

Oregon Traffic Control Devices Committee

May 7, 2009

Meeting Minutes

Marion County Public Works

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, Rodger Gutierrez, Kevin Haas, Katie Johnson, Gary Obery, Greg Stellmach, Joe Searcy, ODOT Traffic-Roadway Section; Nicole Charlson, ODOT Transportation Safety Section; Tamera Abbott, Shelley Weigel, Oregon State Parks; Jim Renner, Diane Cheyne, Travel Information Council; Nancy Flye, City of Lake Oswego; Kevin Hottmann, City of Salem; Tom Larsen, City of Eugene; Karen Odenthal, Marion County; Kimberly Payne, Coral Sales Company; Bikram Raghubansh, Clackamas County; Chris Tiesler, Lani Tribbett, Anthony Yi, Kittelson & Associates

Introduction – Approval of Minutes – Additional Agenda Items

Chairperson Brian Barnett called the meeting to order. Committee members and other attendees introduced themselves. Ed Fischer then moved to accept the minutes from March 20, 2009. Cindy Schmitt seconded and the committee voted unanimously in favor.



PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

NEW BUSINESS

[Multi-Way Boulevard Issues](#)

Tom Larson briefed the committee with a [hand-out](#) on the concept of [multi-way boulevards](#) that are being considered by local government for West 11th Avenue in the Eugene area. These facilities are considered useful in enhancing pedestrian experience, through providing medians that allow slower traffic on access lanes and buffer pedestrians, homes and businesses from the noise and speed of thru traffic. Transit vehicles may also be included. The City of San Francisco, is one of several jurisdictions nationwide who have installed or are considering installing this treatment. Eugene is looking at it as an alternative to the rejected West Eugene Parkway and Tom wanted to hear some feedback from the committee.

Issues discussed included the following questions:

- how right of way should be assigned for weave movements in and out of access lanes onto the main line
- whether there should be special signing or signaling to allow, restrict or prohibit the weave move from access lanes,
- how stop bars and crosswalks for cross streets should be positioned,
- whether STOP sign control of access lanes should be allowed,
- how drivers respond to signalized movements if the access lane is STOP sign controlled
- stop bar locations for side streets vs. access lane and crosswalk



Signals – Yellow Change & Red Clearance Intervals

Gary Obery addressed a draft [Appendix K](#) to ODOT's [Traffic Signal Policy and Guidelines](#), seeking committee input. ODOT is looking at putting yellow and red clearance policy into the document, to be implemented starting as soon as possible. It currently resides only in the signal timers notebook. The appendix is designed to make ODOT's yellow change intervals more closely match the 1994 ITE Guidance. In the past a 6% grade was assumed for all intersections, rounded up to the nearest half-second, and now ODOT is trying to get yellow times a little bit shorter and more consistent with other cities, and ITE guidelines. The yellow times in the table are about a half-second shorter than the current timing. They are derived from the ITE formula but with nothing shorter than a three and a half second yellow and nothing longer than a five second yellow.

The proposed red clearance interval adds a half-second minimum red clearance at slower speeds, and increases up to one second at higher speeds. The biggest difference in thinking on red clearances is the language acknowledges we want a minimum red clearance which in some cases needs to be longer. In the past, ODOT has not used a red clearance interval except at higher speeds (50 MPH). While the research is not conclusive, it is believed that this will increase safety at intersections without noticeably affecting capacity. The ITE guidelines talk about either having a yellow interval that allows a vehicle to completely clear the intersection or to have a shorter yellow and some red clearance. These changes put ODOT policy in agreement with the later option.

A concern is that we avoid any circumstance in which signal timing is perceived as being used to increase revenue from red-light running cameras. Joe Marek said he's noticed that the yellow time often does not leave enough time for a bicycle to clear an intersection. It was clarified that we're trying to establish the point that under Oregon law the yellow light requires all vehicles to stop if it is safely possible to do so, and the all-red clearance should help to ensure any other vehicles make it through the intersection safely after that. So to help clear bicycles or other slow vehicles from the intersection, the red clearance interval is the appropriate interval to adjust. Another concern is that drivers will calculate that the added red clearance time is available to them in "pushing" a yellow light. This is why ODOT wants to keep the red clearance interval fairly short.

Brian Barnett pointed out that Oregon law is fairly unique in requiring a stop on the yellow light when it can be done safely. Other states allow the driver to enter an intersection on a yellow light, assuming they can get through the intersection before the red light comes on.

Brian mentioned a presentation he did ([Anatomy of an Intersection](#)) regarding signal timing to the Municipal Judges Conference in 2008, which highlighted his conclusion that Oregon Law is out of sync with most other states, that our signal timing practice is out of sync with the Laws of Physics, and that our drivers, law enforcement officers, and most engineers don't seem to know these problems exist. He also said it would be good if all jurisdictions adopt the same timing policy for consistency across jurisdictions and advocated for more education to drivers, officers and judges statewide.

