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AMERICA WALKS
THE NOTIRTOUS MUTCD
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>> Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for being here. And welcome to today's webinar, the notorious NECTD, while fixing a federal manual is credible to safety, equity and climate.

I'm Kelsey Carr, communications manager and I'm joined here with the executive director, Mike Segan. Mike will be moderating and guiding the conversation today, and I will give our presentations.

And we'll be running the technical details behind the scenes as well.

So first off, we wanted to thank all of you who attend these webinars and have donated to make sure this program and our other programs continue to thrive. These are programs that allow us to directly support local grassroots activism at the neighborhood level so if you do like this content and you're a regular guest here, we'd really encourage you to think about making a donation that ultimately supports this kind of work.

And a quick note about the technology today. So you should see a control panel just like this on your screen. That's where I will be looking for your questions for our panelists today.

And after this presentation, we'll kick off a Q & A session, so please enter any questions that come to mind right there and if you'd like to use our closed captioning today, the link for that is also in the chat box there.

Our presenters today are Don, city traffic engineer for Seattle he's worked over 29 years in the transportation, engineering world, focussed on improving safety and mobility for all travel modes.

Dave, director of design at national association of city transportation officials, also known as NACDO and has 20 years of experience in multimodal planning and urban development.

Matthew Roe, technical lead at NAFTO, he is a urban transportation planner with a decade of experience in planning and implementing great streets.

And Lisa Marie Glover, transportation division manager at City of Fort Lauderdale. Lisa has more than 15 years of experience around transportation infrastructure, legislative research, and transit planning and management.

And Benjamin, senior project manager at city of Fort Lauderdale. Benjamin reviews site plans to identify conflicts and opportunities and addresses traffic impacts. And he's been working in the field of engineering for more than nine years.

So we have some serious wisdom packed on to this panel today. Thank you all so much for being here.

So today's webinar is really focussed on the notorious imagine of uniformed traffic control devices, NUTTD.

This document dictates the design from every street in the U.S., from cracks, speed limits, bike lanes, and more, and right now, it is up for revision.

So the proposed draft, though, continues to prioritize moving cars fast over state, equity, accessibility, and climate.

So USDOT secretary Pete Buttigieg is facing a very early test of his commitment to reform. And we are all wondering, will he make the call to reframe and where he write this manual so it aligns with what he says he wants to do.

So today our amazing panel will speak to the nuances and stories of why the NECTD matters, what is wrong with, it what needs to be done yet next, and how you can help make a difference.

So again, thank you so much for being here. I'm going to turn things over now to Dave and we will get started.

>> Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for joining us and thanks to America Walks for hosting us. With NAFTO. Next slide, please. And we'll just fib a few moments of next slide. Thanks.

Of a little framing around the NUTCD.

First is as you've heard, it is a document that governs signs, signals, and markings, and because of that, it has a pretty big impact on other things that govern design, from speed limits, crack materials, bike ways, etc., and it is the manual of uniform traffic control devices.

What we want to spend a little bit of time on is what is wrong with the current draft.

There is a draft that is available now for comment and we want to just spend a little bit of time just explaining what the comments look like and why we're calling for a reframe.

Right now, because of the focus on car traffic and sort of the dominance of sort of car centric planning, it results in lengthy process, lengthy time line, and even additional costs for key safety and access measures.

And what that means is it is essentially perpetuates an existing double standard between modes and that is it is sort of an inherent I can equity we see.

Other thing that I think is really important to flag is that it is written as technical guidance and because it is written as technical guidance, it is seen as a thing that is sort of taken

as law as almost a Bible by folks in our industry, and this is the moment where I say some of my best friends are engineers.

But essentially, it puts us in a situation where we are perpetually asking engineers to really reframe what our streets do for mobility, for accessibility, not just for cars and for highway design but also for all of the purposes that we use our streets for, whether you're a pedestrian or a transit rider or a cyclist or driver.

What we're doing right now, not just NAFTO but several other partner organizations are calling to reframe the current draft.

We want to see a substantive alignment with the goals that the administration has set forth, safety, sustainability and equity.

And to focus out core elements of what the document is meant to achieve.

We are, however, also collating detailed comments from our member cities NAFTO which are over 80 in the U.S. and we're going through section by section to review the current draft.

And also going through detailed suggestions for changes.

And what this essentially means is we're seeking a document that is really seen as proactive safety guidance for all road users and that incorporates multidisciplinary stakeholder collaboration.

We want to make sure that it is not just engineers writing this document but that it is also urban planners, it's urban designers, and basically everyone who uses the street has an opportunity to weigh in, because it puts our designers and engineers in a situation where they're responsible for on their own.

And no document that's written by any one sector could ever be seen as sort of promoting all of these goals and particularly equity.

And with that I'll turn it over to Matthew to go through a through a lot more detail of what some of the key issues are, and join you back for the discussion.

>> Thanks, Shave.

My name is Matthew Roe. Again, I'm the technical lead at NAFTO and I've got a very short story to tell about cities and problem solving and the MUTCD and how they can work together when only there's really a -- really a view toward problem solving and flexibility.

So back soon after I started my first job at New York City DOT, cities around the country and then after that, around the world, started to say, okay, we've got this roadway space that we want to repurpose. We need to make it pedestrian friendly space so how are we going to do that

Well, the MUTCD says you can use a double white line to say cars are prohibited from crossing. Motor vehicles can't cross the double white line. So cities got comfortable creating pedestrian space on the roadway.

