

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Committee Members & Alternates
FROM: James Stack, Executive Director JS
DATE: May 6, 2021
SUBJECT: Update to the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*

The New York State Association of MPOs (NYSAMPO) has developed an informational memorandum for members and partner agencies to highlight proposed revisions to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD). The MUTCD provides national standards and guidance for the use of traffic control devices on all streets, highways, bikeways, and roadways open to public travel.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is currently accepting comments on over 600 revisions which are outlined in the Federal Register Notice of Proposed Amendments (NPA) as issued December 14, 2020. Revisions update the technical provisions and incorporate advances in technologies, operational practices, recent trends and innovations.

The following items are included for your consideration:

1. NYSAMPO Memorandum



New York State Association of MPOs
Memorandum on MUTCD : Notice of Proposed
Amendments and Comment Period
*Prepared April 8, 2021 by the Safety and Bike/Ped Working
Groups*

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is currently accepting comments on proposed revisions to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD). The MUTCD provides national standards and guidance for the use of traffic control devices on all streets, highways, bikeways, and roadways open to public travel. FHWA is proposing over 600 revisions which are outlined in the Federal Register Notice of Proposed Amendments (NPA) as issued December 14, 2020. Revisions update the technical provisions and incorporate advances in technologies, operational practices, recent trends and innovations.

This informational memorandum was prepared in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the Safety Working Group and Bike/Ped Working Group. Special thanks also to the Capital District Transportation Committee for providing their *MUTCD Updates and Comment Period Fact Sheet* to assist in preparation of this memorandum.

The following discussion highlights key MUTCD proposals that may be of interest to your MPO and your member agencies. Informational webinars on the NPA can be viewed here:
https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/mutcd_news.htm#apr_02_21

The overview below references the corrected MUTCD Text-Mark-up PDF for ease of reviewing the proposed changes. The PDF can be downloaded here:
<https://www.regulations.gov/document/FHWA-2020-0001-0038>

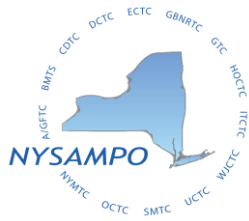
The supporting materials include proposed text in clean and marked-up versions, proposed figures, and proposed tables. For more information, visit:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/02/2021-01440/national-standards-for-traffic-control-devices-the-manual-on-uniform-traffic-control-devices-for> (see supporting/related materials in right sidebar).

Comments on the proposed MUTCD revisions must be submitted in the Federal eRulemaking Portal or via mail by **May 14, 2021**. The notice with additional details can be found at:
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-02-02/pdf/2021-01440.pdf>

Proposed Changes

Revised Procedures for Posting Speed Limits

Section 2B.21 (Speed Limit Sign) on page 76 includes additional considerations for setting speed limits including the road context, lane width, bicycle activity, and functional classification, as well as the distribution of speeds. It provides more flexibility for setting speed limits on most streets; for freeways, expressways and rural highways, the guidance continues to state that posted speed limits should be within 5 mph of the 85th-percentile speed.



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Crosswalks and Aesthetic Crosswalk Treatments

Section 3C (Crosswalks) starting on page 368 provides details on crosswalk marking patterns and includes a section on High-Visibility Crosswalks in Section 3C.05 (page 370).

Colored pavement is detailed in Section 3H (page 389). Section 3H.03 on Aesthetic Treatments (page 390) includes guidance that “aesthetic treatments within crosswalks should only be used on roadways with a speed limit of 30 mph or less.” Examples of materials are found in Figure 3H-1. Research on multicolor crosswalk treatments and their effects on road user distraction and recognition and understanding by vision-impaired pedestrians is ongoing.

Green Pavement Markings for Bike Lanes & Bike Boxes for Turning

Section 3H.06 (pages 391-392) details the use of green-colored pavement for bicycle facilities. It states that green-colored pavement shall be limited to bicycle lanes, bicycle lanes through intersections, exclusive turn lanes, two-stage turn boxes, bicycle boxes, bicycle detector symbols, and separated bicycle lanes.

Red Pavement Markings for Transit Lanes

Section 3H.07 (pages 392-393) details the use of red-colored pavement for public transit systems. It states that red-colored pavement shall be only used in locations where general-purpose traffic is not allowed.

Curb Extensions Designated by Pavement Markings

Section 3J.07 (pages 399-400) discusses painted curb extensions and recommends double lines, colored pavement or diagonal lines for emphasis, and physical separation (tubular markers/delineators) where pedestrians are expected.