Gary noted that ITE recognizes differences among the states regarding the meaning of the yellow indication. Oregon law states that drivers facing a yellow light "shall stop.....before entering the intersection. If a driver can not stop in safety, the driver may drive cautiously through the intersection". The ITE Guidelines are believed to be appropriate for application under Oregon law. Kevin Hottmann was asked about the legal requirements regarding Salem' red light running cameras. Kevin said a vehicle is in violation if they cross the stop bar after the red light comes on. Salem has a minimum four seconds of yellow light interval at these locations, with up to four and a half or five seconds on some approaches.

Ed Fischer said that the proposed vehicle clearance time will be ODOT policy for State highways, but just guidance to Oregon cities and counties. It will probably take about three years to have it implemented on all the state highways. Gary said ODOT would encourage ODOT signal timers to work with jurisdictions in their region that operate signals. Cindy asked that when ODOT changes policy that they don't automatically build to ODOT standards on signals that ODOT maintains and operates under contract for local jurisdictions. Ed said that most of these operations are spelled out in intergovernmental agreement and should address that, but ODOT will discuss it with their signal timers and region traffic people.

Legislative Update

Kevin Haas reviewed a summary of legislation affecting TCD's including those most likely to pass and those not moving in the 2009 session of the State Legislature. Of most interest at this point is [HB 2001](#) which involves additional – not one-time – funding for transportation. The Governor originally proposed a half billion dollars, which the Legislature has scaled down to closer to \$300 million. About half will go to ODOT, with the other half split between counties and cities. Many things have been stuffed into this bill in the last few weeks, including the following:

- ODOT to conduct study on better management and maintenance of all highways by sharing responsibilities and resources with local agencies;
- Pilot implementation of congestion pricing in Portland metropolitan area;
- ODOT to provide information about transportation projects on website;
- ODOT to develop least-cost planning model;
- Lottery bonds for multimodal transportation projects;
- Defines "medium-speed electric vehicle" and requirements for operating these vehicles on highways;
- ODOT to facilitate sharing of offices and other facilities with local governments;
- ODOT to update criteria used to select projects within STIP;



- ODOT to develop environmental performance standards for highway projects;
- ODOT to implement flexible design practices to minimize project costs;
- ODOT to determine amount of federal funding available for non-highway projects;
- Permits City of Portland to establish vehicle registration fees based on VMT;
- Prohibits local governments from enacting or enforcing provision regulating use of fuel in motor vehicles;
- Other changes to vehicle fees and motor fuel taxes that have yet to be determined.

The Oregon Institution of Transportation Engineers keeps tabs on legislation. Kevin leads this effort as Legislative Chair of Oregon ITE. He referred all attending to regular updates on legislative issues posted on [Oregon ITE's website](#).

Traffic Records Coordinating Committee Report

Nicole Charlson, from ODOT's Transportation Safety Section gave a [presentation](#) on Oregon's [Traffic Records Coordinating Committee](#) (TRCC) which works to create an effective campaign to reduce injuries and fatalities in Oregon. Membership on the committee includes managers, collectors, and users of traffic records, public health and injury control data. These representatives come from highway safety, highway infrastructure, law enforcement and adjudication, public health, injury control and motor carrier agencies and organizations. Nicole would like to get further representation from justice/prosecutors.

The Oregon TRCC, part of a [national effort](#), works to coordinate improvements in transportation safety through data improvements. These improvements should minimize duplication, improve uniformity, advance electronic data collection, and facilitate data access and use amongst all interested parties. Projects are funded through federal grants given on a competitive basis amongst the states. Oregon generally gets granted about \$500,000 per year.



A consultant was hired last year to come up with recommendations for Oregon's TRCC. Specific recommendations the committee is currently working on are:

- Strengthen the TRCC
- Provide data clearinghouse and analytical resources for users
- Correct barriers to full crash reporting
- Encourage electronic citation issuance and electronic crash reporting
- Location coding: expand GIS and GPS use
- Implement EMS run report database
- Link components of traffic records systems
- Provide crash reporting training

Nicole described six components of Oregon's Traffic Records system: Crash, Roadway, Vehicle, Driver/Person, Enforcement/Adjudication and Injury.

Among discussion/questions from the committee were longstanding concerns about the long lag time before road authorities can get crash data from DMV and whether/what plans there are to improve upon that. More timely data would be extremely useful and local agencies are finding ODOT's data to be incomplete. Among the core issues is funding and information systems

priorities. The way DMV batches and holds on to accumulating record files continues to be an issue as well.

Nicole said she hopes to see incremental improvement through various strategies as time goes by. ODOT's Transportation Safety Division goal is to improve the timeliness of the Crash System by decreasing the number of days until the annual Statewide Crash Data File is available each year by about a month. The TRCC is still looking for answers that work better for all concerned. TRCC meeting minutes can be [accessed here](#).

Sign Policy and Guidelines Update

State Sign Engineer Greg Stellmach gave a [presentation](#) on his latest recommendations for updates to ODOT's [Sign Policy and Guidelines](#)

The first proposal was to revisit Sign No. OR12-8, a truck length limit sign that the committee had asked for changes to at the [March meeting](#). The committee felt that the "60FT" and "75FT" wording on the updated sign proposal was too wide for the space available. It was agreed that the new sign be approved with a modification to better fit the text. The "FT" in each case will be reduced in font size. This should both provide for a better margin and help make the "60" and "75" digits stand out better. This proposal also deletes the old versions of the sign (OR13-1 and OR 13-2).



