

Oregon Traffic Control Devices Committee

January 16, 2009

Meeting Minutes

ODOT Region 2 Office

Salem, Oregon

Members Present: [Brian Barnett](#), Chair, City of Springfield; [Ed Chastain](#), Vice-Chair, Lane County; [Ed Fischer](#), Secretary, ODOT State Traffic Engineer; [Alan Hageman](#), OSP; [Angela Kargel](#), ODOT Region 2; [Robin Lewis](#), City of Bend; [Joseph Marek](#), Clackamas County; [Charles Radosta](#), ITE, Kittelson and Associates; [Massoud Saberian](#), City of Lake Oswego; [Cynthia Schmitt](#), Marion County

Others Present: Doug Bish, Debby Corey, Kevin Haas, Sheila Lyons, Gary Obery, Greg Stellmach, ODOT Traffic-Roadway Section; Craig Black, ODOT Region 2 Traffic; Tamera Abbott, Shelley Weigel, Oregon State Parks; Mary Pat Parker, Jim Renner, Oregon Travel Info Council; Rob Burchfield, City of Portland; Terry Hockett, Kevin Hottmann, City of Salem; Tom Larsen, City of Eugene; Sarah Murchison, Washington County; Eric Hathaway, Kittelson & Associates; Natalie Inouye, Oregon Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus

Introduction – Approval of Minutes – Additional Agenda Items



New Chairperson Brian Barnett called the meeting to order. Ed Chastain then moved to accept the minutes from September 19, 2008. Charles Radosta seconded and the committee voted unanimously in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

OLD BUSINESS

[Pedestrian Event \(Fill the Boot\) Sign \(SB 1084\)](#)

State Sign Engineer Greg Stellmach showed the committee the new Pedestrian Event sign no. CW 15-15. The sign was produced subsequent to its approval in concept pending review of language regarding appropriate use of the sign at the September, 2008 meeting . The committee approved the new sign by consensus.



Info Center ((lower case) “i” Symbol) Signing

Jim Renner introduced [a paper](#) he wrote regarding a proposed test in Salem and Eugene of the (lower case) “i” symbol for visitor information centers in Oregon. The test would investigate whether the (lower case) “i” symbol should replace the VIA logo for future highway signs. The committee was asked [which \(lower case\) “i” symbol](#) they preferred. Consensus of the committee was that Model Sign B would make the better (lower case) “i” sign.



Jim explained that a questionnaire card would be handed to visitors at the test sites, asking questions to determine the recognition level/usefulness of the current logo and the (lower case) “i” symbol sign as well as what services people expect at the information centers. Centers in Newport, Roseburg and La Grande will use the current VIA symbol – but without the words that accompany the existing sign – on their questionnaire.

The committee supported the idea of the study, but made suggestions about wording of the questionnaire so that it elicits accurate answers about the intuitive understanding of the (lower case) “i” symbol and doesn’t make an invalid comparison by stripping the VIA logo from the text (“OREGON VISITORS INFORMATION”) that’s always accompanied it.



There was a suggestion that if the cards are only given at Information Centers, they would not reach people who never located the centers (and therefore presumably didn’t understand the (lower case) “i” symbol signs). There was also concern about replacing the VIA signs which originated as part of the whole “Branding Oregon” program. However, the Branding Oregon logo has since changed.



In a separate but related item, Greg Stellmach was looking to get committee approval to go forward with criteria that the Oregon Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus have developed to define Visitor Information centers as a change to [Information Center Signing Guidelines](#) in the Sign Policy. The committee agreed in principle, and asked that Stellmach come back at a later meeting for approval of the final draft. In the meantime, suggestions for improvements to the draft should be sent to [Greg Stellmach](#).

Bicycle Traffic Signals

Rob Burchfield put on a [presentation](#) in which he pointed out the operational differences between motor vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians at traffic signals, and discussed the value in separating bikes from conflicting vehicle movements through a separate bike-only signal display. The bike usage in Portland and environs are increasing steadily and making that growth work safely with motor vehicles is a growing issue. Rob recently returned from a study tour of Amsterdam and Copenhagen with a primary purpose of studying bicycle transportation in these European cities.

Recently, high visibility right hook crashes between motor vehicles and bikes have put the issue front and center in Portland. The value and the need appears to be there, but while bike signals are used broadly in Europe, there has been only limited use in North America. The MUTCD makes no provision for their use.

[Davis, California](#), is among the limited number of cities in North America that uses bike signals. California has passed [enabling legislation](#). (Note, also see California's MUTCD [Section 4D.104 Bicycle Signals](#)).

The issue with bike signals is to make them intuitive, unambiguous in their display, distinct from vehicle and pedestrian displays and of an appropriate size and visibility for bicyclists. Rob showed examples of bike signals and their placement and the committee discussed what might be most practical in Oregon. Some members of the committee liked the idea of having an LED oval signal head to differentiate the bike signal and allow for the shape of a bicycle symbol as the light display.



Rob discussed possible next steps in the City of Portland. One of the locations where a bike signal may be the best way to help prevent right turn hook accidents is [NE Broadway Street at N Williams Avenue](#). There are about 300 through moving bikes per hour with about 1000 right turning vehicles per hour at that intersection. The committee discussed the need to develop warrants for locations where bike signals would be permitted.

