

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
INTER-DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION

From: Erik Paddleford *EP*
Bicycle/ Pedestrian Technician

Date: May 28, 2015

At: Bureau of Rail and Transit

Thru: Patrick Herlihy,
Director, Aeronautics, Rail and Transit

Shelley Winters *SW 05/28/15*
Administrator, Bureau of Rail and Transit

Subject: NHDOT Bicycle Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (BPTAC)
NHDOT Maintenance of MUTCD standards on State Maintained highways Policy
Recommendations

To: William Cass, P. E., Assistant Commissioner
Commissioner's Office

The NHDOT Bicycle Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (BPTAC) has reviewed the current maintenance policies and practice of NHDOT and attached is the Committee's letter requesting that the Department modify its maintenance practice regarding certain MUTCD-approved traffic control standards. The BPTAC has recommended that NHDOT recognize MUTCD standards as de facto NHDOT standards for state-maintained roadways when adequate pavement for their application exists and where community needs and interests and/or best design practice suggests their use.

The development of this BPTAC recommendation was advanced, in part, based on Lebanon #25194, in which the City requested that the Department stripe certain NH 120 intersection approaches in an upcoming resurfacing project, where practicable, in accordance with MUTCD Figure 9C-4. The Department subsequently informed the City that it would allow these bicycle-friendly pavement markings if the City would maintain them as Traffic indicated that the markings would require additional resources (in staff and materials) that the Department could not commit at this time. The City was not willing to commit to the ongoing maintenance and therefore as the project stands today, the Department will not implement the pavement markings in accordance with MUTCD Figure 9C-4, which, in the view of the BPTAC, will compromise safety for all roadway users at these locations.

Based on Lebanon #25194 as the impetus, the BPTAC would like the Department to reconsider its standard markings and maintenance policy as further detailed in the attached letter. As BPTAC's request may affect multiple bureaus and divisions, it may be appropriate, if you deem it necessary, to hold an internal meeting to discuss the merits of BPTAC's request in order to prepare a response. In the interim, please feel free to discuss further with Rail & Transit staff and let our office know if we can be of further assistance.

cc: Jim Marshall (Highway Design)
William Lambert (Traffic)
Caleb Dobbins (Highway Maintenance)

NHDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee

May 15, 2015

William Cass, P. E., Assistant Commissioner
New Hampshire Department of Transportation
7 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Assistant Commissioner Cass,

The NH Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (BPTAC) was established in 2013 by then-Commissioner Clement to advise on policies, programs and recommendations in support bicycling and walking, to ensure that these activities remain viable, safe forms of transportation and recreation. Among its many activities, BPTAC is currently helping bicycling and pedestrian advocates work within their communities to make projects more bicycle and pedestrian amenable, collecting information to quantify bicycling and pedestrian activities and identify where infrastructure improvements can be made, and updating the 15 year old New Hampshire Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. On behalf of BPTAC, I am writing to recommend a modification to current NHDOT practice regarding lane markings for bicycles and pedestrians.

New Hampshire state law has for many years defined bicycles as vehicles, with essentially the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicles short of travel on limited access highways. Recognizing the number of highway users on bicycles nationally, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) includes a full section (Part 9) on devices, signage and lane marking for bicycle traffic in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). These are important standards that improve safety not just for people on bicycles but for all road users. We recognize that NHDOT applies some of these standards routinely in new construction project, such as minimum shoulder widths for bicycle access, and others have been applied to bicycle facility projects resulting from specific funding programs. Consistent with NHDOT's goals to reduce and ultimately eliminate traffic fatalities under the Driving Toward Zero initiative, we believe these standards should become a matter of routine design for all state highway improvement projects. Accordingly, BPTAC respectfully recommends that NHDOT recognize the MUTCD standards as de facto NHDOT standards for state maintained roadways when community needs and interests and/or best design practice suggests their use.

An immediate opportunity to apply these federal standards is the City of Lebanon's request to use MUTCD Section 9C-4 in association with a rehabilitation project (Lebanon 25194) on NH 120, a state-maintained highway. This is a significant bicycle commuting route connecting downtown Lebanon with major employment sites in Lebanon and Hanover. Current NHDOT striping policy guides people on bicycles into a lane position vulnerable to a "right hook" crash where an overtaking automobile turns right to enter an access ramp. This is one of the most common forms of crash leading to bicyclist injury or death.

Our understanding is that NHDOT offered to grant Lebanon's request, but only if the City would take on maintenance responsibility for those pavement markings related to bicycle safety. We are aware that NHDOT has had an informal policy of not maintaining bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Our understanding of this policy up to this point has been that it applied to winter maintenance, recognizing that it is not practical for NHDOT crews to transport sidewalk plows all over the state to plow short segments of State-owned sidewalk. We also understand the financial pressures the Department is under with regard to maintaining New Hampshire's highway system. That said, if NHDOT maintains pavement markings guiding safe movement of automobile traffic, it should similarly maintain pavement markings stipulated by the MUTCD for the safe travel of bicycles and pedestrians.

The BPTAC is not requesting wholesale redesign of existing facilities, but rather that when a municipality requests MUTCD standard markings for bicycles and pedestrians as part of a highway project that those markings be incorporated, and subsequently maintained, by NHDOT just like other highway markings.

This recommendation is consistent with NHDOT's mission of "transportation excellence" and purpose, to provide "safe and secure mobility and travel options." In addition, adopting current MUTCD standards will further enhance NHDOT's objective of "increased access to all modes of transportation" and adds weight to the Driving Toward Zero campaign.

The BPTAC welcomes the opportunity to discuss this further with you.

Sincerely Yours,

Felice Janelle, Chair
NH BPTAC