Using that tech knee. MUTCD compliant, meant from the design from the beginning to work with within existing regulations, knew those regulations wouldn't change.

NAFTO took that practice and perform lies ed put in the urban street guide which many of you are familiar. With

And you know have a small cause for celebration. Even though these were always [compli](#) can't, they weren't in the guide, so a lot of cities, a lot of states, especially when jurisdictions within the state or the state or a county and a state and a county and a

state wanted to work together to create something like this, there was certainly some hesitation.

It just didn't quite know whether it was okay because it wasn't in the manual.

So we have some things to celebrate here.

But even though motor vehicle lane, shortening the crosswalk by having a white lane at the end instead of going through all the way on the left at MUTCD, even though those are aloud, they're not ill illustrated yet. Ed it they're an easy thing to fix.

The reason I bring it up is this is an example where the party problem is clear. It was solved. It was resolved in a way that really didn't require much of a change on the part of a regulation and the MUTCD is a regulation, and that's one of the challenges with it. But it wasn't resolved fully. Right?

The guidance and the kind of permission slip we're looking for, the support and backing for as cities isn't fully there yet.

That interplay between the modes and between the professions also comes up when we look at the way that easy pass leans and electronic collection claims or formal names are treated in the manual versus how transit leans are expected to be treated in the manual.

Back in 2006, 2007, a number of cities started to implement red transit leans in the United States. There are dozens and dozen of them now. They've been demonstrated to work. But the proposed manual would still saddle every project with a new engineering study, unspecified.

So that just kind of opens up cities to push back. It opens up cities to a state saying, well, you didn't necessarily do the engineering study the way we want to and adds delay in cost and veto points for projects that really need as much support as they can.

And even a little bit more, even a little more gallingly, the proposal will say, well, you can do pretty much whatever you want with purple, purple, you can put it behind the words at a toll plaza but you can't do any of the stuff on the right with red, even if as you picture on the right, you have a good reason not to mark red across an entire rail line.

So that's an example where we think, you know, there was a really good intent and it is great to see red transit lanes in the draft of the manual, but it hasn't -- it just hasn't gotten to the point where it would actually make it easier. It might actually make it a little harder for some cities.

The other thing that we hear about, the MUTCD, is that it is not a symmetric design guide and it is not meant to be and it is certainly not meant to be comprehensive about that.

But it is often referred to as one, and there are clauses that prohibit some kinds of design. And actually encourage other kinds of designs.

What you seen the screen here is a kind of infrastructure, bike infrastructure, bike lanes that most people wouldn't be comfortable using.

It is a type of intersection most pedestrians wouldn't be comfortable crossing either, I certainly wouldn't be, and the issue is that whoa have made this the standard, the typical nationwide. The MUTCD has essentially doubled down on that, on this as a typical type of infrastructure. And you sometimes end up with as much as 400 feet between when the MUTCD says have you to draft the bike lane before the right turn lane and you end up with a situation that doesn't serve anybody well. The person on

the bike ends up on the sidewalk, he didn't want to be on that marked line between two 45 or 50-mile per hour car lanes.

This is a lingering fact of a pretty narrow lodge of cycling, I'm not going to get in to that in detail but there's a fear of bike infrastructure embedded in the MUTCD and that makes it hard to change things over time.

So once of the differences between the some of the things that are not going to be -- not proposed to be aloud and some of the things that are proposed to be aloud are the one that is are not -- the one that is are proposed to be prohibited kind of build on older restrictions and the one that is are row posed to be loud are actually based on older flexibility that was already there.

It is very hard for HAWA to make that change and that's why it concerns us is that there are a lot of provision s, no prohibitions in the manual, there are a lot of especially in section pertaining to bicycle infrastructure with means it is going to be harder to make the kinds of urban streets we want. The kinds of streets that are actually safe and comfortable to bike and walk and play on and plan transit on.

Almost everything on the left would be prohibited. A signing that tells people that's a street good for biking on. The minute, the one minute time marker to help people, reassure people, it is really not that far we're trying to go because there's research showing that it is really hard to know how far, how long it will take you to go by bike.

And by the way, that makes a little, you know, even if it isn't a perfect bike infrastructure, when you do have a situation with cars sharing the same spaces as people on bikes, you know, I would certainly want the drivers to see the boldest thing possible, but that would be prohibited, that green would be prohibited.

So those new restrictions are very concerning.

And sometimes it is because there isn't research to back up allowing something but sometimes even when there is research that supports allowing something, that supports the idea that it might be better and reasoning that supports the idea that it might be better, we still find those things restricted.

So the yield to pedestrian or stop for pedestrian state law, stop for pedestrian in crosswalk sign which I'm sure a lot of you are familiar with, that would still be allowed on a double yellow line.

But the situation on the right where it is between two leans on a multilane street wouldn't be aloud.

Why? Maybe it is because those are the streets they are needed the most.

So there's a certain fear of installing thing, there is a fear of allowing anything that might encourage people to actually cross the street.

And that runs through the document. There's actually specific wording caution willing against just using crosswalks all over the place.

Sometimes the restrictions or the lack of support in the manual can be a little bit comical, right, on all of these large animal crossing signs that are available.

I certainly don't know how to behave differently when I see a bighorn sheep than when I see regular sheep. But the sign on the right, which many states have used for years, wouldn't be aloud because you would have to actually rent word bicycles.

