Oregon Traffic Control Devices Committee

January 15, 2010

Meeting Minutes

ODOT Materials Lab
Salem, Oregon

Members Present: Ed Chastain, Chair, Lane County; Massoud Saberian, Vice-Chair, City of Lake Oswego; Ed Fischer, Secretary, ODOT State Traffic Engineer; Brian Barnett, City of Springfield; Ethan Wilson, OSP; Joel McCarroll, ODOT Region 4; Joseph Marek, Clackamas County; Charles Radosta, ITE, Kittelson and Associates; Cynthia Schmitt, Marion County

Members Absent: Robin Lewis, City of Bend

Others Present: Nick Fortey, FHWA; Doug Bish, Debby Corey, Jamie Gibbs, Kevin Haas, Katie Johnson, Sheila Lyons, Gary Obery, Amanda Westmoreland, ODOT Traffic-Roadway Section; Craig Black, ODOT Region 2 Traffic; Diane Cheyne, Dave Lanning, ODOT Rail Division; Oregon Travel Info Council; Ian Amweg, Cecelia Hagle, Washington County; Rob Burchfield, City of Portland; Terry Hockett, City of Salem; Anna Sieber, South Salem High School

Introduction – Approval of Minutes – Additional Agenda Items

New Chairperson Ed Chastain called the meeting to order and all attendees introduced themselves. Cindy Schmitt then moved to accept the minutes from the December meeting. Joe Marek seconded and the committee voted unanimously in favor. Three possible non-agenda items for later discussion were identified.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

OLD BUSINESS

Bicycle Signals

Gary Obery introduced the final draft of the Bicycle Signals entry for ODOT's Traffic Signal Policy and Guidelines. The changes generally reflect changes approved at the December meeting, plus some minor grammatical changes.

Decision: Ed Fischer moved that the final draft document be approved with the changes noted above. Joe Marek seconded and the committee voted unanimously in favor.

NCUTCD Meeting Report

Ed Fischer reported back on his trip out of state for the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices meeting earlier this month. The NCUTCD is an official advisory committee to the Federal Highway Administration. The meeting was held in Arlington, Virginia on January 6 and 7. Ed introduced the concept of adding Bicycle Signals to the MUTCD to the Signals Technical Committee while there. Varying bike signals seen on the European tour, NACTO support of bike signals and the fact that large U.S. cities are starting to install bicycle signals helped to sway the committee. They agreed that it was probably time to start getting standards established for bike signals. They formed a joint task force with the Bicycle Technical Committee that is working from a modified draft of ODOT's document.

Ed said he'd also taken a research proposal to Virginia with him based on work Chris Monsere and Miguel Figliozzi at Portland State put together for ODOT, a request to do a best practices synthesis for bike signals in the U.S. and internationally to use as a starting point for some of the specific aspects of using bike signals. The Signal Technical Committee liked the idea, but the Bicycle Technical Committee did not. They didn't endorse it because of past experience that innovations aren't put into the manual until a lot of research is done first. They would rather focus on human factors and other research, the completion of which would speed full council acceptance of standards for bike traffic signals. Ed still thinks that for traffic engineering practitioners, it would be good to have something in hand that would help make decisions on when/where/how to do bicycle signals, so he's still in favor of the synthesis research. Ed submitted a re-written proposal to TRB in response to their annual solicitation of projects. He may also rewrite it with more specificity and submit it to AASHTO's Traffic Engineering Subcommittee in June. He will talk to Bill Schultheiss and Richard Moeur on the Bicycle Technical Committee to see what specific research ideas might be good to support through AASHTO as well.

Red Light Running (RLR) Camera Guidelines

Doug Bish, in presenting the latest draft for the 2009 Red Light Running Camera Guidelines, recalled committee review of earlier drafts and went through corrections as requested.

The first item was the specification of the Highway Safety Manual for quantification of the expected crash reduction of different measures, including installation of red-light cameras. This was satisfactory to the committee.

There was considerable discussion regarding guidance on how to improve intersection safety prior to the decision to use red light cameras at a given intersection. The committee discussed wording of the six considerations and the authorities which should be cited regarding proper yellow-red clearance intervals.

The committee agreed that "ODOT policy" should be replaced with "ODOT's Traffic Signal Policy and Guidelines". Also, ongoing controversy over red-light camera enforcement and yellow light length brought on discussion about the pros and cons of consistency statewide and the value of local jurisdictions retaining their own authority to determine best practices. Just mentioning the 6th Edition of the ITE Handbook as guidance was a concern as a result. The committee ultimately agreed that something consistent with the support statement in the 2009

MUTCD, Section 4D.26 (*Engineering practices for determining the duration of yellow change and red clearance intervals can be found in ITE's "Traffic Control Devices Handbook" and in ITE's "Manual of Traffic Signal Design" (see Section 1A.11)*) would be more appropriate.

Getting judges and the general public to understand the need for variations in signal timing can be a challenge when it comes to any variation in yellow change and red clearance intervals. Disgruntled ticketed drivers sometimes find sympathetic judges who think ODOT's signal timing policy is the gold standard that all others should adhere to. Differences between jurisdictions on signal timing policy such as including an all-red phase complicates the issue of setting standards for minimum yellow-red clearance interval timing. The committee agreed that it is generally a good idea to have consistency statewide but that as a practical matter this is difficult to do.

The word "assuring" in the last two considerations was seen as being a little tougher to document compliance. The committee therefore agreed to different wording that indicates consideration should be given to these issues during the engineering study. The revised wording also considers differences between jurisdictions as to inclusion of an all-red clearance in the signal. There was discussion regarding the appropriate driver response to yellow and red lights in accordance with ORS 810.260.