Among concerns discussed was possible damage to current training for bicyclists to behave like vehicles, obeying all the same signals, etc., which is still needed in most cases. Another was to keep bike signal dimensions small enough for post mounts

Rob asked for guidance from the committee as to what Portland should do next regarding both possible legislation and further experimentation. It is too late for the State to propose legislation in this Legislature but a bicycle advocacy group may be able to get something drafted. The committee had no objection to something general being written into a bill. As to the city's next steps, Ed Fischer suggested the first thing to do would be to contact Scott Wainwright at FHWA and see what they would need to support a project for experimentation status.

Signal OARs

Gary Obery briefed the committee on the work he's done on [updating Signal OARs](#) for his technical advisory committee which includes Massoud Saberian, Charles Radosta and Joel McCarroll. He welcomed input/comments on his [draft update](#) from all attending. Part of the effort was to remove guidance from the OARs and put them into ODOT's Traffic Manual, making the OARs more generic. Another purpose is renumbering some OARs so that all signal-related rules appear within sections 400-500.

Some of the rules are being modified to be more consistent with Department practice or desired practice. Any comments should be emailed to [Gary Obery](#) by February 2nd.

NCUTCD Report

Ed Fischer reported highlights on his trip to the National Committee meeting. FHWA received 1925 letters which came to 15,200 individual comments regarding the proposed new MUTCD. He said no decision has been made yet whether to publish a final rule or publish a supplemental notice of proposed amendment. One or the other should be coming out by the end of the year. It's reasonable to expect some changes. If FHWA decides what they consider significant changes should be made, a supplemental notice will be issued. It is FHWA's prerogative to decide that.



Significant issues

- Private property issue – MUTCD applies to all property open to public travel.
- Traffic control devices for toll plazas – taken out and made a separate part of MUTCD?
- Diagrammatic signs – 15 year compliance? Major replacement costs
- RV Friendly symbol – revert back to interim approval (12" lettering)
- 12-inch signal heads – 8 inches may be okay in many locations
- Number, location and design of signal faces on approaches over 40 MPH
- Pedestrian signal – legal definition for flashing hand may conflict with state law/ordinances (countdown display would allow pedestrians to enter on flashing hand if they can make it across safely before phase change)
- Countdown displays – requirement for all new installations
- Slower walking speed
- Yield or stop at passive railroad crossings
- High visibility safety apparel
- Metrics – English primary, metrics in parenthesis
- Future direction – too big? Standards? Guidance?

Ed said that there was discussion of the HAWK signal at the June 2008 meeting and the Rail Technical Committee thought that with the alternating flash, it might be confused with rail preemption. The full committee approved simultaneous flashing. A discussion of whether pedestrian signals can go "dark" when not in use in roundabouts was begun. This will continue since there's disagreement on why that shouldn't apply in other applications.



Ed also discussed his presentation to a joint meeting of the Rail and Markings committees in which he presented ODOT's evidence that the placement of a right turn arrow sign may be causing train-vehicle crashes. The recommendation is to make sure the sign is at least 100 feet back from the tracks and to carry edgelines through the rail crossing. The committees agreed with these proposals.

Finally, Ed noted that the Uniform Vehicle Code has been orphaned since the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances has disbanded. This private organization sought to promote uniformity in traffic laws and ordinances through their model which individual states could adopt or borrow from.

Meeting Locations and Meeting Hosts

Brian Barnett deferred this item to the March meeting when more time should be available.

Non-Agenda Items

Rail Division Issues - Cynthia Schmitt reported to the committee on issues Marion County and others are having with ODOT Rail Division regarding a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ([Railroad-Highway Crossing Rules](#)), whether the road authority controls work in their right-of-way, and general communication issues. Cindy also shared a [letter Marion County sent](#) to ODOT's Administrative Rules Coordinator in response to the proposed new rules, and concerns that it is being pushed through as housekeeping measures when it is more substantial and of greater concern to road authorities.

The concern is that ODOT Rail and some railroads are not being cooperative about communication of issues with the County. The OAR was removed from the December OTC meeting in response to a request to ODOT Director Matt Garrett but she hasn't heard anything further.



Cindy continued describing the problems and issues Marion County has with the ODOT Rail Division and the proposed OAR changes Rail wants to make. She pointed out items of particular concern were: the change that gave ODOT Rail "jurisdiction" over the section of roadway equal to the safe stopping distance from the stop line; the removal of the requirement for the railroad to comply with procedures required by the road authority when a crossing is temporarily closed; and the lack of a requirement for the railroad to provide temporary traffic control when a crossing is temporarily closed.

Rob said the problems Cindy described resonate with him. He has also been told by ODOT Rail that when the railroad company closes a crossing temporarily, the City is responsible for traffic control.

Marion County has a meeting planned with ODOT Rail. She invited other agencies to attend or send her their input. Ed Chastain and Rob Burchfield expressed interest and Ed Fischer indicated he would try to facilitate communication between the parties.

Sign for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations - Ed Fischer reported receipt of a [letter from Robert Arnold \(FHWA\)](#), denying experimental status for the proposed EV sign. Also, the vehicle symbol used in the sign may have a registered trademark. Asked if any signs already installed should be removed, Ed Fischer said, not necessarily, just don't install any new ones.



The committee adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

Next Meeting Date

March 20, [Marion County](#), 5155 Silverton Road, NE., Salem