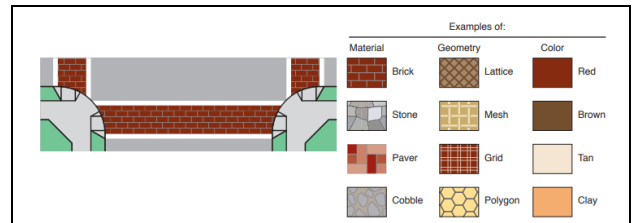


Figure 3H-1. Aesthetic Treatments for Basic Crosswalks

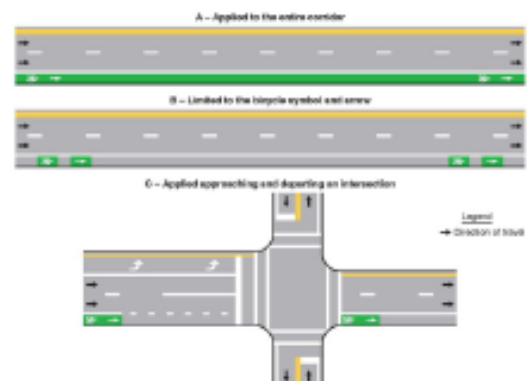


Figure 3H-4. Examples of Green-Colored Pavement Applications

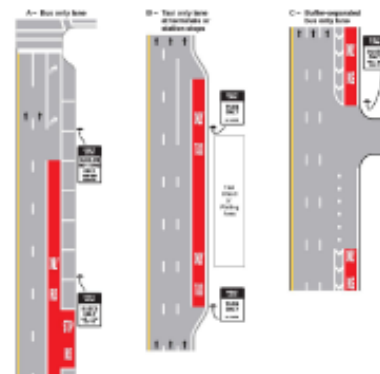


Figure 3H-5. Examples of Red-Colored Pavement Applications



Figure 4H-1. Example of Bicycle Signal Face



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Bicycle Traffic Signals

Section 4A.05 (pages 405-406) explains bicycle signal indications. There is also a new Chapter 4H on Bicycle Signals (see page 464).

Traffic Signal Warrant 7, Crash Experience

Section 4C.08 (pages 418-419) details when the severity and frequency of crashes warrant a traffic control signal. This section is now guidance rather than a standard and there is more detailed guidance for engineering studies, including reported crash history.

Pedestrian Safety in Work Zones

Chapter 6C, Pedestrian and Worker Safety (starting on page 531), includes revised guidance about sidewalk closures in work zones and encourages more consistent accommodation of pedestrians with disabilities.

Push Button Locations at Signalized Intersections

Section 4I.05 (page 471) describes pedestrian detectors and provides standards for accessible design. See Figures 4I-2 and 4I-3 related to pushbutton locations. There is also an option for touch-free pushbuttons. Pedestrian signals are recommended at each marked crosswalk at a signalized intersection.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs)

New Chapter 4L (pages 487-489) describes Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs). Figure 4L-1 shows an example of post-mounted RRFBs at an uncontrolled crosswalk. Audible information is also recommended at RRFBs.

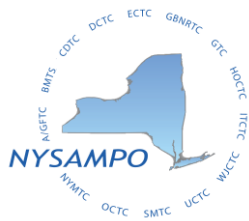
Automated Vehicles (AVs)

New Part 5 – Automated Vehicles (page 510) provides an overview of automated vehicle technologies to support their safe deployment. This section does not include any new requirements, but items to consider.

Figure 4I-2. Push Button Location Area

Figure 4I-3. Typical Push Button Locations

Figure 4L-1. Example of RRFBs at Uncontrolled, Marked Crosswalks at an Intersection



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Train Crossings

Section 8 (page 680) describes several changes related to train crossings.

Bicycle Lanes

Section 9E (Markings), page 767, describes new bicycle lane pavement markings including guidance related to bicycle lanes at intersections, buffered bicycle lanes, separated bicycle lanes, counter-flow bicycle lanes, and shared-lane markings.

Two-Stage Turn Boxes

New Section 9E.11 (page 776) describes two-stage turn boxes. Section 9B.18, Two-Stage Bicycle Turn Box Regulatory Signing (page 749) is a new section that outlines signage for turn boxes.

Bicycle Boxes

Section 9E.12 (page 777) is a new section on Bicycle Boxes.

Submitting Comments

While this memorandum is informational only and the NYSAMPO will not be submitting comments, should your agency or organization be interested in submitting comments, the following should be considered, as indicated in the FHWA informational webinars:

- Whether you like a proposed change, or disagree with it:
 - Include the rationale for your position
 - How will the proposed change affect traffic operations, safety, and uniformity?
 - Are there significant cost impacts not considered?
 - Is there data, research, or experimental findings to support a different position? (Providing supporting material for your comment can be just as important as the comment itself.)
- Didn't see what you were looking for?
 - If a change that you wanted to see was not proposed, we want to hear that too
- Comments on topics not specifically proposed:
 - Could be used to refine this rulemaking
 - Can influence a future revision
 - Suggested new content can shape future research needs to address new issues and future experimentation