirable that pathways and sidewalks be designed such that they maintain a relatively consistent horizontal alignment and profile from the nearest rail to the detectable warning (if present) or from the nearest rail to the stop line (if present) on each approach to the crossing. Providing a pedestrian refuge area in advance of the stop line or the detectable warning surface so that pedestrians have a place to wait while rail traffic approaches and occupies the crossing can be beneficial to pedestrian safety.

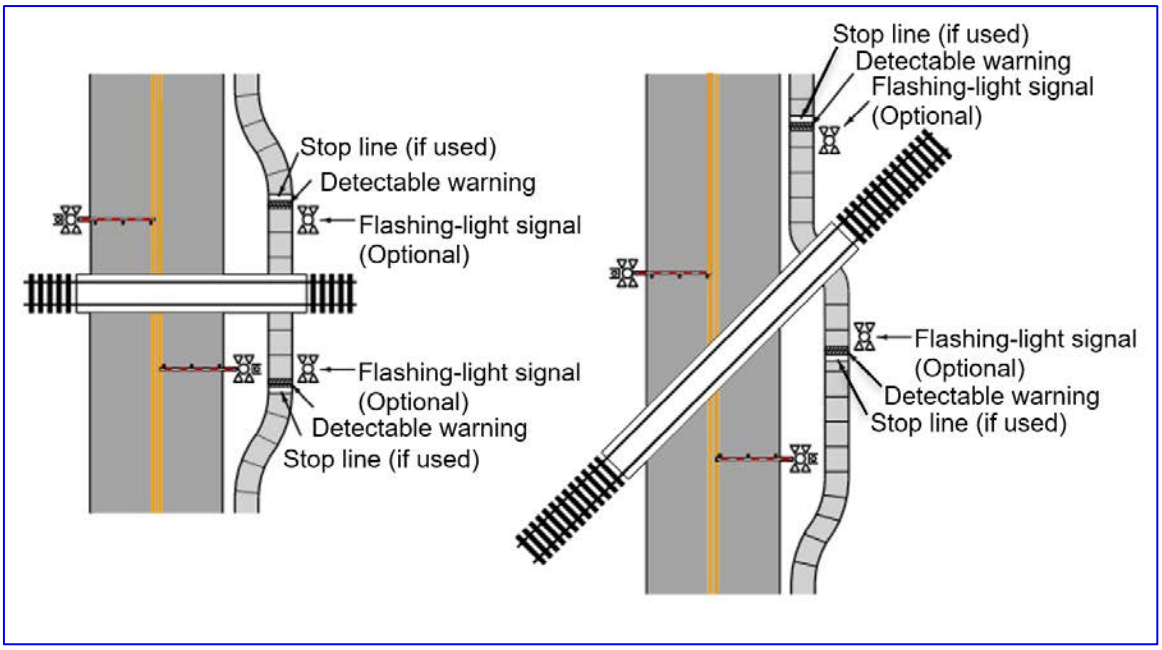
06 When designing new sidewalk grade crossings, placing the sidewalk outside of the area occupied by grade crossing traffic control devices for vehicular traffic is desirable (see Figure 8E-2). This includes making sure that the counterweights and support arms for the automatic gates for vehicular traffic do not obstruct the sidewalk when the gate is fully lowered.

07 Additional information regarding the design of pathways and sidewalks is contained in the U.S. Department of Justice 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, September 15, 2010, 28 CFR 35 and 36, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Figure 8E-2. Examples of an Active Traffic Control System for a Sidewalk or Pathway Grade Crossing



[Replace existing Figure 8E-2 (above) with a new Figure 8E-2 (below)]



Section 8E.05 Passive Traffic Control Devices – Crossbuck Assemblies

Standard:

01 Where the nearest edge of a passive pathway or sidewalk grade crossing is located more than 25 feet from the center of the nearest traffic control warning device at the grade crossing, a Crossbuck Assembly (see Figure 8E-5) shall be installed on each approach to the pathway or sidewalk grade crossing. The distance shall be measured perpendicular to the traveled way from the center of the support post of a Crossbuck Assembly at a passive grade crossing or from the center of the mast of an active traffic control warning device at an active grade crossing to the nearest edge of the pathway or sidewalk surface where it crosses the track(s) ~~(see Figure 8E-2)~~. [The figure reference is proposed to be deleted because Figure 8E-2 no longer shows the 25-foot dimension described in this paragraph.]

Option:

02 A Crossbuck Assembly may be installed on the approaches to a pathway or sidewalk grade crossing where the nearest edge of the pathway or sidewalk is located 25 feet or less from the center of the nearest traffic control warning device at a grade crossing.

03 The Crossbuck Assembly may be omitted at station crossings.

04 The retroreflective strip on the back of the support may be omitted on the Crossbuck support at a pathway or sidewalk grade crossing.

Standard:

05 The minimum height, measured vertically from the bottom of the YIELD or STOP sign to the elevation of the near edge of the pathway or sidewalk, of Crossbuck Assemblies installed on pathways or sidewalks shall be 4 feet where the lateral offset to the nearest edge of the sign is 2 feet or more and shall be 7 feet where the lateral offset to the nearest edge of the sign is less than 2 feet (see Figure 8E-5).

06 The minimum lateral offset, measured horizontally from the nearest edge of the pathway or sidewalk to the nearest edge of the Crossbuck Assembly signs, shall be 0 feet for sidewalks and 2 feet for pathways.

Section 8E.07 Active Traffic Control Systems

Standard:

01 Except as provided in Paragraph 5 of this Section, at pathway-LRT and sidewalk-LRT grade crossings where LRT operating speeds on a semi-exclusive alignment exceed 25 mph, active traffic control systems shall be used.

02 Except as provided in Paragraph 5 of this Section, at pathway-LRT and sidewalk LRT grade crossings where LRT operating speeds on a semi-exclusive alignment exceed 40 mph, active traffic control systems, including automatic gates, shall be used.

03 If used at a pathway or sidewalk grade crossing, an active traffic control system (see Section 8D.01) shall include flashing-light signals (see Figure 8E-7) on each approach to the crossing.

Guidance:

04 If used at a pathway or sidewalk grade crossing, an active traffic control system (see Section 8D.01) should include an audible device such as a bell that is operated in conjunction with the flashing-light signals.

Option:

~~05 Flashing-light signals, bells, and other audible warning devices may be omitted at pathway or sidewalk grade crossings that are located within 25 feet of an active warning device at a grade crossing that is equipped with those devices.~~ [This Option statement is no longer applicable based on the proposed Standard in Section 8E.02, which states that the Diagnostic Team shall make recommendations where active warning devices are needed for the sidewalk or pathway grade crossing.]

06 Additional pairs of flashing-light signals, bells, or other audible warning devices may be installed on the active traffic control devices at a grade crossing for pathway or sidewalk users approaching the grade crossing from the back side of those devices.

Guidance:

07 Where railroad or LRT tracks in a semi-exclusive alignment are parallel and immediately adjacent to a roadway and if adequate space exists, a pedestrian refuge area or island should be provided between the tracks and the roadway to permit pedestrians to stand clear of the tracks while waiting to cross the roadway and to stand clear of the roadway while waiting to cross the tracks. If a pedestrian refuge area or island is provided at a signalized crossing of the roadway, additional pedestrian features (see Chapter 4I), such as signal heads, signing, and detectors, should be installed in the refuge area or on the island.