Agenda Item III.7, June 2014

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE; Regulatory & Warning Signs

DATE OF ACTION; January 9, 2014

TASK FORCE; Randy McCourt & Jim Pline

TECH COM APPROVAL DATE: 1/09/14

TECH COM APPROVAL DATE FOLLOWING EDITS: 3-21-14

TRANSMITTAL TO SPONSORS: April 2014

RWSTC APPROVAL FOLLOWING SPONSOR COMMENTS: 6-25-14

COUNCIL APPROVAL DATE: June 26, 2014

TOPIC: Excessive Use of Signs

AFFECTED PORTIONS OF MUTCD: Section 2A.04 (Relocated to 2A.20)

SUMMARY:
In December 2013 we received FHWA edits to Chapter 2A along with other chapters. This proposal from FHWA reorganized Chapter 2A in order to enhance the usability of the Manual both printed and electronic editions. Continued development of the web and application based programs necessitates organizing the document in a manner that can more easily be viewed and searches by various electronic devices per FHWA.

Also, FHWA has included all the previously approved NCUTCD Council approved items verbatim and has indicated the date and RW item # approved by Council.

FHWA’s intention is to issue an NPA in November 2014, requested NCUTC input by July 2014.

RESEARCH: None

DISCUSSION:
The RWSTC approved Section 2A.20 as submitted by the FHWA recognizing that it has been expanded as noted in red text to address vanity signs. It is considered necessary to send this expanded text to the Sponsors for their comments prior to the final consideration and approval in
June 2014. Based on the Sponsors comments, it is recommended that all reference to “Vanity” signs be deleted.

Existing 2009 MUTCD text: Black

Proposed FHWA Text: Blue

FHWA Explanatory Notes: White Highlighted Green

RECOMMENDED MUTCD PROVISIONS/REVISIONS:

It is recommended that the following revised MUTCD text be approved.

Section 2A.04 2A.03 2A.20 Excessive Use of Signs

When used, Regulatory and warning signs should be used conservatively because these signs, if used to excess, tend to lose their effectiveness. If used, Route signs and directional guide signs should be used frequently at strategic locations because their use promotes efficient operations by keeping road users informed of their location. In all cases, sign clutter (see Paragraph 2 of this Section) should be avoided and minimized as much as practicable.

Support:

Sign clutter is the proliferation of sign installations or assemblies along the roadway or roadside, either separately or grouped, to such an extent that adequate spacing between installations necessary for orderly processing of the sign messages cannot be achieved without unduly distracting the attention of the road user away from the driving task. Sign clutter can reduce the effectiveness of one or more signs in a sequence of signs.

Vanity signs display information that is of little value or interest to the majority or significant number of road users. Vanity signs often take the form of General Information signs, but provide no navigational guidance or orientation to the road user. Vanity signs are usually of importance only to the entity requesting the sign. Vanity signs can result in sign clutter and undermine the basic role of official traffic control devices in providing only as much information to the road user as necessary to promote the safe and efficient operation of streets and highways.

Section 1D.09 contains additional information regarding the placement of traffic control devices and unnecessary traffic control devices:

Guidance:

Signs and other traffic control devices should be installed and maintained from a systematic standpoint rather than individually. When a new sign is installed, the existing signs in the vicinity should be considered for replacement, relocation, or removal as a result of the new sign that is installed. Existing systems of signs should be reviewed periodically for evidence of sign clutter and adjustments should be made accordingly.

Vanity signs, if installed due to mandate or other directive, should be located as far as possible from other traffic control devices, decision points, and other locations requiring heightened attention of the
road user and in as inconspicuous a location as practicable, such as farther from the roadside and away
from highway medians, gore areas, auxiliary lanes, or similar features.

TECH COMMITTEE VOTE 3-21-14: For: 19 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1

TECH COMMITTEE VOTE 6-25-14 FOLLOWING SPONSOR COMMENTS:

For: 25 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

COUNCIL VOTE: June 26, 2014 For: Unanimous Against Abstentions

C:NCUTCD/June 2014 /RW #7 Section 2A.04 (new 2A.20) Excessive use of signs 3-21-14
Updated 5/27/14, approved by RWSTC 6-25-14 following sponsor comments, approved by
COUNCIL 6-26-14