

State of California

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CALIFORNIA TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting
May 10, 2018

45 Stony Point Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Committee Members in Attendance:

Robert Bronkall, Chair
Hamid Bahadori, Vice Chair
Pratyush Bhatia
David Fleisch
Lt. Rick Hatfield
Bryan Jones
Xavier Maltese
Andrew Maximous
Mike Sallaberry
Hamid Zolfaghari

Committee Staff:

Vijay Talada, Executive Secretary
Don Howe, Senior Transportation Engineer, Caltrans
Arshad Iqbal, Senior Transportation Engineer, Caltrans

Also Present:

Jason Nutt, City of Santa Rosa,
James Botello, City of Santa Rosa
Shane Erickson, City of Santa Rosa
Zahi Khattab, City of San Jose
Robert Lim, SFMTA
Zoubir Ouadah, County of San Diego
Steve Pyburn, FHWA
Craig Rhodes, Traffic Management, Inc.
Massoud Saberian, City of Santa Rosa
Syroun Sanossian, SZS Engineering Access, Inc.
Rob Sprinkle, City of Santa Rosa

ORGANIZATION ITEMS

1. Introduction

Chair Bronkall welcomed the attendees.

- **Welcome from City of Santa Rosa**

Jason Nutt, Transportation and Public Works Director at City of Santa Rosa, welcomed the CTCDC.

- He described the city's response to the catastrophic October fires. *(The beginning of the presentation was not recorded because of technical difficulties.)*
- The city is looking at an issue in which 1.4 million tons of debris is being removed from various areas in the county. The impact on the roads is substantial; a team is looking at what the debris removal process did to the roadway network.
- The county is submitting worksheets to FEMA so that recovery funding can start flowing to the public infrastructure.
- The city initiated a number of experiments early on with the CTCDC and wants to continue at the front edge.

The Committee Members, staff, and audience members introduced themselves and gave their affiliations.

Hamid Zolfaghari stated that he is acting for the office of Duper Tong, who is on another assignment.

2. Membership

Chair Bronkall stated that Hamid Zolfaghari is a voting member representing Caltrans.

Chair Bronkall stated that another new voting member is Xavier Maltese representing AAA Northern California, Nevada, and Utah.

Committee Member Zolfaghari recognized Don Howe for his contributions to the CTCDC. He announced Mr. Howe's retirement from Caltrans this coming July. Mr. Howe has worked for Caltrans for 30 years in various capacities.

Committee Member Zolfaghari introduced Arshad Iqbal, Senior Transportation Engineer with Caltrans Division of Traffic Operations. He will take over Mr. Howe's responsibilities as Chief of the Traffic Signing Branch.

Committee Member Bahadori expressed appreciation for the 15 years he has worked with Mr. Howe on the CTCDC.

3. Approval of Minutes of the February 8, 2018 Meeting

MOTION: Committee Member David Fleisch moved to approve the February 8, 2018 California Traffic Control Devices Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. Committee Member Mike Sallaberry seconded. Motion passed.

4. Public Comments

Chair Bronkall explained the procedures for Public Comment.

Craig Rhodes, Traffic Engineer, referred to Typical Plan TA 22B. He stated a concern that because an arrow board is needed for every merging taper as per the manual, moving the arrow board down into the merge ON the far side might be redundant/confusing – someone might think they have to turn. He distributed diagrams of the original design with the added inclusion of an arrow board on the far side as an option, and another design showing it removed entirely.

Vice Chair Bahadori requested for Caltrans to look at the request and bring it back to the next meeting. Caltrans agreed.

5. Items under Experimentation

16-07: Request to Experiment with modified signage and pavement markings requiring vehicles to stop behind light rail vehicles stopped to board or alight passengers

Experiment Closeout: Final Report has been submitted and can be accessed at:
http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/ctcdc/docs/Final-Report_SFMTA_Taraval_Signage.pdf
Agency/Sponsor: SFMTA/Mike Sallaberry

Committee Member Sallaberry introduced Robert Lim of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). Mr. Lim gave a presentation explaining the background, experimental treatments, evaluation, and results.

Background

Mr. Lim showed maps of the Taraval line and a photo of the typical operation of the line.

