

Minutes: Minnesota Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

January 27, 2021 1:00 – 3:00

NPA Special Meeting

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendance

- Sara Buermann, Wright County
- Diane Colton, MnDOT
- Joe Gustafson, Washington County
- Tiffany Kautz, MnDOT
- Jon Krieg, Hennepin County
- Mike Martinez, HDR
- Tim Plath, City of Eagan
- Scott Poska, Alliant Engineering
- Howard Preston
- Ron Rauchle, MnDOT
- Mark Sehr, Rock County
- Josie Tayse, MnDOT
- HunWen Westman, City of St. Paul

Guests

- Ken Johnson, MnDOT
- Jeff Morey, MnDOT
- Michelle Moser, MnDOT
- Ted Ulven, MnDOT

I. Membership Update/Introductions – Tiffany Kautz

All members have confirmed 2021 membership.

II. Corrections/Updates to the Minutes – Tiffany Kautz

None

Vote: Minutes Approved

A. Comments on NPA for MCUTCD spreadsheet.

Vote: Spreadsheet Approved

III. Review of Action Items from Previous Meeting – Tiffany Kautz

- A. FHWA presentation notes – Completed
- B. MnDOT request for [extension letter](#). – Completed
- C. FHWA NPA webinar dates. - No dates have been given yet.
- D. Confirmation of Membership – Completed

E. Joe will review the NPA for trapped lane (through lane into turn lane) for discussion

The NPA does not really change this. They did add other changes we may be interested in such as adding the stovepipe symbol sign as an indicator of where a taper begins. This is different than how we're using it.

It is not clear that the FHWA recommendations are based on research.

Discussion:

This is not on the agenda. Other items committee members would like to look at:

- 1) The lane reduction layout
- 2) Trapped lane turning into a turn lane
- 3) Place holder for items that may come up from the City Engineering Traffic meeting on February 11th. Need to hold a place for possible discussion at the February 24th meeting.
- 4) In-street pedestrian crossing signs. The NPA requires that to use the in-street pedestrian crossing signs, the pedestrian warning sign with a down arrow must be used. MnDOT does not believe the warning sign needs to be used.

VOTE: Add the above items to the discussion list.

VOTE RESULT: **Passed**

Other Discussion:

Chimney sign vs. MnDOT Merge with Arrow sign.

The FHWA is proposing using the chimney sign. There is interest in using the MnDOT Merge with Arrow sign instead or offer it as an option. This is not in the NPA.

IV. MN MUTCD Revision Update/Timeline, Revision 9 – Diane Colton

A. Current list:

1. Appendix C – remove Appendix C and all references to it from the MN MUTCD.
2. Figure 2M-12 – remove (was supposed to have been removed in Rev 8).
3. 2C.12 – review One-Direction Large Arrow language.

V. Request for Experimentation Update – Tiffany Kautz

None

VI. NPA Topics for Discussion – Tiffany Kautz

A. Section 3B.19 (existing [Section 3B.16](#)) Stop and Yield Lines (Will Stein sent this Tuesday 1/26)

Proposed changes: <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2020-26789/p-811>

VOTE: Add to list for discussion at next meeting.

VOTE RESULT: **Passed**

B. Speed Limit signing (existing Section 2B.13)

1. NPA MUTCD: [2B.21](#)

There is confusion with the Option statement, lines 13-18, on Page 77 of the NPA Section 2B.21.

Discussion:

- Has FHWA consider addressing other sign designs? Do we want to ask FHWA to allow additional designs and how would this be worded?
- There is support for the use of green or blue sign backgrounds.
- Example of a sign currently in use:



- There are questions of enforceability of the sign – it’s not a regulatory sign. Enforcement may be difficult without it being clear what’s being enforced. There is the ability in Minnesota to vary speed limits from community to community. If it’s not signed it could be easy for a motorist to say they’d just come from another city that had a different speed – difficult to enforce.
- There should be consistency with the MUTCD. Why not use the above sign but change it to black on white?
- If the above sign was converted to black on white, we’re back to MUTCD standards. You could, however, have another speed limit sign just beyond this with different speed limit.

