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TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: Regulatory & Warning Signs
TOPIC: Part 2A – FHWA NPA 1/02/08
STATUS/DATE OF ACTION
TECH COMM DRAFTS: 02/01/08, 03/01/2008, 03/05/08,
03/06/08 , 03/25/08
TECH COMM APPROVAL: 6-18-08
Transmitted to Sponsors: N/A
COUNCIL APPROVAL: 1-12-08 and 6-21-08
ORIGIN OF REQUEST: RWSTC Task Force
MUTCD SECTIONS: Part 2A, Figures 2A-1, 2A-2, 2A-3
and Table 2A-4

SUMMARY: The FHWA published a Notice of Rulemaking in the Federal Register on January 2, 2008, covering the MUTCD Revisions for the 2009 Manual. The RWSTC has reviewed this proposed Part of the NPA providing the following comments on behalf of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Color Code: Previously Approved Council Revisions, January 12, 2008
Approved by Council June 21, 2008

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CHAPTER 2A. GENERAL

- 26 **Section 2A.01 Function and Purpose of Signs Approved by Council 1/12/08**
- 27 **Section 2A.02 Definitions No Change**
- 28 **Section 2A.03 Standardization of Application Approved by Council 1/12/08**
- 29 **Section 2A.04 Excessive Use of Signs Approved by Council 1/12/08 with Revisions**
- 30 **shown in blue highlight**

31 Guidance:

32 Regulatory and warning signs should be used conservatively because these signs, if used to
33 excess, tend to lose their effectiveness. ~~If used~~. Route signs and directional guide signs should be
34 used frequently because ~~they~~ their use promotes ~~reasonably safe and~~ efficient operations ~~and can~~
35 result in lower crash rates by keeping road users informed of their location.

36 Reason: The “If used” is superfluous wording, “guide” was added for clarification and the
37 “crash rate” is unnecessary wording as indicated for Section 1A.01.

38 Section 2A.05 Classification of Signs Approved by Council 1/12/08

39 Section 2A.06 Design of Signs Approved by Council 1/12/08

40

41 ~~Section 2A.07 Changeable Message Signs~~ the text from this Section has been
42 relocated to new Chapter 2M

43 Section ~~2A.08~~ 2A.07 Retroreflectivity and Illumination Approved by Council
44 1/12/08

45 Section ~~2A.09~~ 2A.08 Minimum Retroreflectivity Levels

46 Support:

47 (This section is reserved for future text based on FHWA rulemaking.)

48 Section ~~2A.10~~ 2A.09 Shapes No Change

49 Section ~~2A.11~~ 2A.10 Sign Colors Approved by Council 1/12/08 with Revisions
50 shown in blue highlight.

51 Standard:

52 The colors to be used on standard signs and their specific use on these signs shall be as
53 indicated in the applicable Sections of this Manual. The color coordinates and values shall
54 be as described in 23 CFR, Part 655, Subpart F, Appendix.

55 Support:

56 As a quick reference, common uses of sign colors are shown in Table 2A-4. Color schemes
57 on specific signs are shown in the illustrations located in each appropriate Section.

58 Whenever white is specified herein as a color, it is understood to include silver-colored
59 retroreflective coatings or elements that reflect white light.

60 The colors coral, ~~purple~~, and light blue are being reserved for uses that will be determined in
61 the future by the Federal Highway Administration.

62 Information regarding color coding of destinations on guide signs, including community
63 wayfinding signs, is contained in ~~Section 2D.03~~ Chapter 2D.

64 Option:

65 Where the color yellow is required, the fluorescent yellow color may also be used. Where the
66 color orange is required, the fluorescent orange color may also be used. Where the color red is
67 required, the fluorescent red color may also be used.

68 Approved corresponding fluorescent colors may be used as an alternative to required colors.

69 Reason: Editorial, rewording for simplification .

70

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72 Section ~~2A.12~~ 2A.11 Dimensions

73 Approved by Council 1-12-08 with Revisions shown in blue highlight. Additional
74 revisions approved by Council 6-21-08 shown in yellow highlight.