The identified problem is vehicle/pedestrian collisions involving people boarding/alighting the trains. Although the California Vehicle Code (CVC) 21756 states that in the absence of a safety zone, cars must fully stop behind the train, only 72% fully stop.

Experimental Treatments

SFMTA experimented with installing new warning signs and a 12” limit line at transit boarding area markings.

They installed a sticker on the side of the train that reads “Do Not Pass.” They installed LED lights on the trains that flash yellow when the doors are open.

They involved the community in educating customers via stickers and flyers.

Evaluation

To measure compliance, SFMTA strapped video cameras to streetlights at five locations chosen in the inbound direction. They measured seven days of continuous footage.

Results

After a year of the treatments being out in the field, compliance only improved by 2% overall. 74% compliance did not meet the original target of 90%. SFMTA has made the decision to build boarding islands in the inbound direction in order to increase the compliance rate. Construction will begin in 2019. Every service stop on Taraval Street will have them.

Committee Member Sallaberry stated that his recommendation is to end the experiment with no changes to the CA MUTCD.

Questions and Discussion

MOTION: Vice Chair Bahadori moved to close the experiment and to incorporate the signage in the city. Committee Member Sallaberry seconded. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Steve Pyburn, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), advised that these experiments cannot proceed without FHWA approval; FHWA has ultimate approval in whether the experiment can go forward or not.

Secretary Talada noted that the CTCDC Meeting Minutes of March 2016 showed a brief discussion on whether the experiment had been submitted to the FHWA for approval. Perhaps at that time, Kevin Korth had indicated that FHWA did not need to evaluate the experimentation.

AGENDA ITEMS

6. Public Hearing

CONSENT ITEMS (Minor discussion with vote expected)

18-09: Update to Section 2B.46 Parking, Standing, and Stopping Signs

Mr. Howe addressed the Consent Item. Currently at Rest Areas and Vista Points, there is an 8 HOUR PARKING sign. What is currently missing in the CA MUTCD is a permissive sign that addresses commercial vehicle operators, allowing them to remain at these facilities for up to 10 hours. The request from Caltrans Division of Maintenance is to develop such a sign.

The proposal is also to put additional language in Section 2I.05 Rest Area and Other Roadside Area Signs. The sign may be used to discourage extended stays in these areas. Section 2B.46 repeats the addition of the language.

Questions and Discussion

Vice Chair Bahadori asked if the two signs are used in conjunction. Mr. Howe confirmed that they are.

Committee Member Fleisch asked why the language adds "...for automobiles..." and not other vehicles. Mr. Howe suggested using "...for private vehicles..." instead to be more inclusive.

Committee Member Hatfield felt that the layperson may have some confusion with "private vehicles." Many vehicles fall under the definition of "commercial" as well. Mr. Howe agreed that it is vague; generically speaking, trucks are commercial vehicles. They could come up with a better term.

Committee Member Hatfield asked why the new sign is green instead of black and white, as the sign is regulatory. Mr. Howe answered that green and white is for a permissive regulatory sign specifying a timeframe. Committee Member Hatfield noted that the other sign does that as well. Committee Member Sallaberry suggested having the top sign look more like the bottom sign for consistency.

Chair Bronkall asked if consideration was given to expanding the 8-hour parking to 10-hour parking so that two signs are not needed. Mr. Howe pointed out that the differences are in the

language in the CVC. Vice Chair Bahadori suggested making the timeframe consistent. Mr. Howe stated that Caltrans' role is not to legislate such corrections; we work with the laws that are on the books.

The committee discussed the timeframe issue.

Public Comment

Zoubir Ouadah, County of San Diego, commented in favor of consistency for the lower sign.

Mr. Rhodes suggested using the term "noncommercial vehicles" instead of "automobiles" because when he checks the vista points, half the time it is an RV. He also stated a preference for using 10 hours for commercial vehicles because of rules requiring long-distance drivers to pull over and rest after a certain number of hours on the road.