VOTE – Add a comment to the NPA allowing for a green and/or blue sign for citywide speed limit signs.

VOTE RESULT: Did not Pass

Discussion:

- Is there an option to use green or blue?
- We need to request FHWA to make a formal interpretation. We could ask Will to see if he could get something on this. Maybe they’ve already ruled on or clarified this.

MOTION: Request FHWA make a formal interpretation on whether there is an option to use green or blue for sign backgrounds. Motion introduced by Jon Krieg. HunWen Westman seconded.

VOTE - Motion Passed.

Action Item: Tiffany will discuss with Will.

C. Deleted “ampersands”

1. Lenience requested for current MN MUTCD guidance statement.
2. MN MUTCD was updated with this change.
3. There have been no reported problems with recognition of ampersands on signs in MN. When used, the ampersand reduces the need for a larger sign. This will affect the following signs in MN: park & ride, Move Over Law, specific service, HOV and supplemental guide signs
4. NPA MUTCD: 2A.13

Discussion:

- We removed “ampersands” last time. It is in the MUTCD. Do we want to recommend that it be removed?
- Low clearance panels used during construction use the foot and inch tick marks. This falls into the apostrophe category. Should we expand to remove apostrophes?
- What about the pound hashtag sign? Maybe we add this.
- Washington County experimented with the hashtag for twitter notifications. Not on board to add this.

VOTE: Make comment to remove apostrophes and ampersands from line 48, Page 47 the NPA.

VOTE RESULT: **Passed**

D. Overhead lane control signs

1. Lenience requested for current MN MUTCD guidance statement
2. MN MUTCD was not updated with this change.
3. Change “installed” to “considered”
4. Agencies need to consider the context of the area when considering installation of overhead lane control signs. Downtown areas, low speed areas and areas with limited sight distance may not accommodate these installations.
5. NPA MUTCD: [2B.27](#)

Discussion:

- This was to be changed last time, but the actual change wasn’t made in the current MN MUTCD.
- Do we still want to make this suggestion in a comment to NPA?

VOTE: Make comment to change “installed” to “considered”.

VOTE RESULT: **Did not Pass**

E. Ramp meter advanced warning signs

1. Lenience requested for current MN MUTCD guidance statement.
2. MN MUTCD was somewhat updated with this change.
3. NPA MUTCD: 2B.63 and [4P.03](#)

Discussion:

- The Guidance statement was changed to an Option statement in the new NPA – the document was not marked up to show this.
- Section 4P.03 (old 4I.03)
 - Standard – last time we added SIGNAL AHEAD sign and WHEN FLASHING plaque.
- Maybe this should be discussed with the RTMC.
- Makes sense to keep the change in there but agree it largely just impacts MnDOT.

F. Delineator placement and spacing

1. Lenience requested for current MN MUTCD guidance statement
2. MN MUTCD was updated with this change.
3. NPA MUTCD: 3G.04, page 388, Lines 8-9.

Discussion:

In Section 3F.4 we changed placement of delineators from 2 to 8 feet to 2 to **12** feet in order to accommodate mowing/plowing operations.

MOTION: Request FHWA to change delineator placement to 2 to 12 feet. Motion introduced by Joe Gustafson. Josie Tayse seconded.

VOTE: Motion Passed

G. Engineering Judgement

1. Definition of a “Standard” has change in the new NPA – there’s no mention of engineering judgement, just engineering study. Guidance has “engineering judgement”.
2. A new clause has been added in the new NPA that talks about having “appropriate traffic engineering experience”.
3. NPA: 1A.01; 1C.01; 1C.02 #69; 1C.02 #70
 - Section 1A.01 – lines 28-30 – no comments
 - Section 1C.01 – Standard – engineering judgement not mentioned
Guidance – engineering judgement is mentioned
 - Section 1C.02 #69 – definitions

Discussion:

- The last statement says documentation of engineering judgement is not required. Is this new? Maybe we add that documentation would be really helpful. Might help

establish immunity for engineering decisions. It can be extraordinarily helpful if you find yourself in a lawsuit.