75 Support:

76 ~~Sign and object marker sizes for use on the different classes of highways are shown in~~
77 ~~Sections 2B.03, 2C.04, 2D.04, 2E.14, 2F.01, 2I.01, 2K.01, 2L.01, 5A.03, 6F.02, 7B.01, 8B.02,~~
78 ~~and 9B.02, and in the “Standard Highway Signs and Markings” book (see Section 1A.11).~~

79 **Reason: It is not necessary to cross reference these sizes in a separate Support**
80 **Statement that imposes no requirements and does not contain the size details that are**
81 **contained in the specific Sections and the Standard Highways Signs and Marking**
82 **publication.**

83 The “Standard Highway Signs [and Markings](#)” book (see Section 1A.11) prescribes design
84 details for up to five different sizes depending on the type of traffic facility, including bikeways.
85 Smaller sizes are designed to be used on bikeways and some other off-road applications. Larger
86 sizes are designed for use on freeways and expressways, and can also be used to enhance road
87 user safety and convenience on other facilities, especially on multi-lane divided highways and on
88 undivided highways having five or more lanes of traffic and/or high speeds. The intermediate
89 sizes are designed to be used on other highway types.

90 **Standard:**

91 **The sign dimensions prescribed in this Manual ([see the Table of Sign Sizes in each](#)**
92 **[applicable Chapter](#)) and in the “Standard Highway Signs [and Markings](#)” book (see Section**

93 **[Reason: Added editorially to replace Support Paragraph above.](#)**

94 1A.11) shall be used unless engineering judgment determines that other sizes are
95 appropriate. [Except as noted in the Option below](#), where engineering judgment determines
96 that sizes smaller than the prescribed dimensions are appropriate for use, the sign
97 dimensions shall not be less than the minimum dimensions specified in this Manual. [The](#)
98 [sizes shown in the Minimum columns that are smaller than the sizes shown in the](#)
99 [Conventional Road columns in the various sign size tables in this Manual shall only be used](#)
100 [on low-speed roadways, alleys, public facilities, and private property open to public travel](#)
101 [where the reduced legend size would be adequate for the regulation or warning **and/or**](#)
102 [where physical conditions preclude the use of larger sizes.](#)

103 **[Reason: The “and” is not needed as these are separate items.](#)**

104 **Option:**

105 [For alleys with restrictive physical conditions and vehicle usage that limits installation of the](#)
106 [Minimum size sign \(or the Conventional Road size sign if no Minimum size is shown\), both the](#)
107 [sign height and the sign width may be decreased by up to 150 mm \(6 in\).](#)

108 **Guidance:**

109 [The sizes shown in the Freeway and Expressway columns in the various sign size tables in](#)
110 [this Manual should be used on freeways and expressways and for other higher-speed applications](#)
111 [to provide larger signs for increased visibility and recognition.](#)

112 [The sizes shown in the Oversized columns in the various sign size tables in this Manual size](#)
113 [should be used for those special applications where speed, volume, or other factors result in](#)
114 [conditions where increased emphasis, improved recognition, or increased legibility is needed, as](#)
115 [determined by engineering judgment or study.](#)

116 Increases above the prescribed sizes should be used where greater legibility or emphasis is
117 needed. ~~Wherever practical~~ [If signs larger than the prescribed sizes are used](#), the overall sign
118 dimensions should be increased in 150 mm (6 in) increments.

119 **Standard:**

120 **Where engineering judgment determines that sizes ~~larger~~ that are different than the**
121 **prescribed dimensions are appropriate for use, standard shapes and colors shall be used**
122 **and standard proportions shall be retained as much as practical.**

123 Guidance:
124 When supplemental plaques are installed with larger sized signs, a corresponding increase in
125 the size of the plaque and its legend should also be made. The resulting plaque size should be
126 approximately in the same relative proportion to the larger sized sign as the conventional sized
127 plaque is to the conventional sized sign.

128 **Section ~~2A.13~~ 2A.12 Symbols Approved by Council 1/12/08 with Revisions shown in**
129 **blue highlight**

130 Support:

131 Sometimes a change from word messages to symbols requires significant time for public
132 education and transition. Therefore, this Manual includes the practice of using educational
133 plaques to accompany some new symbol signs.