It is trivial in a sense but some of those restrictions are quite insulting.

They went out of the way to allow what's on the left and out of its way to prohibit the rainbow crack and other community cracks on the right.

So what's the point of that? Why? Seeking uniformity. MUTCD as a document is based on the I can't of uniformity.

But the idea is if we make every single, sign, marking look the same, it will be easier for drivers to go fast. And the idea that the amount of time it takes to actually figure out what to do that bringing that down is always a good thing, that idea is really directly tied to the idea that the purpose of the street or the road is just to move as many cars as possible, as quickly as possible.

So you are see the word inefficiency in the manual.

And unfortunately, that phrase, when it is used together in traffic engineering, we have to be careful. Because usually that phrase meaning can we avoid making drivers stop or slow down. Can we remote high-speed movement without conflict that might cause a serious crash for a vehicle occupant?

The problem with that is pretty clear. It should be pretty clear to all of us. It leaves out all of the rest of us, whenever we're not in the driver's seat of a car.

So the two areas are, in a sense, the deepest expressions of this, are the idea of the 80% speed and that has been used for quite a long time as a way to set speed limits, the MUTCD walks that back a little bit, but it still recommends it for highways and it still City recommends using it for all streets. It still recommends considering that speed. So you're supposed to sort of now consider the speeding drivers and also the kids on the street and the people crossing the street and biking on the street and transit riders.

It doesn't restrict anyone from putting in lower speed limits but it does discourage them.

And then, finally, and probably most egregiously, this is what you're going to hear the most about I think from some of our subsequent speakers, the signal warrants remain very circular. They instruct us as transportation transitioners, the planners, me when I was working for the city, he instructed me to not try to put in signals, instructed us approximate to put in signals that show that the people -- that the bar is not set at four injuries or deaths in three years it. Seems like quite a high number.

As soon as we can see an injury and observe a street, we often know that there is a real problem there and often before tragedy happens, we can intervene.

So the street on the left, unfortunately, is MUTCD compliant, best as I can see, and it remains, so the only thing that the manual would require would be widening the markings on the leans from four inches to six inches. It wouldn't really help this pedestrians.

It wouldn't help me cross that street and honestly, it wouldn't help the drivers coming out across multiple leans either.

This kind of hesitancy from the MUTCD, we might call it signal hesitancy, has really been instrumental and there are documented effects of what this means. Including when -- including when it is not even a matter of restriction, just a matter of ditch in knowing it is the right thing to do.

You're going to hear now from Don Chang, traffic engineer of the City of Seattle who has some great things to share with you.

>> Okay, everyone. Thank you for joining us for some really important topic. I think we have as profession a really great job, we have a dedicated group of volunteers and also staff looking at safety of all of our roadways and we've done an excellent job of creating

a roadway system that's really safe, sufficient, and convenient for people travelling in vehicles.

But you know, really those that are outside the vehicle are often not addressed. They're excluded and they're harmed. And I think this is really apparent now with the age of COVID and as we are utilizing our sidewalks and sometimes there is no sidewalks and how we have to navigate the uniform vehicle code which is the rule of the roads in if there isn't a sidewalk, you're to walk facing traffic, that's what the MUTCD kind of references and then upon a approachable vehicle, supposed to step clear of the roadway.

If a family is walking on the portion of Aurora in North Seattle where they should be actually walking on the other side. And that they are obviously not in the best environment for people outside of the vehicle.

So really for continuation is really important and we need to think about safe system of on the roadway design for not just vehicle drivers but for all users and really think about those we have excluded. An example of the practice that really harms is how we treat all modes at intersection where we have the intersection and the rules of the road and the MUTCD says, that you know, when that signal is looked at, that's based on engineering judgment. It is not always required. It is not the de facto. So we should change that.

It should be required unless there's a rationale for removing it or not having it.

And at a location where now we have technologies to do count down timers and we are able to gauge when we have sufficient time. The current regulation on, step in the intersection when the walk signal is on but as soon as the flashing don't walk you're not to step into the intersection, right?

So this is an intersection in the lower left of University of Washington where the predominant mode is a walk.

Why can't we have count down timers starting at the start of walk so we know exactly how much time they we have to cross the street. And if someone gauges and they have enough time to cause, why makes that illegal.

So again I think we really need to think about the regulation that is we put in place and then who we impact and exclude based on -- based on our -- on these guidance.

For example, in Seattle, African Americans represents 7% of the Seattle's population but they receive 26% of the jaywalking tickets.

So these laws and these regulations that we have impact people in a desperate way.

So having that context is really important. So this is a roadway where if you have high-speed, it really makes sense to have the guidance and the design for safe operation of the driver, right, so you want to have good clear area for people to regain if they lose control. Anything that's on the side of the roadway should be break away so that they don't have that high-speed crash. But in the other context in the urban area where there are people, we don't want to have break away features. You don't want that vehicle to stop and really they place, it is really four pedestrians, right so we need to make sure that vehicles stay in that roadway space and that they are not encroaching on to the pedestrian space.

And the MUTCD provides guidance that sometimes does not help us design and operate our streets in that context.

MUTCD is adopted in Washington State by State law. We have to have substantial performance of the MUTCD.

There's a group that convenes to review and mixed modification but they tend to be very small.

And it applies to all roadways open to the public. Even private roadways.

So if you think about a private property owner, they have no clue on what the MUTCD but they have to comply with it and because it has a force of law in Washington State, they have the responsibility to follow and have all of the reliabilities that comes with it and respirabilities.