Committee Member Questions and Discussion

MOTION: Vice Chair Bahadori moved to approve the staff recommendation, with the proposed change to the lower sign for consistency and with a change in the language from "automobiles" to "noncommercial vehicles." Committee Member Sallaberry seconded. Motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEMS (New items that may be voted on or brought back as Action Items in a future meeting)

18-10: Intersection Control Evaluation – Draft Language

Secretary Talada explained that at the May 2017 CTCDC meeting, Caltrans had presented its views on intersection control evaluation strategies for transportation improvement projects located on and off the state highway system. The presentation had been well-received by the CTCDC committee members. They had requested for Caltrans to develop draft language for providing additional guidance for local agencies. Caltrans has been using Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) for the past 20 years and would like to extend its use to the local agencies.

The draft language is permissive in nature with no standard statements. It gives the local agencies the required flexibility. Secretary Talada indicated the proposed additions and deletions. He asked the committee for recommendations.

Questions and Discussion

Vice Chair Bahadori noted that today, any local agency that wants to put a traffic control at any intersection can go look at the warrants for a signal; also, nothing stops an agency from putting in a roundabout at an intersection. Are we putting specific criteria for roundabouts in the MUTCD? If that is the case, then that language itself needs to be incorporated.

Secretary Talada responded that this language encourages the local agencies to look at the roundabout option. It is a *should* statement rather than a *shall* statement.

Committee Member Fleisch felt that the language points more at Caltrans than the local agencies. If the intent is to encourage local agencies to look at roundabouts, the language as written does not accomplish that. There has been considerable public outcry against roundabouts.

Secretary Talada suggested making it a *shall* statement.

Vice Chair Bahadori said that there is flexibility in the law already. This is like having language just for its own sake.

Secretary Talada responded that Guidance Statement 018 states that ICE procedures should be considered when evaluating safety improvements at intersections.

Chair Bronkall agreed with Vice Chair Bahadori that the existing guidance and support statements in 01b and 01c seem adequate. He was not sure about what additional benefit the proposed support statements offer.

Public Comment

Mr. Pyburn stated that public opposition notwithstanding, roundabouts save lives. 8,000 people will die this year at signal-installed controlled intersections. In the 29 years that roundabouts have been installed in the U.S., 56 people have died at those intersections. The purpose of this language in the MUTCD, short of a warrant, is for local agencies to be aware of this viable option. There are cases where roundabouts were compared with signals, and the benefit-cost ratio is over 12 times higher with a roundabout than with a signal.

Vice Chair Bahadori then suggested that it be a *shall* statement.

Secretary Talada stated that Caltrans strongly supports making it a *shall* statement.

Committee Member Fleisch felt that making a unilateral decision such as this should not be done on very short notice – outreach to local jurisdictions is needed.

Mr. Ouadah agreed with the FHWA's position on the roundabout. The word *should* makes county agencies feel that they have the obligation to consider the viability of roundabouts at intersections. He suggested adding “the local roadway system” – and not to have only “the state system.” He felt that a *should* statement is sufficient because at many locations a roundabout is not viable.

Committee Member Sallaberry reiterated that going from *should* to *shall* is a big step, and sufficient outreach is needed to representatives from cities around the state. Personally he feels that roundabouts should be used more heavily around the country.

Vice Chair Bahadori pointed out that among the seven cost-efficient steps that will prevent injuries and fatalities, roundabouts are number three. However, going with a *shall* statement is a major change.

Committee Member Fleisch said that although we ought to be moving towards roundabouts, local agencies who have to deal with a public that's not yet comfortable with them need to have more deliberate process. It takes a tremendous amount of time to overcome changes in behavior and expectations of people – this must be put in place in the right way.

Committee Member Jones noted that when he put a roundabout in a local agency, they eventually called it “the #1 DUI enforcer in the region.” It surpassed all other police DUI enforcement – it is in effect 24 hours a day. We ought to look at things differently and force people to make tough decisions, even if they feel uncomfortable. In addition, roundabouts will not work in every situation.

Vice Chair Bahadori said that putting this language into the CA MUTCD does not promote roundabouts; traffic engineers and public works directors know about them. He would like to see stronger language.

Committee Member Maximous felt that this is a great initiative, and Caltrans is showing great leadership in the direction of traffic safety. He suggested forming a subcommittee or finding a way to raise awareness of this serious issue throughout the state. We need some clarity on what we want to achieve.

