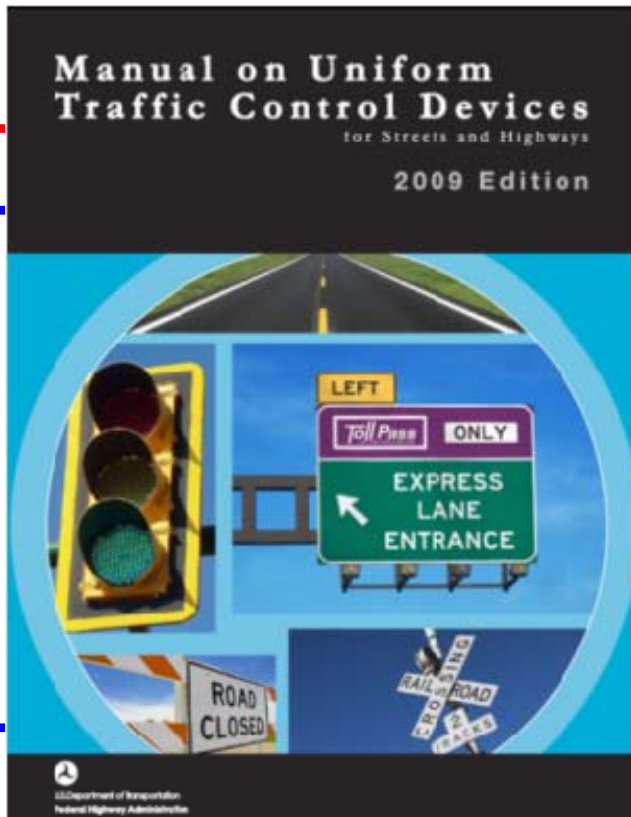


Preliminary Thoughts on a Long-Range Vision for the MUTCD



H. Gene Hawkins, Jr., Ph.D., P.E.



Presented at
SCOTE Meeting
Orlando, Florida
June 2012



Purpose of Presentation

- Provide information on strategic planning process
 - ~ *20 minutes*
- Provide opportunity for comment and discussion
 - ~ *40 minutes*