And o and so having a process and providing a input that everyone can really easily understand and why it is placed the way that it is, is critical.

For example, I get and he questions from my community on what are these signals and why don't Seattle have a lot of these hawk signals.

And if you think about the uniformity and safety, hawk signal is very, again, it is a tool that's available it. Has features behind it. But is it uniform? Is it easily understood?

And is that something that really has safety benefits?

Again, we have a lot of real crossing in seating, will, as many communities, there's a possibility so we need to be thoughtful, how the decisions are made, and how we can direct our concerns to people that can make changes.

And with that, I will turn it over to Lisa Marie Glover from City of Fort Lauderdale.

>> Fort Lauderdale is experiencing a growing popularity and is transforming into a thriving me drop list. The development and development patterns are changing from urban to suburban with high density growth areas. More people in the business and the areas, there's a need to develop a balanced transformation network.

Just to provide a quick overview of the layers and users of our network, Fort Lauderdale is home to Fort Everglades which is one of the top ten busiest cruise courts in the world. We are also one of the south Florida's main seaports.

The home -- we're also the home of Fort Lauderdale Hollywood international airport and we enter Continental gateway with over 700 flights to over 135 destinations.

We are also the home of one of the top boat shows in the world for the Fort Lauderdale boat show which has dubbed as the boating capitol of the world, with 50,000 registered vessels and 100 marinas and boat yards.

We are also known as of America with 165 miles of inland waterways, as well as a known south port of vacation spot with over 560 hotels and nearly 36,000 hotel rooms.

Now, add on top of that our transit, bicycle and pedestrian dependence, residents, residential traffic, mobile traffic, and residential users of our transportation network.

Our vision here in Fort Lauderdale is to be a connected city, great streets, and shared safety for all of our users.

Now it is important to remember, as stated earlier, the organize goal of the MUTCD was to create national standards for the automobile traffic.

Although deemed a recommendation guide as Debbie has noted, it is used as a standard guide it. Is the Bible, and everyone refers to it in their ordinances, roadway design standards, etc.

This becomes a barrier we're looking at trying to pro molt designed and seek to improve equity, economic development, livability, and shared safety at the forefront of our street.

We believe the reframing of the MUTCD would provide guidance for all modes to jointly share the roadway.

Now I'm going to have it over to our traffic engineer, Benjamin.

>> Hi, everyone.

Benjamin Strpo, I'm project manager here at the City of Fort Lauderdale. I want to give two examples of how the city of Fort Lauderdale has run into the MUTCD and how it has impacted not just the way people live in our cities but also some financial impacts on our roadway.

So this first slide here is Northeast 13th Street. North East 13th, this is an area of Fort Lauderdale that is about half a mile between Northeast Fort Lauderdale and FEC train tracks. It is a city collector, four-lane divided with left turn lanes.

There's no on street parking, sidewalks and the community has called this a little section of Fort Lauderdale, the little midtown.

It is commercially zoned, surrounded by residential but instead of being used as a midtown gathering area, drivers mainly use this stretch of corridor as a cut through to east Fort Lauderdale to West Fort Lauderdale.

This is just a street view of north east 13th Street looking east, it is a four-lane divided highway with a two-way left turn lane.

There's not really much economic growth happening here. You can see like for rent signs and oh, in this picture, it was taken in 2011.

Here's another view, Northeast 13th Street on Dixie highway. Fought really much going on. It doesn't make you feel like it is a sense of a place where you want to stop in and purchase something.

This next slide I'm sure most people know about the memorandum approximate the approval for optional green colored pavement. This interim approval was approved in 2011 with the condition that FH would approve the use of the jurisdiction submits a written request to the transportation office of operations.

In 1984, the city of Fort Lauderdale entered an agreement where the city granted jurisdictional control over all streets and highways located within the city boundaries, except for the state highways, of course.

So what this means is Brower County is now the agency or the entity responsible for planning, installation, operations, and maintenance of traffic control devices on state roadways.

So in 2017, the city went out and constructed this had beautiful cross-section on Northeast 13th Street.

It went from a four-lane divided collector to a two-lane divided roadway with bike lanes and on street parking.

The reason why there was a memo before is that the city, since it gave jurisdictional control to the county, we couldn't wait to get that approval from FHWA or we couldn't wait for Brower county to apply for approval from FHWA.

So ended up happening because of the construction of this, the city and county had to amend the agreement from 1984 and they would remove this half-mile stretch from the agreement and then place in to monetary responsibility of maintaining the signing of pavement markings and all traffic control devices back on to the city.

So this is the side of that intersection that I kind of showed you before where the signals were, went up replacing the signals with this round about and with replacing the signals now, the city is responsible for all maintenance of this round about.

So you can kind of see the before and after.

The bottom left corner is the before the reconstruction project and after you can see on the top right corner. A lot more for pedestrians and bicyclists and even vehicular users, there's a lot more on street parking for people to come in and spend their time here.

Again, the bottom left corner is before, the signal intersections, to after.

If you look at a aerial view of this segment, you can see the economic development that happened in this area, all of the new businesses that sprouted out just because of this project that the city constructed. In 2018, after the project was constructed, the project was constructed in 2018, Brower County eventually did apply for the interim use or the approve ram to use green pavement to signify a bicycle lane.

So after the project, maybe the county saw how great it was so they just said, okay, let's go get the approval and let's are the start constructing this all over the county.