Secretary Talada suggesting tabling the item for now and bringing it back with some new language, including giving more information on the ICE process in the MUTCD. The ultimate goal of this language is to encourage people to look at roundabouts as an alternative. If local agencies have a different methodology for evaluation, Caltrans has no objection.

Vice Chair Bahadori stated that we need stronger language for this to be taken seriously. Restating today's law does not give it any teeth.

7. Request for Experimentation (None)

8. Discussion Items

18-11: Yellow time sub-committee

Committee Member Zolfaghari reported that Caltrans has a list of people interested in the subcommittee. They come from local agencies as well as Caltrans.

Committee Member noted that the previous yellow subcommittee had accomplished a great feat: to establish the timing for the through movements. This new committee is focused on left turn movements.

Secretary Talada reported that he has 16 potential subcommittee members from traffic engineering consultants, cities, counties, etc. However, there is no Chair as yet. He was now requesting the CTCDC to appoint a Chair.

Vice Chair Bahadori described the amount of work involved in being a Subcommittee Chair.

MOTION: Committee Member Zolfaghari nominated Vice Chair Bahadori as Subcommittee Chair, with other subcommittee members assisting him in any way they can. Committee Member Fleisch seconded. Motion passed.

18-12: Interim Approval 21 – Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons at Crosswalks

Secretary Talada reported that Caltrans, after receiving email feedback from CTCDC members, has put in a request for statewide blanket approval for the use of Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) in California. Caltrans has secured statewide blanket approval from FHWA.

Secretary Talada thanked the CTCDC members for their prompt response to his emails soliciting their feedback. This enabled him to expedite the whole process.

Committee Member Jones stated that the CTCDC members appreciated the way Secretary Talada handled the discussion to make RRFBs a tool again.

18-13: Yellow Band

Chair Bronkall reported that he had been approached by Syroun Sanossian, SZS Engineering Access, Inc. about the feasibility of incorporating language currently in the California Building Code (CBC) into the MUTCD, as possibly a better home for the language.

Ms. Sanossian, an architect and access consultant, stated that SZS Engineering Access, Inc. assists institutional clients who have challenges regarding accessibility for people with disabilities. She explained that this section really has a better fit in the CA MUTCD than the CBC.

- While traveling the state, Ms. Sanossian has seen the code section instituted in only one place – the city of Clovis. Yet the requirement has been in place since 1981.
- The California Division of the State Architect (DSA) has decided to remove the code section from the CBC. However, it is important for people with vision impairment; the implementation of the band is very useful for people with low vision, who lose the federal yellow color last out of all the colors in the spectrum.
- This population would like the banding on any pedestrian control; there are not a lot of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APSs) out there – possibly less than 5%.
- In addition, for people with hearing loss who cannot hear the APS tone, they can still see the yellow band.
- It is also very important for the banding to be separate from the APS housing on the Pedestrian Control Device. It needs to encircle the pole.
- The banding and the pedestrian control need to be installed not higher than 48 inches for people with a limited reach range.
- The section should be inserted into the one that discusses all pedestrian control buttons.
- The California Council of the Blind is the sponsor. They are asking that this be a standard, not an option.
- Ms. Sanossian presented the language of the proposed standard.

Questions and Discussion

Vice Chair asked if this is addressed in the federal MUTCD. Ms. Sanossian answered that it is not. She was not aware of other states that have it.

Secretary Talada stated that this matter was discussed in 1986 at the CTCDC meeting. The consensus had been that the textured bands are not official traffic control devices and that a regulation for their use should not have been adopted following the provisions of Section 21400 of the CVC. The Motion was that CTCDC write the DSA to request that this regulation be removed from the CBC. Ms. Sanossian stated that people do not want the textured banding, as it attracts dirt; it is the color that they want.

Committee Member Jones stated that this is a traffic control device manual, and the yellow bands are not traffic control. Language going into the manual requires research – scientific studies on effectiveness and usefulness. While the section was in the CBC for three or four decades, only one agency utilized it. Committee Member Jones was not certain that the CA MUTCD is the appropriate location for this section.

Vice Chair Bahadori also cited the problem of the lack of research.

Ms. Sanossian continued.