The second proposal was to add text on Page 5-1, 2D.48 General Information Signs (I Series) to clarify the use of the BUS STATION symbol sign (I-6) on state highways. The proposal, which came through ODOT's Traffic Operations Leadership Team (TOLT), applies strictly to state highways. It is intended to promote uniformity in signing. They noted signs starting to show up on the highway that include phone numbers, web sites, specialized graphics, etc. The other issue TOLT wanted to clarify is that this signing is not to be used for guidance to bus stations on local roads off of state highways.

Generally directed at rural state highways, the policy in question has historically been to facilitate bus stops on the highway using the symbol sign from the MUTCD and a supplemental plaque indicating what service it is. TOLT felt that this was being overlooked and that the policy was in need of reinforcement.

The committee expressed concern that the proposal to not use the symbol for destination guide signing doesn't support multi-modal transportation and as written may affect existing signing in urban areas such as Portland. The committee suggested that this symbol sign might be used as guide signing, the same way that the airport and train station symbol signs are used. Greg said that the past practice has typically not been to use it as guide signing for bus stations because they don't have the same kind of trip generation that airports and train stations have from state highways. Greg reiterated that this did not prevent cities and counties from using it

for guide signing on local streets and highways. The committee agreed to table the proposal pending further discussion with transit personnel. It will be readdressed at a future meeting.

Action Item: Greg Stellmach will bring this issue back to a future committee meeting.

Greg's next proposal was Sign No. CW11-1, a roll-up version that combines MUTCD Bike Symbol Sign W11-1 and ODOT's OBW1-5 ON ROADWAY plaque for work zones. It has a slightly smaller bike symbol in order to fit the text on the same sign. The committee liked this proposal.

Ed Fischer noted that Cycle Oregon have told him and Rodger Gutierrez that they would like to have a similar sign for bike events. They have concerns about different signing requirements in different jurisdictions, including crossing state lines. They may be proposing something on that order at the July meeting. The committee approved the proposal to use it for work zones as part of the sign policy.

Action Item: Rodger will look at what other states, including California, are using and come up with a proposal for what the Bike and Pedestrian program would like to use for bike events and other temporary bike signing for the July meeting.

The last sign Greg brought up was CW22-2, TURN OFF TWO-WAY RADIOS AND CELLULAR TELEPHONES for deletion from the SP&G. He suggested MUTCD Sign W22-2 should be used instead. The committee concurred.



Interstate Oasis Signing

Jim Renner introduced the relatively new Federal [Interstate Oasis Program](#) and signing discussed by the committee last year in reviewing Section 2F.04 of the [2009 draft MUTCD](#). He emphasized it has nothing to do with highway rest areas. It is strictly intended for truck stop type facilities off the interstate right-of-way near freeway interchanges.

Jim described the genesis of the new program which FHWA first announced in a February 2006 Federal Register [Notice; request for comments](#) and again in an October 2006 Federal Register [Notice](#). The program is a component of the new SAFETEA-LU law. Under the law an oasis usually needs to be within 3 miles of an interstate; provide free, always-open public restrooms; must always have an attendant; must have adequate free parking for trucks and cars; and must offer food and fuel for sale to the public. The National Association of Truck Stop Operators (NATSO) [are against](#) any [commercialization of rest stops](#) as an unfair competitor to their businesses and have [supported this program](#) as an alternative.



Jim and Ed Fischer discussed three categories of signing (supplemental, logo and advance or intersection) prescribed for the program as illustrated in a [hand-out](#). Ed noted that the Oasis [palm tree logo](#) has not been approved although it is proposed in the draft 2009 MUTCD.

The Travel Information Council will be operating the Interstate Oasis program through an intergovernmental agreement with ODOT.

EV Signing Update

In updating the committee on electric vehicle signing issues, Ed Fischer first reviewed a draft [memo from Art James](#), Innovative Partnerships Project Director to the Oregon Electric Vehicle Stakeholder Group. The memo basically announces the demise due to alleged copyright infringement of the previously selected ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION sign. That sign will therefore need to be replaced. Ed then turned to his [memo to Bryan Katz](#) announcing ODOT's receiving approval from their research department to join the Traffic Control Devices pooled fund program to evaluate a symbol for electric vehicle charging stations and inquiring how that would best be pursued utilizing an alternative sign that California has used. That sign has a head-on silhouette of a car with a battery embedded on it. Ed reported that a request to FHWA for approval of an evaluation plan for the now-cancelled mouse-car design had been rejected by FHWA and expressed hope that the pooled fund effort would result in FHWA blessing whatever symbol we decide is the right one to use.



Non-Agenda Items

There were no non-agenda items brought forward.

Future Agenda Building

- Bicycling Event Signing
- Rail Grade Crossing Signing
- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon
- MUTCD Update
- US Access Board ADA Rules Adoption

The committee adjourned just prior to noon.

Next Meeting Date

Friday, July 17, ODOT Materials Lab, Airport Road, Salem, Oregon