The next example is of a -- the next and final example is Northeast 9th Street and Northeast 2nd Street.

As I mentioned before, Brower County has jurisdictional control to accept or deny the installation of traffic control devices in our city.

And as they should, the Brower county uses MUTCD to know when and where to install traffic control devices.

At the time of the installation, this control intersection did not meet the needs. So brow arrested can the County denied the city's request to make this an all shocked control intersection.

So the stay of Fort Lauderdale thought it was imperative to move forward with the soft control since this intersection does connect a church and a high school. So you can imagine during peak season, there's only one day out of the week that people are not walking through intersection and you need a certain amount of traffic control besides crosswalks to get not just children but anybody through these intersections.

So in on to install this, you can kind of guess, it is very similar to the previous, the city and the county this had to amend the 19ed 4 agreement and remove this intersection from the agreement and put all of the responsibilities and monetary replacement responsibility back on the city to maintain.

Because the MUTCD's preferred treatment of vehicles and pedestrians it makes it more difficult for cities like Fort Lauderdale to make pedestrian bicycle improvements.

Burden just isn't about accessibility but it is also monetary since cities like Fort Lauderdale must make amendments to maintenance agreements and reallocate funds to from one source to now, maintaining the traffic control devices.

So that is kind of the stuff that we have to evaluate going furtherer when we want to try to do bold, innovative projects.

Do we want to go for the grandiose projects, dined kind of like Northeast 13th Street, and if we do, then we have to make amendments to our maintenance agreements and adds more financial burdens. That's one of the things we would like to see just quick clear guidance on how we can allocate spaces in our railways to most of the users in the roadways.

And that's all I've got. Thank you.

>> Benjamin, I think you need to turn off your presentation. And get everyone into the conversation.

There are you popping up. Membership too.

There we go. Thanks, everybody and if I can try to summarize what we heard so far was one, we prioritized cars over people, you know, whether that's speed limits, whether it is cracks, whether a barrier can be a solid barrier or not. Now we're April or tiring the damage to the car over damage to a person. Because we have something that will break away as a vehicle as opposed to protect a person.

And Benjamin's story was just if you don't follow the MUTCD deal you can lose dollars. You will do the unsafe thing to save money and then have to you the more money in. How did we get here? This is my first question. We can't possibly have everybody answer every question but one of the things that was answered here was the NUCTD, national committee on uniform traffic control, and I'll tee this up a little bit.

When I first read about it and for viewers I was a served on multiple committees, who was this organization, and how did they get the authority to write the draft, and ask does this make sense?

So Don, I'll put it on you because I know you have served on it.

What is this group of people, how did they get this authority? And why did they get to set the rules in the first place? To the best of your knowledge.

It is really a dedicated group of professionals and stakeholders come together and look at MUTCD, look at recommendations and then come to a recommendation.

All of the decisions is made by the FHAW team.

And this, the national committee on uniform traffic control devices used to have another parallel committee that looked at uniform vehicle code as well.

So there was a parallel effort to look at traffic control devices and how they're utilized in the United States and then nor group that looked at the laws and regulations, and that group no longer exists, do not meet, and so if you think about how fast things are changing, and of course, the makeup of this group is, it is fairly large. There's, you know, diverse stakeholders. And I would say that the -- the objective of the group is really great.

We've made tremendous impact for safety of vehicles and uniformity on our roadways but it doesn't really recognize some of the needs of outside of the vehicle, again, the place and the and the communities and especially seeing in our time right now with COVID but the changing need of the street itself there is no tools that are available except for putting in road signs in order to allow that space for people to be able to safely distance. Be involved in the committee, to understand how decisions are made at the team at the federal level is not very transparent. It is hard to really understand, unless they're, you know, have you a relationship with the team.

>> Don, was this all engineers on that committee? Traffic engineers?

>> No, there's a broad stakeholder group of mostly engineers. There are practitioners. There are lawyers. There are people, again, various different stakeholders and I would say that it is a, the strength is having a diversity so that all review the implications and have a robust dialogue. But again it is really difficult, we had a stakeholder group that looked at just the pedestrian aspect of it. There's a and just the interest in that group to further the need of the pedestrians has been tremendous and it is hard to get that kind of change --

>> But it doesn't get -- it doesn't actually get through the community. I've seen you Tweet about things that are voted out.

Stafy, if you were to design a city for road safety, how would you do it? Who would you put on that committee? And what are the values you'd be looking for on that?

>> This is a great question. I lucky don't have to wave my magic wand. I don't get to be the person. I think the goal would be to make sure that it is a multidisciplinary committee that are pedestrian planners, that are bicycle planners that are, you know, transit planners, that everyone involved in using our streets has a voice on the committee.

There's someone in the chat that mentioned the business have a public health framing are we looking at people that people shouldn't realize sedentary lives, because streets are used by many different people and the perspectives as well as expertise are diverse because everyone uses the streets. And I mean, we talk about for cars, I would say that we're not doing a great job of having institutes for drivers either. We think of all of the traffic deaths on our streets and that number is climbing every year. And we certainly want to focus on bike lifts and pedestrians and transit riders who are the most vulnerable, they are outside of vehicles. But some of those traffic deaths are drivers as well. So we need to make sure that we are doing what we can to actually achieve safety, sustainability, and equity. And that means having multiple voices in that at the table.

