



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Chair's Message

MESSAGE #1
FEBRUARY 7, 2018

As is the tradition here at Texas A&M, I want to share a heartfelt Howdy to all NCUTCD members and others interested in traffic control devices. As the newly-elected chair of the NCUTCD, this is what I hope is the first of many messages I will share with our members and friends. I intend to send out messages as it is appropriate rather than to have a specific schedule. Feel free to share all or part of this message with others as you see fit. In this message, I address what I consider to be a few of the events, accomplishments, and actions during the past month.

Notable Events and Accomplishments

It has been about a month since I was elected chair. I am humbled by the support of the NCUTCD Council and hope to live up to the confidence expressed by the support. During the past month, I have spent a great deal of time on the phone and sharing emails on many issues related to the NCUTCD. Specific items that have occurred since the January meeting include:

- **Welcome Messages:** I sent separate short emails to the NCUTCD membership and the NCUTCD Council. These messages encouraged individuals to contact me with their thoughts and they included my "10 Thoughts for the Future" that I developed prior to the election and shared with Council late last fall. I received many replies to those messages and some of them contained specific suggestions, which I have taken note of.
- **Chair/VC Appointments:** At the January 3 Executive Board meeting, the Board postponed approval of technical committee chairs and vice-chairs appointments/reappointments so that the newly elected chair would have the ability to appoint the individuals of his choice. The Board recently voted to approve my appointments. All current chairs and vice-chairs have been reappointed in addition to the following new appointments: Tom Heydel as chair of RW (replacing Bill Lambert, who is now VC-Programs), John Dining as vice-chair of Railroads (replacing Tim Huya, who has resigned from the NCUTCD), and Bill Fox as vice-chair of Bicycles (who fills a previously vacant position).
- **FHWA Relations:** I have had several conversations with Kevin Sylvester, FHWA MUTCD team leader. I hope to continue to have regular discussions with FHWA in the future.
- **Former Chairs:** I have created a Former Chairs Advisory Group, consisting of the three former NCUTCD chairs (Lee Billingsley, Ken Kobetsky, and Dick Luettich). I will reach out to this group for advice on an as-needed basis and have done so on several occasions already.

- **Former Leaders:** I have established a Former Leadership Advisory Group, which consists of about a dozen individuals who are former chairs of technical committee and/or former NCUTCD officers. This group has extensive experience that continues to be of value to the NCUTCD and I want to take advantage of their insights when it is appropriate to do so, either as a group or from selected individuals.
- **Automated Vehicle RFI:** On January 18, the FHWA published a Request for Information (RFI) on issues related the infrastructure aspects of automated vehicle technologies. The deadline for submitting a response to the docket is March 5, 2018 (https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FHWA_FRDOC_0001-1539). Paul Carlson, who chairs the NCUTCD Automated Vehicle Task Force, is working with his TF to develop a draft docket response for the NCUTCD. This draft will be submitted to sponsors and Council concurrently for review and comment with a short deadline for a response. Council will then vote by email on the draft docket comment. If approved, we will submit to the docket. If not approved, we will continue to refine the document until it can be approved by Council. Then we will submit even if it is after the deadline. This process restricts our ability to generate the best possible input due to the lack of face-to-face dialogue. However, it is the best we can do under the circumstances. As it is an RFI and does not represent a proposed change to the MUTCD, I am willing to live with the weaknesses of this process.
- **RRFB:** ITE has taken an active role in engaging with FHWA on the termination of the RRFB Interim Approval. Following up on their letter to FHWA asking for additional flexibility for RRFB projects in the pipeline, they are starting up an RRFB Alternatives work group. Jeff Paniati, ITE Executive Director has requested NCUTCD participation in this effort and I have provided NCUTCD contacts for that group.
- **Internal Improvements:** I have identified some organizational/process tweaks in several areas including email communication and bylaws. We will be working to improve these areas in the future, along with other issues as they are identified.
- **Ray Pusey:** Ray Pusey, an NCUTCD Honorary Member, passed away on January 24. He was 82 years old. Ray was the Delaware DOT Chief Traffic Engineer from the 1960s into the mid-1990s. He made huge contributions to the transportation industry both in Delaware and across the country. Among his many accomplishments are his national leadership in the promotion of traffic signal arrow displays and flashing signal displays. Ray is noted on the DeIDOT web site as a pioneer in our industry. At the national level, Ray was a leader in the traffic engineering arena within AASHTO as well as the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. He was also a principal member and advocate of the National Committee on Uniform Laws & Ordinances. Beyond the personal loss experienced by his family, Ray's passing is a profound loss to the profession and the NCUTCD.
- **NCUTCD Impact:** There were 293 individuals attending the January 2018 meeting, setting a new record. During this meeting, I conservatively estimate that NCUTCD volunteers contributed approximately 5,000 man-hours of effort toward the improvement of the MUTCD (280 members × 20 hours of

meetings/member), and this estimate should probably be higher. Assuming an hourly rate of \$100 (which is significantly undervalued), this represents a half-million dollars of what is essentially free consulting work on the MUTCD.

Actions at Last Meeting

During our January 2018 meeting, the following proposals were approved by Council (some with changes since review by sponsoring organizations) and will be sent to FHWA in the near future:

- 16A-GMI-01, National Toll Interoperability Symbol
- 17B-GMI-01, Word Message Logo Sign Panels
- 17B-TTC-02, Clarification on the use of Temporary Portable Rumble Strips in a Temporary Traffic Control zone, Section 6F.87, Rumble Strips
- 16B-TTC-04, Providing for Optional use of the End Road Work (G20-2) Sign in Figures 6H-23, 6H-24, 6H-25, and 6H-27
- 16B-TTC-06, Providing for optional use of the YIELD Sign (R1-2) in Figures 6H-40 and 6H-44

These recommended changes to the MUTCD will be posted on our website after they are sent to FHWA.

Expected Action for Next Meeting

The leaders of the various technical committees are preparing their recommended changes to the MUTCD for distribution to our sponsoring organizations for review and comment. Those recommendations should be distributed to sponsors in late February. We have advanced the distribution schedule to provide technical committees with more time to address sponsor comments. After those items go to sponsors, I plan to send out another Chair's Message with a listing of those items.

Meeting Reminder

The next NCUTCD meeting will be June 20-22, 2018 in Denver, CO. Details will be announced later this spring. This meeting will be in the second half of the same week as the AASHTO Committee on Traffic Engineering (formerly SCOTE), which is at the same hotel as the NCUTCD meeting, and the week before the Joint Western-Texas District ITE meeting, which is in Keystone, CO. At present, I am planning to attend all three meetings and hope to see you there.

Input Welcome

I am already working on the content of the next Chair's Message. I welcome your feedback on the value of the Chair's Message and on possible content for future messages.