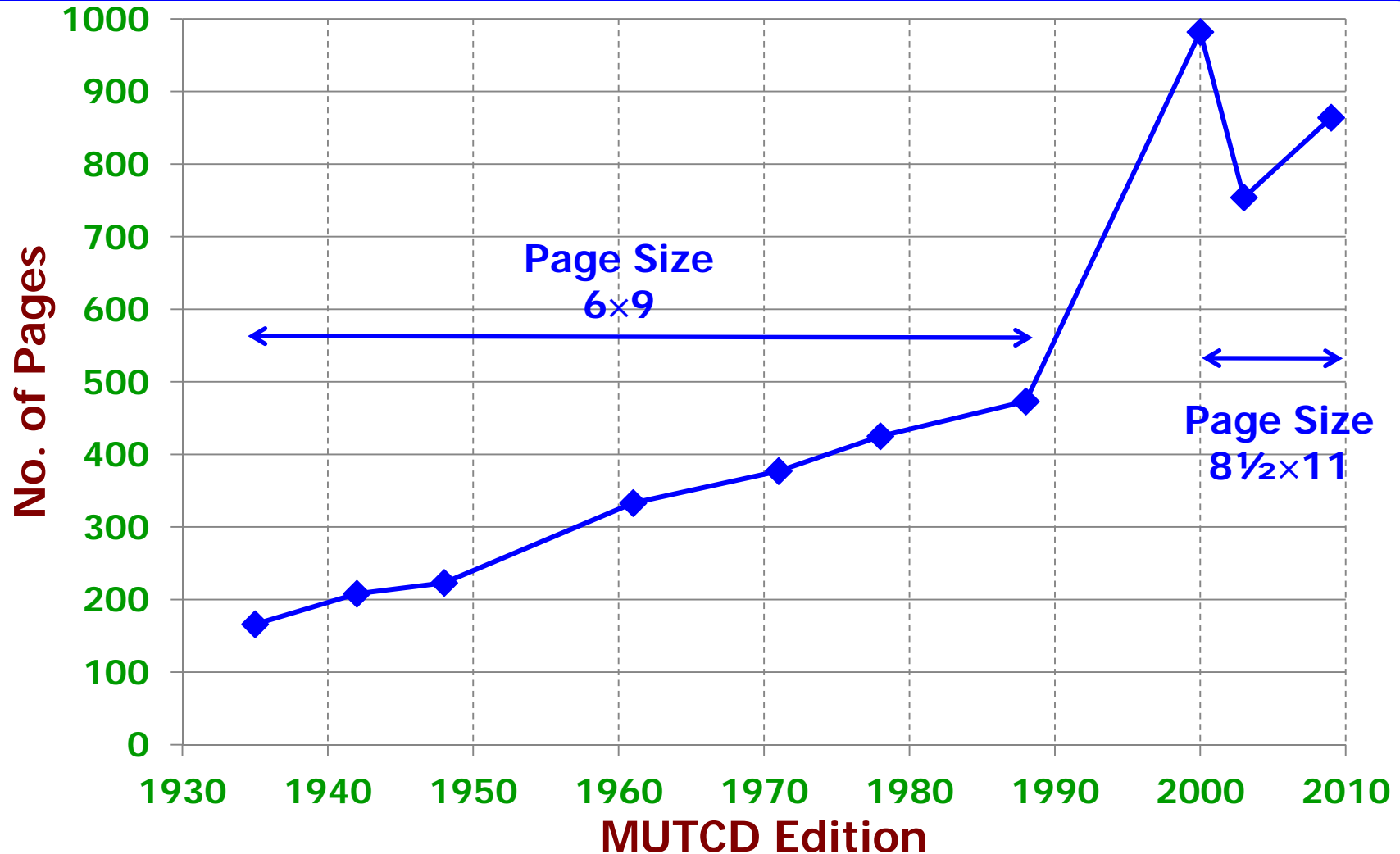
MUTCD History

- There have been 10 MUTCDs





MUTCD Growth





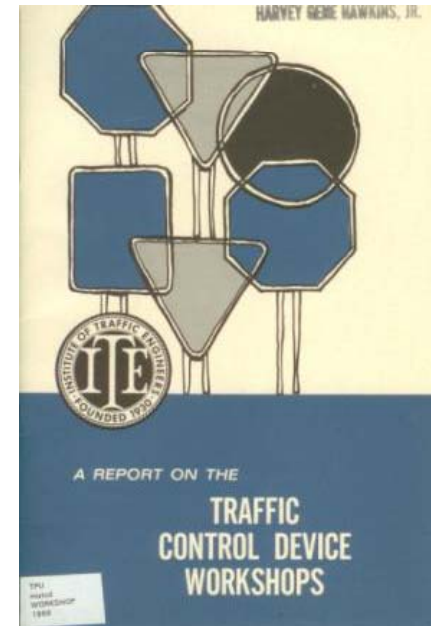
MUTCD Challenges

- **MUTCD is large and complex**
 - *Has more detail than ever before*
 - *Less flexibility to use engineering judgment*
- **Unclear audience**
 - *Not sure who it is written for*
- **Desire to avoid litigation – more specific details in the MUTCD**
 - *Limits ability to use engineering judgment*
- **It is time to reexamine MUTCD future**



Planning for MUTCD Future

- Previous efforts to define a future for the MUTCD
 - *Mid-1960s by ITE*
 - *FHWA/NCUTCD meetings*
 - 2001 & 2005
- Current effort
 - *NCUTCD MUTCD Strategic Planning Task Force*
 - *NCHRP 20-7/323 project*





MUTCD of the Future

- What should the MUTCD be like in 25 years?
 - *If starting from scratch, what would we want?*
- Consider:
 - *How to present content*
 - Organization, format, and technology
 - *Information contained in document*
 - *Qualifications of users*
 - *Ability to update and adapt*