With the likelihood that more jurisdictions will be getting involved with red light running cameras, the committee agreed that getting out updated guidelines is important even though ITE has an updated Handbook in the works for release in about a year.

Doug pointed out minor changes to the forms in the Guidelines and it was requested that the wording "yellow change and red clearance intervals" be used consistently throughout. The committee agreed to have an email vote to validate the final draft Doug will prepare.

Cindy Schmitt brought up an issue where cities such as Salem want to do red light running cameras at intersections that have both city and county legs. Counties are still excluded from using red light cameras. The committee agreed that under current law, this can probably not be done without the city annexing all legs of the intersection

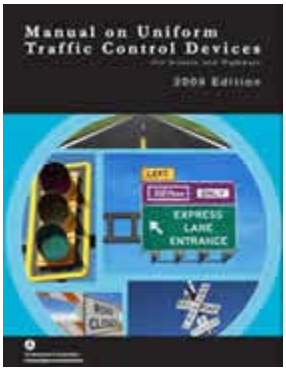
Action Item: Doug Bish made corrections as directed by the Committee and an e-copy was sent to all members for approval. As of 1/28/2010, all responses have been approving.

Oregon Supplements to New (2009) MUTCD

Ed Fischer and Kevin Haas discussed the release of a new 2009 MUTCD. ODOT needs to take action to adopt the new publication and any Oregon Supplements to the Manual. The OTCDC continues to serve as advisory committee in fulfilling that requirement. States have up to two years to complete these tasks in accordance with the Standard in Paragraph 19 of Page I-3 of the new Manual and 23 CFR 666.603.

States cannot be less strict than Standards in the new MUTCD (*may* be more restrictive) without FHWA approval unless state laws require it. Nor can states omit guidance statements unless the reasons are satisfactorily explained to FHWA based on engineering judgment, state law, or

a specific engineering study. Kevin also reviewed a draft update to the list of subcommittees for MUTCD review that was used for the early draft of the new Manual. It was noted that the old Part 10 has been moved into Part 8 in the 2009 Manual. The committee agreed for review purposes to separate out Part 8 (rail/light rail) from Part 4 under primary contact Dave Lanning. At their request Kevin added Brian Barnett to the Part 3 review subcommittee, and added Cindy Schmitt and Joe Marek to the one reviewing Part 5. (Note: Kevin has since produced an updated subcommittee list and added milestones.)



The good news is we have a head start on reviewing the 2009 Manual in the form of the document created the last time around with all the issues we originally had with the draft 2009 Manual. Kevin noted that the Oregon Temporary Traffic Control Handbook will also need to be reviewed.

Ed Fischer then summarized some of the high points of the changes in the new MUTCD (available as powerpoint downloads from FHWA's website). He noted that FHWA received 15,000 comments prior to publishing the new Manual.

FHWA Powerpoint presentations on the 2009 MUTCD:

General, Introduction, and Part 1	Chapters 2D - 2N	Part 6
Chapter 2A	Part 3	Part 7
Chapter 2B	Part 4	Parts 8 and 9
Chapter 2C	Part 5	

The committee had preliminary discussion regarding some of the changes in the new Manual but the bulk of the work will happen during and after the meetings of the subcommittees which will more thoroughly review the changes and look at what changes may be needed in the Oregon Supplements to the 2009 MUTCD.

Kevin suggested that for the first meeting of subcommittees, that chairs should have the existing supplement plus Oregon's comments on the earlier draft 2009 MUTCD and a copy of the now official 2009 MUTCD available for subcommittee members to go through. For a timeline, the subcommittees should start meeting within the next two months and start reviewing the documents. Hopefully all subcommittees will have an idea on what their proposed supplements are going to be by Summer 2010. The goal is to get a an OTCDC approved Supplement by the end of the year in order to be ready to get it out to the Oregon Transportation Commission's rule-making process which will take about six months of 2011.

Nick Fortey suggested the committee may be wise to run their final Oregon Supplements product by his office prior to going into the Administrative Rule process in order to avoid wasting months of work if FHWA doesn't go along with everything AFTER the new Supplements get approved by the Transportation Commission. Ed Fischer agreed that would be a good idea.

Not on Agenda

Bike Race Signs – Ed Fischer noted that he has been hearing that some groups such as the Oregon Bicycle Racing Association are not happy with the committee's December decision to

discontinue Bike Race signs. It seems to boil down to an issue of inventory already purchased. Ed said this may come back up for a further conversation in future meetings.

2010 Off-Year Legislative Session – Kevin Haas reported that the Legislature will meet again in February and they have already filed a couple of bills that ODOT will be watching. One of these items is a requirement to adopt new signs that indicate more clearly when school is in session where photo radar is employed and flashing lights are not. Another item is a first-bite proposal to reform Oregon's Access Management Program, with the hopes of making it easier and less arbitrary for land owners to access the highway on lower volume roads.

Kevin noted that the best place to keep up with legislative issues being tracked is the Legislature page at the Oregon ITE website.

Joint ITE/OTCDC Meeting – will be on the 2nd Friday in May (May 14th), either in Salem or the south part of the Portland Metro area.

Meeting Dates – Debby Corey said April 2nd is the next meeting date that replaces the March 12th meeting. It will be at Marion County Public Works.

MUTCD Orders – The committee discussed the possibilities of getting together on purchasing the 2009 MUTCD in bulk in order to get a price break. ODOT will work on finding out how many are needed by local jurisdictions statewide and then will finalize plans.

The committee adjourned at about noon.

Next Meeting Date

April 2nd, Marion County, 5155 Silverton Road, NE., Salem