134 **Standard:**

135 **Symbol designs shall in all cases be unmistakably similar to those shown in this Manual**
136 **and in the “Standard Highway Signs and Markings” book (see Section 1A.11). New symbol**
137 **designs shall be adopted by the Federal Highway Administration based on research**
138 **evaluations to determine road user comprehension, sign conspicuity, and sign legibility.**

139 Guidance:

140 New warning or regulatory symbol signs not readily recognizable by the public should be
141 accompanied by an educational plaque.

142 Option:

143 State and/or local highway agencies may conduct research studies to determine road user
144 comprehension, sign conspicuity, and sign legibility.

145 Educational plaques may be left in place as long as they are in serviceable condition.

146 Although most standard symbols are oriented facing left, mirror images of these symbols may
147 be used where the reverse orientation might better convey to road users a direction of movement.

148 **Standard:**

149 **A symbol used for a given category of signs (regulatory, warning, or guide) shall not be**
150 **used for a different category of signs, except as specifically authorized in this Manual.**

151 **A recreational and cultural interest area prohibitory sign symbol (see Chapter 2J) shall**
152 **not be used on streets or highways outside of recreational and cultural interest areas, ~~except~~**
153 **as noted in the Option below.**

154 **Except as otherwise noted in the Option below, a A recreational and cultural interest**
155 **area-guide sign symbol (see Chapter 2J) shall not be used on any regulatory or warning**
156 **sign.**

157 Option:

158 A recreational and cultural interest area ~~guide sign~~-symbol may be used on a highway guide
159 sign outside of a recreational and cultural interest area to supplement a comparable word message
160 only if there is no approved symbol for that message in Chapters 2B through 2F or 2I.

161 **Reason: Editorial changes.**

162 **Section ~~2A.14~~ 2A.13 Word Messages Approved by Council 1/12/08 with Revisions**
163 **shown in blue highlight**

164 **Standard:**

165 **Except as noted in Section 2A.06, all word messages shall use standard wording and**
166 **letters as shown in this Manual and in the “Standard Highway Signs and Markings” book**
167 **(see Section 1A.11).**

168 Guidance:
169 Word messages should be as brief as possible and the lettering should be large enough to
170 provide the necessary legibility distance. A minimum specific ratio, ~~such as~~ of 25 mm (1 in) of
171 letter height per ~~12~~ 9 m (~~40~~ 30 ft) of legibility distance, ~~should be used.~~

172 ~~Support:~~

173 ~~Some research indicates that a ratio of 25 mm (1 in) of letter height per 10 m (33 ft) of~~
174 ~~legibility distance could be beneficial.~~

175 ~~Guidance:~~

176 Abbreviations (see Section 1A.15) should be kept to a minimum, and should include only
177 those that are commonly recognized and understood, such as AVE (for Avenue), BLVD (for
178 Boulevard), N (for North), or JCT (for Junction).

179 Except as otherwise provided in Table 1A-1, word messages should not contain punctuation,
180 apostrophes, question marks, ampersands, or other characters that are not letters or numerals
181 unless **absolutely** necessary to avoid confusion.

182 **Reason: Editorial, “absolutely” is an all exclusive and superfluous requirement.**

183 **Standard:**

184 All sign lettering shall be in **capital upper-case** letters as provided in the “Standard
185 Highway Signs **and Markings**” book (see Section 1A.11), ~~except as indicated in the Option~~
186 ~~below unless specifically stated otherwise for a particular sign or type of message.~~

187 ~~Option:~~

188 ~~Word messages on street name signs and destinations~~ The lettering for names of places,
189 streets, and highways on guide signs ~~may~~ **shall** be composed of a combination of lower-case
190 letters with initial upper-case letters. The initial upper-case letters shall be approximately
191 1.33 times the “loop” height of the lower-case letters.

192 **Section ~~2A.15~~ 2A.14 Sign Borders Approved by Council 1/12/08**

193 Section 2A.15 Enhanced Conspicuity for Standard Signs

194 Approved by Council 1/12/08 with Revisions shown in **blue highlight**, Additional
195 Revisions in **Yellow highlight** approved by Council 6-21-08

196 Option:

197 Based upon engineering judgment, where the improvement of the conspicuity of a standard
198 regulatory, warning, or guide sign is desired, any of the following methods may be used, as
199 appropriate, to enhance the sign’s conspicuity (see Figure 2A-1):

