



FOREWORD

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NCUTCD Chair

As Chair of the NCUTCD, I want to welcome you to the first issue of the Journal of Traffic Control Device Research. I am so pleased to see the NCUTCD produce this document and I look forward to the role this journal will play in future improvements to traffic control devices and the MUTCD. I see this journal making an important contribution to advancing traffic control device practices.

Traffic control devices may be the most important tool in the traffic engineer's toolbox. Traffic engineering is a challenging field that involves so much more than just engineering. A traffic engineer needs an understanding of engineering, human factors, psychology, law enforcement, civics, economics, public policy, and a gut feel for what may work (or may not work). Practitioners and the traveling public have many questions regarding traffic control devices. Will road users respond to a device in the intended manner? Does it improve safety for road users? Does it increase road worker risk for installation and maintenance? Does it require enforcement to work? How much will it cost agencies to implement? Does it complement and is it consistent with other devices already in the MUTCD? And so many more questions. No single effort can answer them all. There has never been enough information about traffic control devices and it is likely that there will never be enough. All we can do is chip away at the mountain. Each traffic control device evaluation represents one brick in a large masonry structure. As someone who has spent most of their career evaluating traffic control devices, I realize how difficult it can be to make study results available to others. I want this journal to provide an easier path to sharing traffic control device information.

I am the son of a traffic engineer. I have a vivid memory as a young boy of my father (who worked for the City of Houston) using one of my toy cars to practice a presentation on the benefits of a quick-drying marking material he wanted the city to implement. That demonstration by my father may be part of the inspiration for this journal. After becoming NCUTCD Chair, I challenged Bryan Katz, chair of the NCUTCD Research Committee, to create a journal that would focus on the practical aspects of traffic control device evaluations and provide NCUTCD members with better information for developing recommended changes to the MUTCD. This is not a new need. In 1962, my father's boss

at the city was appointed to the National Joint Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (a predecessor of the NCUTCD). Soon after, he offered the following thoughts in an issue of the Texas ITE section newsletter: "There has been some criticism in the past regarding new standards in the Manual and questions as to what basis was used for the development of these standards. There are probably reasonable grounds for this criticism where new standards have been decided upon by a majority of the vote of members of the Committee without the benefit of proper research or studies (author's note: this statement was made when the NJCUTCD was responsible for MUTCD content, FHWA assumed ownership of the MUTCD in 1971). There is unanimity of opinion among the current members of the Joint Committee that any further modification, changes, or additions to the Manual should be based on the results of very thorough research."

My goal is challenging the Research Committee to develop this journal was to find a way to publicize practical findings about traffic control devices without having to worry about journal impact factors, detailed statistical analysis, and some of the burdens that come with academic-oriented journals. While the name of the journal uses the word "research," you may note that I have not used that word to describe what we are looking for. I do not want potential authors to feel that a study has to be comprehensive to be included in the journal. Rather than call the contents of this journal research papers, I prefer to call them traffic control device evaluations. Every evaluation makes a contribution to the body of knowledge. Another brick in the wall so to speak (for you Pink Floyd fans). With this inaugural issue behind us, I hope that you will think of an evaluation you have done and will submit it for possible inclusion in a future issue. With your assistance, we can use this journal to help fulfill the goal established by Mr. McEachern in 1962 to base all future changes to the MUTCD on factual data.