- MnDOT recommends documentation – that sentence is in the current MN MUTCD and MUTCD.
- The difference between the two definitions (engineering judgement and engineering study) is documentation – otherwise they're the same thing.

MOTION: Make a comment that documentation would be helpful and provide a comment to modify the definition for engineering judgment. Motion introduced by Howard Preston; Joe Gustafson seconded.

Discussion:

- It is a good practice but is the MUTCD the right place for it? Does it belong here? It's good for us to teach but should it be written here?
- Statement could be something as simple as "formal documentation of engineering judgment is not required, but documentation may be helpful for future reference.
- It may be that if we add it in it hurts us more if we don't document.
- This could be something we could add to the MN MUTCD in the future - do we think it's important enough to add country wide.
- All states don't have the immunity we have so it may impact them differently.
- Although it may be helpful - don't think many people will see it. May hurt us. Language has been there a long time – no reason to add to it.

VOTE: Comment to remove the last sentences of the definition of engineering judgement and change it to: Formal documentation of engineering judgment is not required, but documentation may be helpful for future reference.

VOTE RESULT: Did not Pass

H. County Signs

1. We are not in conformance with FHWA and MN MUTCD on county signs.
2. NPA: 2D.11

Discussion:

There is strong support to continue the flexibility of black and white signs – this also affects townships.

- The more flexibility the better.
- This was never really discussed with FHWA because we're not allowed to change standard statements. Just got lucky last time.
- Regarding the white numbers on the pentagon - we should at least bring that sign into conformance with the national one.
- There should be an option for a black and white square.
- We can come up with language for the feds that will allow us to keep Minnesota language.

- We'd be encouraging counties to be in conformance with the federal manual by eliminating the black and white square.
- On the fence on this one – good reason to have a uniform manual with nation wide standards. This is an information sign - automated vehicles – what are they going to recognize. It's purely informational – not like a stop sign
- White text shows up better than the yellow.

Motion: Table this discussion to the next meeting. Motion introduced by Joe Gustafson. Josie Tayse seconded.

VOTE: Table the discussion to next time.

Vote Result: **PASSED**

Action Item: Joe will propose new language at the next meeting.

I. Chevrons/Curve warning signs:

1. The new NPA has some modifications – we should review this. The table appears to have issues - looks like they missed some things. Exceptions for low volume road has potential for impacts to counties.
2. NPA: 2C.05 thru 2C.13

Discussion:

- It appears they're taking out reference to volume.
- There are no exemptions for low volume roadways. This could be a huge deal for counties.
- Crash data on rural roads – something like 70% of crashes occur on roadways with less than 1000 vehicles a day.
- The standard talks about speed differentials. Higher speed going to low speed is the issue.

Motion made to adjourn and start with this topic at our next meeting.

VOTE: Motion passed.

VII. Future NPA Meeting Items

- A. Distance between advanced warning signs
- B. Lane Reduction Arrows
- C. Striping Cycle
- D. Crosswalk Blocks
- E. Single flagger location
- F. Height of Portable Work Zone Signs

VIII. Next Meeting

Next meeting is on Feb 10th. Do we want to schedule an additional meeting for February 24th?
NPA comments are due March 15th.

Committee agreed to an additional meeting on February 24th. Temporary Traffic Control staff won't be able to make this meeting.

Action Item – Diane will set up meeting – Done.

IX. Round Robin

X. Future agenda items:

Modification to 2D.29 – Tiffany Kautz, Josie Tayse

Add an exception (to 1st Standard, 1st paragraph) for signed township route and (maybe) National Forrest routes.

2I.5.1 Public Water Access Signs – Tiffany Kautz, Josie Tayse

Working with DNR to establish guidelines regarding sign placement. Tiffany and Josie talking with DNR about this section.

2C.27 Low Clearance Signs – HunWen Westman

- First Option in MN MUTCD states “The Low Clearance sign **should** be installed on **and** in advance of the structure. If a sign is placed on the structure, it **should** be a rectangular shape.....”
- MUTCD states “The Low Clearance sign **may** be installed on **or** in advance of the structure. If a sign is placed on the structure, it **may** be a rectangular shape.....”