- 200 A. Increasing the size of a standard regulatory, warning, or guide sign.
201 B. Doubling-up of a standard regulatory, warning, or guide sign by adding a second
202 identical sign on the left-hand side of the roadway.
203 C. Adding a solid yellow or fluorescent yellow rectangular “header panel” above a standard
204 regulatory sign, with the width of the panel corresponding to the width of the standard
205 regulatory sign. ~~A legend of “NOTICE,” “STATE LAW,” or other appropriate text may~~
206 ~~be added in black letters within the header panel.~~

208 **REASON:** The words NOTICE and STATE LAW are unnecessary , add nothing to the
209 sign legend, and do not appear to increase road user compliance. With a
210 Blank Yellow panel, jurisdictions may add their own wording but it is not
211 necessary to suggest wording.

- 212 D. Adding a NEW plaque (see Section 2C.67) above a new standard regulatory or warning
213 sign, for a period of time determined by engineering judgment, to call attention to the
214 new sign.
215 E. Adding one or more red or orange flags (cloth or retroreflective sheeting) above a
216 standard regulatory or warning sign, with the flags oriented so as to be at 45 degrees to
217 the vertical.

218 **REASON: Orange flags added because they are used by a number States.**

- 219 F. Adding a solid red or fluorescent red strip of retroreflective sheeting at least 75 mm (3 in)
220 wide around the perimeter of a standard regulatory sign. This may be accomplished by
221 affixing the standard regulatory sign on a red retroreflective background panel having a
222 width and height that is 150 mm (6 in) larger than the size of the standard regulatory sign.
223 G. Adding a solid yellow, a solid fluorescent yellow, or a diagonally striped black and
224 yellow (or black and fluorescent yellow) strip of retroreflective sheeting at least 75 mm
225 (3 in) wide around the perimeter of a standard warning sign. This may be accomplished
226 by affixing the standard warning sign on a background panel that is 150 mm (6 in) larger
227 than the size of the standard warning sign.
228 H. Adding a warning beacon (see Section 4L.03) to a standard regulatory (other than a
229 STOP or a Speed Limit sign), warning, or guide sign.
230 I. Adding a speed limit sign beacon (see Section 4L.04) to a standard Speed Limit sign.
231 J. Adding a stop beacon (see Section 4L.05) to a STOP sign.
232 K. Adding light emitting diode (LED) units within the symbol or legend of a sign or border
233 of a standard regulatory, warning, or guide sign, as described in Section 2A.07.
234 L. Using other methods that are specifically allowed for certain signs as described elsewhere
235 in this Manual.

236 **ACTION BY COUNCIL: RETAIN ITEMS A, B, C, and E and DEPICTIONS A and B**
237 **in the associated Figure. Eliminate other items.**

238 Standard:

239 Strobe lights shall not be used to enhance the conspicuity of highway signs.

240 **Section 2A.16 Standardization of Location Approved by Council 1/12/08**

241 **Section 2A.17 Overhead Sign Installations Approved by Council 1/12/08**

242

243 **Section 2A.18 Mounting Height paragraphs have been rearranged within this**
244 **Section to improve clarity**

245 **Approved by Council 6-21-08 with revisions shown in yellow highlight.**

246 **Support Standard:**

247 **The provisions of this Section shall apply unless specifically stated otherwise for a**
248 **particular sign or object marker elsewhere in this Manual.**

249 Support:

250 The mounting height requirements for object markers are provided in Chapter 2L.

251

252 In addition to the provisions of this Section, information affecting the minimum mounting
253 height of signs as a function of crash performance can be found in AASHTO's "Roadside Design
254 Guide" (see Section 1A.11).

255 **Reason: Delete, It is redundant and not necessary because it is covered by Section 1A.11**

256 **Standard:**

257 The minimum height, measured vertically from the bottom of the sign to the elevation of
258 the near edge of the **pavement traveled way**, of signs installed at the side of the road in rural
259 **districts** areas shall be **at least 1.5 m (5 ft)**, **measured from the bottom of the sign to the near**
260 **edge of the pavement** (see Figure 2A-2).

261 The minimum height, measured vertically from the bottom of the sign to the top of the
262 curb, or in the absence of curb, measured vertically from the bottom of the sign to the
263 elevation of the near edge of the traveled way, of signs installed at the side of the road in
264 business, commercial, or residential areas where parking or pedestrian movements are
265 likely to occur, or where the view of the sign might be obstructed, **the clearance to the**
266 **bottom of the sign** shall be **at least 2.1 m (7 ft)** (see Figure 2A-2).