- They would like some kind of mechanism to bring a seamless transition from the CBC regulation into the MUTCD. She agreed with the importance of research in this issue.
- The concern of the California Council of the Blind is that they feel as though the regulation has been around for quite some time, and that while the CBC is no longer going to contain it, it should be contained and enforced somewhere else. If this regulation is in place, there has to be a mechanism by which it would be implemented – either in new construction and alterations, or as part of the transition plan item that Caltrans would carry forth in their own facilities, and that other jurisdictions would as well when they are updating their signalizations and intersections.

Questions and Discussion

Vice Chair Bahadori stated that this regulation was in the wrong code (the CBC); that is why it was not implemented. It is 38 years old – another reason it was not implemented is that it lacks research showing how effective it is. Ms. Sanossian agreed. She advocated that the CTCDC look at it as an option in the future, provided that research shows that it is actually useful.

Committee Member Jones stated that typically, something gets into the MUTCD when a local agency comes to the CTCDC with a Request for Experimentation; the agency then does research and evaluates. While the yellow band is low cost in comparison to overall costs, it is still an additional cost and is a maintenance obligation. If the yellow band is going to go on a traffic control device, it needs to be in the manual; but Committee Member Jones was not sure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues should be going into the manual. Those may be more for the design manual.

Committee Member Bahadori reiterated the need for research.

Ms. Sanossian stated that Gene Lozano, Chair of the California Council of the Blind's Committee on Access and Transportation, contacted Caltrans on four occasions to attempt to present this information. He received no response. The California Council of the Blind has attempted to do what the CTCDC is asking for years.

Committee Member Fleisch stated that he was not sure this is a traffic control device issue. We have a number of things that are required in road right-of-ways because of ADA. They are regulated through the ADA process and the design process. The yellow band issue goes back to research and finding the right solution.

Committee Member Bhatia agreed that we need the research to be done and presented before going forward; it would be a large cost to all the cities of the state.

Chair Bronkall emphasized that if it will be an experiment, it needs to be done through the CTCDC and FHWA. Ms. Sanossian noted that her company works with several dozen local jurisdictions so the experiment will be possible.

Public Comment

Mr. Pyburn also asked if this is a traffic control device. If the experiment goes forward, one issue to be addressed is reflectivity – putting a yellow reflective band on the right side of the roadway where a white one would be expected by the driver. Ms. Sanossian did not feel that the yellow versus white banding would be such an issue in terms of the view of oncoming vehicles.

Questions and Discussion

Chair Bronkall instructed that to promote something like this, you would need to find a sponsoring city or county willing to undertake some form of experiment. The second step would be to identify whether this is truly a traffic control device so that the CTCDC could support it.

Committee Member Jones added that FHWA approval would also be necessary for the experiment. Secretary Talada explained that anything going into the MUTCD needs to be approved by the FHWA because a Letter of Substantial Conformance from them is necessary.

Committee Member Fleisch felt that this is an ADA compliance issue, citing the yellow truncated domes as an example. He suggested going in that direction first.

Chair Bronkall suggested looking at the federal MUTCD as another avenue, rather than having California try to create its own unique standard.

9. Tabled Items (*none*)

10. Next Meeting

August 9, 2018
Caltrans District 11, Garcia Auditorium 1-125
4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110

The committee discussed the possibility of altering the meeting date or combining the August and November meetings into one October meeting. . He added that typically, we don't know how many Agenda Items will materialize until their submittal due date.

Committee Member Maltese stated that for AAA Northern California, September would be a better time.

Secretary Talada explained that CTCDC meetings happen on a certain dates because that gives him enough time to compile recommendations from the CTCDC meetings and publish a new CA MUTCD every year. Both the CTCDC and the SSTI had directed that for the sake of efficiency, we need to publish the CA MUTCD at the beginning of every year.

Committee Member Jones remembered the SSTI report as being focused more on getting the MUTCD updated than on how many times the CTCDC should meet.

Vice Chair Bahadori pointed out that it shouldn't be necessary to meet if there are no urgent items that need review and approval.

The committee members discussed the problem of long travel times to a meeting with a light agenda.

11. Adjourn

Chair Bronkall adjourned the meeting at 12:32 p.m.