>> There's another thing about this process that struck me and I was an advocate for and the like with my first experience with the MUTCD was being told that something didn't meet the warrants. The warrants, and if you're an advocate, you've heard this phrase. And hi to ask what are the warrants and where is this and it was please guidelines.

And I would be interested, if somebody wanted to speak to this issue, one of the things that concerned -- well, and so I was a lawyer. I could go figure out what it was. I could go organize my neighborhood to push back.

Does this have a differential impact on communities, because some communities have the ability to push back against the technical expertise of the planners and other neighborhoods do not. Do we end up with yet another -- an equity issue because of the framing of this document as a technical document as opposed to a public safety document of some kind? Who wants to take that one? Lisa, I see you smiling.

>> I agree with what you're saying. There is a lack of education and it is not their fault, and it is the government, and everything that you do when you goat past your local level it is about he cake.

And that is some of the stuff that we do here in our -- here in my shop is when there is a no, we do have to do some education to explain

>> There is a no, that something can't get done to include safety along the roadway. Some people move it up the ladder. And it can get pushed to a point that it doesn't become a political situation. But because of what the MUTCD does and because of the fact have you licensed engineers, you don't ever want to put anyone's license at risk violating the MUTCD. And so it does lead to a very slippery slope. I think I answered your question.

>> I guess you did. I think what I heard you say this document, if don't fall it, an engineer could lose a license so even if a community is making a good argument, they can't necessarily win.

But I thought I also heard you say some neighbors to manage it for what and maybe get more lead way in the MUTCD than other neighborhoods do was my reading on it.

>> I think it also goes back to what Benjamin said is that if it does get to that point and it gets implemented, like with us, it comes out and you're going to have to take responsibility for what you saw.

>> I would like to talk about that, an maybe you can talk about this issue as well. Like if this document has legal effect that even though it is a guideline, the engineers really feel compelled to file follow it and why is that?

>> You're muted still. You got to unmute yourself.

>> While he's finding the mute button, I'll tell a story, then, because I've been degree this story. I was getting briefed, I had somebody from the city attorney's office come in and tell me that all of the city's streets were safe nor because the city followed the MUTCD which was the Bible of engineering.

So even though the my eyes told me and people told me the streets weren't safe, I was admonishing them not to say that because they followed the MUTCD. Why was she shot trying to tell me that?

>> Because following the MUTCD was the way that that particular lawyer, the strategy of that particular lawyer but unfortunately a lot of agencies have for avoiding lawsuits or avoiding liability.

One of the challenges that cities face in kind 6 going beyond the MUTCD in solving problems that aren't already solved by a device in the manual or applying them to new situations or even just putting in an unwarranted I'll put that in square quotes, a unwarranted crossing, is that they fear either that they'll have to do it every where which is to some extent a legitimate fear but also something that really does harm the systemic response to safety problems and the systemic response to the barriers that pedestrians face on our streets.

There's a notion that, well, okay, if we don't do -- if we put in a signal, let's say, at location A where we note it doesn't meet the MUTCD warrant or any of those warrants directly, but whoa know it is needed but we don't do it at location B and someone gets hurt at location B, we'll get sued for that.

So that's one and could even, could, probably won't, probably won't, I should know, and Don can probably talk more about being a difficult legal environment.

But I think the think that we noticed is that that fear leads to very disparate outcomes and it is not, you know, it is not only we talked about how the -- how a community or an organization has to be really -- really, really well-informed, take are a lot of time and energy and probably money if they're going to kind governor up against a decision that was justified by the MUTCD but also the injure dictions itself, cities, counties, states, counties.

We tend to see a real disparity in how much work they do, the city and how far they go beyond the MUTCD, cities that are self ensured, you know, magically tend to go a lot further than cities that are relying on liability insurance and that's a real inequity. That's a real inequity. You need to have a PE on staff, usually, if you're going to do that work.

If you're going to do something that's even a should not clause, FHWA will say that that's flexibility. And legally, it is flexibility.

But it is rarely interpreted as such. You really need your own engineer that is hard to find, it is sometimes hard to find a consulting engineer, there are good ones, but it is certainly possible, and that means you're putting a barrier really to the people who need it the most, the tons and cities that need it the most.

Remember, we're dealing with a massive problem that on our formerly suburban arterial streets which sometimes are in a big city, sometimes aren't, we have these pretty significant safety issues that's where hatch of the pedestrians are being killed by motor vehicle traffic.

I can't emphasize enough how important it is to see the connection between access to traps I on these big streets, the jurisdictions and that I ever own inability to change what might be a state highway under state controlled, even though it is a city street or urban street, people walking and commerce or simply their own inability to have, you know, not -- they don't have as much money as some of the fist that have done the most work.

>> So I'd toss this one out to the group. One of the things that we know, one of the things that I think is, you know, troubling to anyone who has been adds vole cat in the field is this oftentimes commonplace assumption that, well, everyone drives and therefore we have to make it easy to drive.

There's a wonderful advocacy campaign in my home state of Washington in which the disability mobility initiative pointing out that 25% of the public does not have a driver's license, whether due to age or ability or choice. And how does the MUTCD, you know, you look at something like first of all, just the ability to move around your committee but then issues around, say, how long how long does it take to cross the street but the light starts flashing, to what degree is the MUTCD provide or advertising those needs in the process from your experiences working with it and if you were to redraft the MUTCT, what changes would you make in order to really center the needs of accessibility issues or older or younger with different abilities?