267 **Reason: The wording has been changed from pavement to traveled way consistent with**
268 **the original recommendations of the NCUTCD. Traveled way accomodates those roadways**
269 **that have either a paved or gravel surface.**

270 The minimum height, measured vertically from the bottom of the sign to the sidewalk,
271 of signs installed above sidewalks shall be 2.1 m (7 ft).

272 Option:

273 The height to the bottom of a secondary sign mounted below another sign may be 0.3 m (1 ft)
274 less than the height specified above.

275 Guidance:

276 If the bottom of a secondary sign that is mounted below another sign is mounted lower than
277 2.1 m (7 ft) above a pedestrian sidewalk or pathway (see Section 6D.02), the secondary sign
278 should not project more than 100 mm (4 in) into the pedestrian facility.

279 Option:

280 ~~Where~~ Signs that are placed 9 m (30 ft) or more from the edge of the traveled way, ~~the may~~
281 be installed with a minimum height ~~to the bottom of such signs may be of~~ 1.5 m (5 ft), ~~above the~~
282 ~~level~~ measured vertically from the bottom of the sign to the elevation of the near edge of the
283 pavement traveled way edge.

284 Standard:

285 Directional signs on freeways and expressways shall be installed with a minimum height
286 of 2.1 m (7 ft), measured vertically from the bottom of the sign to the elevation of the near
287 edge of the pavement traveled way. All route signs, warning signs, and regulatory signs on
288 freeways and expressways shall be ~~at least~~ installed with a minimum height of 2.1 m (7 ft),
289 measured vertically from the bottom of the sign to above the level elevation of the near edge
290 of the pavement-traveled way edge. If a secondary sign is mounted below another sign on a
291 freeway or expressway, the major sign shall be installed ~~at least~~ with a minimum height of
292 2.4 m (8 ft) and the secondary sign ~~at least~~ shall be installed with a minimum height of 1.5 m
293 (5 ft), measured vertically from the bottom of the sign to above the level elevation of the
294 near edge of the pavement- traveled way edge. **sentences were rearranged**

295 **Reason: Near edge of pavement revised to “traveled way” for consistency in Section and**
296 **reasons cited above**

297 Where large signs having an area exceeding 5 square meters (50 square feet) are
298 installed on multiple breakaway posts, the clearance from the ground to the bottom of the
299 sign shall be at least 2.1 m (7 ft). **repeated from Section 6F.03**

300 Option:

301 A route sign assembly consisting of a route sign and auxiliary signs (see Section **2D.27**
302 **2D.30**) may be treated as a single sign for the purposes of this Section.

303 **Editorial: NPA needs to show 2D.27 deletion and new Section Blue underline.**

304 The mounting height may be adjusted when supports are located near the edge of the right-of-
305 way on a steep backslope, **providing a better alternative than locating the sign closer to the**
306 **roadway.**

307 **Support:**

308 **Without this flexibility regarding steep backslopes, some agencies might decide to relocate**
309 **the sign closer to the road, which might be less desirable.**

310 **REASON:** Option and Support Statement combined for clarity

311 **Standard:**

312 Overhead ~~mounted~~ **edited to increase consistency** signs shall provide a vertical
313 clearance of not less than 5.2 m (17 ft) to the sign, light fixture, or sign bridge, over the
314 entire width of the pavement and shoulders except where the structure on which the
315 overhead signs are to be mounted or other structures along the roadway near the sign
316 structure have a lesser vertical clearance ~~is used for the design of other structures.~~

317 **Option:**

318 If the vertical clearance of other structures along the roadway near the sign structure is less
319 than 4.9 m (16 ft), the vertical clearance to an overhead sign structures or supports may be as low
320 as 0.3 m (1 ft) higher than the vertical clearance of the other structures in order to improve the
321 visibility of the overhead signs.

322 In special cases it may be necessary to reduce the clearance to overhead signs because of
323 substandard dimensions in tunnels and other major structures such as double-deck bridges.