Presentation Level

- **Dealing with the MUTCD from 100,000 feet**
- **Focusing on strategic issues**
- **Not concerned with specific content in the MUTCD**



Opportunity for Comment

- Today's comments are not recorded
- You must submit comment on-line for it to be considered
- Website
 - *<http://mutcd.tamu.edu>*
- Placeholder site at present
 - *Content posted in June 2012*
 - *Continuously updated*

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

<http://mutcd.tamu.edu>

MUTCD Strategic Planning

The 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is the 10th edition of the MUTCD. The first was published in 1935 and later editions were published in 1961, 1971, 1978, 1988, 2000, and 2003. Changes to the MUTCD are made through the federal rulemaking process and those changes most commonly come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD). With the publication of each new edition

Leave a Reply

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Future Web Site Content

- Project description
- White papers on critical questions
- Background information
- Public comments
 - *Intent is for all comments to be posted for public review*



Stakeholder Presentations

- **NACE, April**
- **AASHTO SCOTE, June**
- **NCUTCD, June and January**
- **ITE, August**
- **ATSSA, August**
- **TRB Traffic Control Devices Committee, January**



Webinars

- APWA Transportation Committee
- Others to be scheduled with selected stakeholder organizations
 - *Organizations to be determined*
 - *Welcome suggestions on what organizations should be invited*



Key Questions (1/2)

- What is the purpose of the MUTCD?
- What target audience should the MUTCD be written for?
 - *Should the MUTCD provide a significant level of detail so that it can be used by inexperienced individuals or provide flexibility so that it can be used by individuals with experience?*
- How should the MUTCD be organized and formatted?
- What type of information should be included in the MUTCD?
- What are the critical factors (guiding principles) that should be considered when deciding whether to put specific content in the MUTCD?



Key Questions (2/2)

- What is the target group of road users that the MUTCD content is intended to accommodate, if any?
- How and how often should the MUTCD be revised?
- What level of research is needed to add new language or revise existing language?
- What is the desirable process for incorporating new technologies and new devices into the MUTCD/other documents?
- What publication or information sharing technologies are desirable for improving the usability of the MUTCD?



Initial Critical Questions

- What is the purpose of the MUTCD?
 - *Ranges from uniformity in meaning and appearance to uniformity in maintenance practices*
- What is the MUTCD audience?
 - *Traffic engineers, field personnel, lawyers, road users, elected officials, architects, private property owners, ...*
- What is the optimal organization, format, and writing style?
 - *Should some content be in a separate document?*
- What should be in the MUTCD (content)?
 - *Standards, guidelines, options, best practices, ...*
 - *Meaning, appearance, operation, installation, maintenance, ...*



Need for National Documents

- TCD meaning, appearance, and some aspects of operation are legal definitions
 - *Need a national standard*
- Decisions on TCD selection, location, operation, maintenance, and removal are engineering decisions
 - *Should be made by a traffic engineer (or under engr supervision)*
 - *Need practices for TCD selection, location, maintenance, and removal*
 - *Could be in document of traffic engineering practices*



Information Management

- Wide availability of MUTCD make it desirable as location for all traffic engineering information (it's free!)
 - *Agencies want information in MUTCD so that they do not have to buy other reference documents*
- Too much information makes it difficult to use
- How to best structure needed traffic control device content?



Multi-Volume Approaches

- **Brute force approach**
 - *Vol 1: all standards*
 - *Vol 2: everything else*
- **Functional approach**
 - *Vol 1: meaning and appearance (MUTCD)*
 - Selected standards from Parts 2, 3, and 4
 - *Vol 2: application of TCDs*
 - Selection, installation, maintenance, and removal
 - Could include standards, guidance, and options
 - *Vol 3: best practices*
 - Typical applications, traffic engineering practices
 - *Vol 4: supporting information*
 - Traffic design issues that relate to traffic control



Multi-Volume Approaches

- **Statute approach**
 - *MUTCD addresses only TCDs that are specifically addressed in federal/state laws*
 - *All information is in one or more other volumes*



Questions?