>> I'll give a comment on that and it is not just MUTCD but the capacity manual and just how traffic studies are done in general.

Lots of times when bigger agencies like states, counties, sometimes cities, depending how big your agency, is you project out ten years, 15 years, 20 years out, to figure out what the capacity of your roadway should be. It is always about the capacity for vehicular or vehicles, how many vehicles can I have on my roadway, do I another lane, do I add a turn lane, or do I add, you know, just, sometimes, some things are being talked about like roads that go over intersections that aren't I95s or interstates or anything like that. Just how to keep the continuous flow or vehicles over a conflict point. When we dot traffic studies we never really or the bigger agencies never really project out the 20 -- 2030 itself, 2040s, 2050s, how many more pedestrians or bike lifts you'll have in your city or just going around in the network. S so I actually would like to see that, some type of language in the MUTCD or the highway capacity manual, the methodology of how to generate pedestrian traffic in the future and then have warrants based on your expected pedestrian traffic for these mid block signal lied blockings. Right now, I believe the warrants are only of how many pedestrian s you count at specific times. There's no projected of future pedestrian. That's my little gripe about it.

>> Thank you. Don, you wanted to jump in too, I saw.

>> Yeah.

So I would say the current proposed amendment helps with the accommodating pedestrians and signals. That changed from standard to guidance. And provides much more flexibility. So it is growing in the right direction.

We also have a couple of members who are in the advocacy and also design for the access board that helps center some of the design for people who have site and mobility issues. So those are definitely being addressed.

But I think as far as like, you know, how, what the current MUTCD and you know, how we are accommodating for pedestrian needs and projections, that is something that I think each agency has to look at holistically in Washington State. Our state highway department provided the City of Seattle some flexibility and said this location, no one is going to cross here, but we know there's a demand so we want you to come up with a plan on how you monitor and then tell us if it is operating safely. And once that's in place, and if it is not, then you need to provide us the, a procedure for remedying.

So we were able to do that for a location on highway 99. We are now doing a couple of other crossings on citiway which is a location, a similar character, very daunting.

So you know, those are the kinds of things that need to be more holistically addressed than MUTCD so it is easier to work with other jurisdictions so that it can be utilized.

>> Okay. So we're going to go, we're going to keep this conversation going for another, you know, five, ten, 15 minutes, as long as we're still having a good one. But at the top of the hour, so if you have to leave, we understand. You should, of course, go to Americawalks.org/donate and support this work.

We actual so we could do more so we need more for this. So we could do that.

So. Could, you know, send in your message to the regulatory comment period. It is open through May 14th. Again, you can go to America Walks. You can go to NAFTO. They've got a great page on what is aloud and what isn't and why you should engage. Share some of the materials. We'll follow-up. We'll follow-up, share some of what has been shared about this. Share, get more people involved, get other voices into this discussion and again, if have you to drop off and if you want to stick around, I've got a few more questions for folks.

But first, just a comment. Benjamin, your point action I've always been struck by the fact that a lot of cities have adopted climate action plans which count for a driving in driving and increase in amount of pedestrians. At the same time their transportation departments have projections of future traffic that have been accommodated. So there's an element of both predicting the future and also shaping the future. So I just wanted to put that into the mix as well that when you design streets for more cars, you're going to get more cars. When you design it for more pedestrians and biking, you'll probably get some more.

Okay. Everything that I just said about send in your comments, get engaged, get other people engaged, there have been a few questions in the comments thread.

And by the way, if have you a detailed question of what or is not aloud in the MUTCD, we're not going to get to it here, folks. We're sorry, we're just going to have to follow-up with your local MUTCD efforts and make we can save some of these comments and wade through a little bit.

But we have asked the secretary Pete to reframe and he write.

And I guess I'll come back to Savey again because we'll become a participant in helping shape the strategy. What do we say reframe, what are we looking for with a reframe?

>> Again. One of the things that we're most interested is making sure this are multiple voices at the table, more diverse voices at the table, in terms of not just cities and towns and perspectives, but also expertise to make sure that everyone at that table is actually involved in the writing of the document itself. We think that will help to create a document that is just not going through line by line comments and edits but will looking at the spirit and the goal ultimately of the documents and where it needs to end up.

And I think, I hope, that that is something that's on the table.

We certainly see FHWA staff is interested in making sure that we're creating safer streets. We all know that. We all talk about it all the time.

We want to make sure that the document itself has enough flexibility so we can say hey, you know, this whole section needs to move to a totally different location.

Or we need to have rewrite the entirety of section 1 so that the framing with which people read the documents starts out in the right place.

So there are specific things that we can and will comment on. We are collecting hundreds of comments and submitting them as well as in addition to our original leg but the goal here is to look at the now tens of thousands of comments coming in and instead of saying page by page this is how the document should be reframed for the entire document what is the right framing for it, what is the right outline and really trying to make sure that it still, again, meets the spirit of safety, equity and climate.

>> Well, those are three frames, then, safety, equity and climate are frames that we could use to reframe.

If you had to pick out three frames or two frames that they're using now, what are the frames that they're using now in the document? They're really using free flowing motor vehicle traffic as a be all and end all and I think that it is called mobility but it is not a complete mobility, right.

So mobility is, in theory, the frame, but it is just not a complete mobility.

And I think the other key is that they're using uniformity as a frame rather than clarity of communications or finance to purpose.

