Future Direction of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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ITE Western District Annual Meeting

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How frequently do you use the MUTCD?

- Daily
- 2-3 times / week
- 4-8 times / month
- 1-3 times / month
- < once / month
January, 2013

FHWA Request for Comments
“Streamlining”

What does it mean?
“Streamlining” =

“making the MUTCD easier to use”
Proposed Enhancements to 20XX Edition:

- Incorporate routine updates
- Reassess each standard and retain, delete or downgrade
- Identify and eliminate redundant or unnecessary text
- Reorganize content where opportunities for improving flow are identified
- Reorganize / reconfigure existing figures to better correlate with text
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration
23 CFR Part 655
[FHWA Docket No. FHWA–2015–0028]
National Standards for Traffic Control Devices; the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways; Request for Comment

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Request for Comments (RFC).
January, 2014

Vision and Strategic Plan for MUTCD
adopted by National Committee
Purpose of RFC

- New traffic control devices
- New applications of traffic control devices
- New technologies for traffic control devices
- Paper vs. electronic versions
- An MUTCD structure that is easy and efficient to use

Context: Updating the Manual is no small task
time-consuming
takes time to incorporate new devices and applications
How frequently do you use the MUTCD?

- Daily: [X] 10%
- 2-3 times / week: [X] 30%
- 4-8 times / month: [X] 40%
- 1-3 times / month: [X] 20%
- < once / month: [X] 10%
Do you work in a state that has adopted:

- The National MUTCD: 18
- The National MUTCD with a state supplement: 22
- A separate state Manual: 10
Which of the following best identifies your employer?

- Federal government: 1%
- State government: 13%
- County government: 7%
- City or other local government: 25%
- Consulting firm or self-employed: 52%
- Other: 2%
MUTCD content should continue to be written with the traffic engineer as the intended audience.
No. While traffic engineers are an important audience for the MUTCD, in practical use the Manual is both a design document and a field document. Therefore, it must provide both flexibility for designers and uniformity for field users. It is also important to note that many field users are NOT engineers.
There is content...in the MUTCD that is not needed by the traffic engineer.

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree
In future editions, FHWA should strive to reduce the amount of explanatory language in the MUTCD.
What percentage of the content...could be deleted....?

- None
- 1 to 5%
- 5 to 10%
- 10 to 25%
- > 25%
If explanatory material and supplemental information is removed, should it be retained in a separate document?

Yes

No
If there were a separate document... it would serve the needs of the traffic engineer.
Evolution of the MUTCD
Considering only the needs of users, what is the most desirable frequency for new editions?

- 9-10 yrs
- 7-8 yrs
- 5-6 yrs
- 3-4 yrs
- 1-2 yrs
FHWA should issue...revisions...between full editions of the MUTCD.
If FHWA does issue revisions between editions, what is the most desirable frequency?

- Every 5 yrs
- Every 4 yrs
- Every 3 yrs
- Every 2 yrs
- Every year
Would dissemination of National Committee recommendations – before adoption in the MUTCD - be useful to the traffic engineer?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
ITE responded to the RFC on February 2
What does the future hold?

Uncertainty about date of next edition

FHWA exploring feasibility of revisions as an alternative to a full edition

Additional interim approvals
Stay Tuned!
Vision and Strategic Plan for MUTCD

Future Editions

2017

2024 - 2026

Mid-2030’s

Continued evolution from paper document to electronic document
Vision and Strategic Plan for MUTCD

MUTCD Language

Purpose of MUTCD
Definition of Engineering Study
Provide more hyperlinks and pop-ups
/ Provide cross-indexing

First hotlinks (hyperlinks) version was created in 2012
Section 1A.08 Authority for Placement of Traffic Control Devices

Paragraph 3
All regulatory traffic control devices shall be supported by laws, ordinances, or regulations.
Use of “smart tags”

- Identify the traffic control device
- Identify activity(s) being addressed by each provision
- Identify the user group(s) that would most likely perform the activity
- Identify the level of mandate
- Identify related reference materials
- Identify related applications