324 **Support:**

325 Figure 2A-2 illustrates some examples of the mounting height requirements contained in this
326 Section.

327 **Section 2A.19 Lateral Offset**

328 **Approved by Council 6-21-08 with revisions shown in yellow highlight.**

329 **Standard:**

330 For overhead sign supports, the minimum lateral offset from the edge of the shoulder
331 (or if no shoulder exists, from the edge of the pavement) to the near edge of overhead sign
332 supports (cantilever or sign bridges) shall be 1.8 m (6 ft). Overhead sign supports shall
333 have a barrier or crash cushion to shield them if they are within the clear zone.

334 ~~Ground- Post-mounted~~ **edited to increase consistency** sign **and object marker** supports
335 shall be crashworthy (breakaway, yielding, or shielded with a longitudinal barrier or crash
336 cushion) if within the clear zone.

337 **Guidance:**

338 For ~~ground- post-mounted~~ **edited to increase consistency** signs, the minimum lateral offset
339 should be 3.7 m (12 ft) from the edge of the traveled way. If a shoulder wider than 1.8 m (6 ft)
340 exists, the minimum lateral offset for ~~ground- post-mounted~~ **edited to increase consistency** signs
341 should be 1.8 m (6 ft) from the edge of the shoulder.

342 **Support:**

343 The minimum lateral offset requirements for object markers are provided in Chapter 2L.

344 The minimum lateral offset is intended to keep trucks and cars that use the shoulders from
345 striking the signs or supports.

346 **Guidance:**

347 All supports should be located as far as practical from the edge of the shoulder. Advantage
348 should be taken to place signs behind existing roadside barriers, on over-crossing structures, or
349 other locations that minimize the exposure of the traffic to sign supports.

350 Option:

351 Where permitted, signs may be placed on existing supports used for other purposes, such as
352 highway traffic signal supports, highway lighting supports, and utility poles.

353 **Standard:**

354 **If signs are placed on existing supports, they shall meet other placement criteria**
355 **contained in this Manual.**

356 Option:

357 Lesser lateral offsets may be used on connecting roadways or ramps at interchanges, but not
358 less than 1.8 m (6 ft) from the edge of the traveled way.

359 On conventional roads in areas where ~~lateral offsets are limited~~ it is impractical to locate a
360 sign with the lateral offset prescribed by this Section, a ~~minimum~~ lateral offset of no less than 0.6
361 m (2 ft) may be used. edited to increase clarity

362 A minimum offset of 0.3 m (1 ft) from the face of the curb may be used in urban
363 business, commercial or residential areas where sidewalk width is limited or where existing
364 poles are close to the curb.

365 **REASON:** **Previous NCUTCD recommendation to clarify specific areas since urban**
366 **areas are widely diverse.**

367 Guidance:

368 Overhead sign supports and post-mounted sign and object marker supports should not intrude
369 into the usable width of a sidewalk or other pedestrian facility.

370 **Support:**

371 Figures 2A-2 and 2A-3 illustrate some examples of the lateral offset requirements contained
372 in this Section.

373 **Section 2A.20 Orientation** No Change

374 **Section 2A.21 Posts and Mountings** No Change

375 **Section 2A.22 Maintenance** Approved by Council 1/12/08

376 **Section 2A.23 Median Opening Treatments for Divided Highways with Wide**
377 **Medians** No Change

378 .

379

380 **FIGURES AND TABLES APPROVED BY COUNCIL, 21 JUN 2008**

381 **Figure 2A-2:** **Revise Note bottom of page replacing “urban” with “residential,**
382 **commercial or business”. This is consistent with our previous wording**
383 **Section 2A.19.**

384

385 **Figure 2A-3:** **The dimension, “1.8 m (6 ft) to” in Typical A, B, C, E,**
386 **and F should be deleted to reflect previous Council**
387 **approval.**

388 **Reason:** **This variation in lateral placement is explained in the**
389 **Note on the Figure.**

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Table 2A-1 : No Change

Table 2A-2 : No Change

Table 2A-3 : Okay with NPA Revisions

Table 2A-4: Okay with the NPA Revisions except the "X" should be deleted from the Warning – Pedestrian/Bicycle rows under the Yellow column.

Reason: Section 2C.52 indicates that Pedestrian and Bicycle signs shall be FYG.

C: NCUTCD: RWSTC Revisions – Part 2A Text 7-8-08