Most engineering guidance, most design guidance you're really -- you're trifling to give people tools that they need to solve problems. The MUTCD is unfortunately is written in a way that makes it ambiguous whether you're allowed to do things around it.

So that's one of the -- the clauses that say things like let's say things like just because it is not prohibited doesn't mean it is permitted.

But beyond that kind of challenge for the practitioner for the user, the [sfwram](#) there is manual targets, this is new, in this manual, this edition would make it explicit that only people who are paying attention, who are fully alert and are aware, who aren't impaired in any way are really the users that should be designing for. That's a big, big problem.

And it is really the opposite of a safe systems framework. I don't really know what to call that frame other than the opposite of safe systems.

>> If I could follow-up really, I think one of the things that that's worrisome at this point, it is seen as a permissive document, right? You can do certain things if you interpret different sections in certain ways.

This shall, this should, this should not, all of those different things. It creates a system where the interpretation is what is most important. And we have heard really different interpretations between cities and states and then across cities and states, right. So Seattle versus WashDOT, for example, that sort of thing. And what we're looking for is a document that is proactive with respect to safety. Proactive with respect to equity. Proactive with respect to sustainability. So that we are putting the types of movements and accessibilities that we want to see, that we know will accomplish our goals at the forefront so that it is easy to understand, yes we want to make this pedestrian crossing safer, yes, we want to make this bike way signal safer, things like that.

So that it is both easy and straightforward for cities to be able to implement the kinds of changes that they want to do in most cases.

And so they are not as time-consuming and costly, right, because the longer it takes for you to do something, the more it is going to cost the city to get it done. This is the kind of framing we want to see.

>> This is interesting. Because when you talk about framing, it is getting at values, what are the underlying values. And this is something that I find finely occurred to me when I was looking at this is that we tend to -- when you look at a technical document that's taken care of by experts, you tend to have a deference to experts, right? Because they know the data better, know the study, they've spent more time in the fields. But I think what is neglected, underlying the expertise, is a set of values about what are the appropriate outcomes and it may not be wise to assign away a group of values to a select set of people. You may want to have the values at the front end.

I was struck by the point you just raised, Matthew, about the particular user, right, that an underlying assumption, a underlying value is in a typical user is fit and aware of their surroundings.

I would be interesting having one of those from anyone else, what are the underlying values or frames need to be taken a look at in terms of what, how this -- you know, how this document should be reframed.

>> Well, I think that they should also include the ability for you to live in a area that has a level of livability.

If you're unable to walk, ride your bike, take transit, you're in a area that is not safe. And the shared safety, because when you have a livability area and a shared safety area, that automatically would help to put the groundwork for economic development. Because everyone is able to move about. If you're someone's six-lane highway, it is hard to get to the other side and then have you to walk a country mile to get to the next lied lithe which makes people cross and jaywalk and they get out there and they're in the middle of the street and if they get hit, the dryer is not even going to be responsible. And those are the types of issues that people are dealing with, especially as these suburban areas begin to populate and turn in to urban areas. And also in urban areas where that one roadway is the roadway that we come out and in. And you have these mega six leans, eight-leans roadways. And it is we have to look at the how the living in these kinds of areas make it safe for people to move around.

>> I think this is an issue that's only getting more important. It depends on the city, of course, but in the cities in which the, the popular cities in which are being pushed further and further, lower income people, lower and refugee communities and people of color

are being pushed out further into suburban areas and they may be most dependent upon the ability to walk or use transit in order to access economic opportunity. Don't you or Benjamin, would you like to weigh in on framing question? This is a great closing segment here.

>> Yeah. I would say the approach is really important on our roadways and that's a it should be a core value and then transparency on how decisions are made, how people can influence changes. Right now it is very difficult for people to understand and if you are a private property owner or somebody who has to abide by this manual but then don't understand how decisions are made and the whole process becomes very confusing for people.

>> Benjamin.

>> I don't have much to add but ditty. What's really interesting about MUTCD and transportation, it is very similar to technology, right? Technology, the two years, it will be obsolete two years later. Not that MUTCD needs to update every two years but it seems the way we move around in our cities is it is updating rapidly, similar to technology. So the end user is always changing.

>> Okay. So flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.

Okay. Well we've gone 13 minutes over. I really want to thank all of our panelists for joining us. It is, I'll make another editorial comment here. There were some editorial comments embedded in my questions as well. But I experienced it as an advocate at the MUTCD, I experienced it as a mayor and even now in this new role in talking with everybody, I just learned even yet more how deeply embedded it is in the design of our streets and I hope I'm not overstating it but it seems like an extraordinarily significant action that could be taken to make local streets around the country safer, to reframe and rewrite this, like we're just stuck with an old paradigm, we're stuck with the set of values that isn't consistent with our future vision of being equitable and safe and inclusive, you know, and the economic vitality that, all of this is implicated here and I've learned that a lot from all of the speakers here and then the conversations I've been having. So I would again, really strongly urge people to become engaged in this process.

One of the beauties of this is that if you follow Washington, D.C. politics you know that it takes 51 votes to get something through the Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives is closely divided. This is an administrative action. This is within the control of our new USDOT secretary and they have made racial equity a priority. They have raised the issue that maybe we can turn some asphalt over to other uses besides moving cars. They've really put a stake in the ground that they want to do something good. This is the chance. This is the chance. So we'd ask you to get engaged, to, you know, let's see if we can live up to the values we can state about what we want to see in the future.

And, again, we really do want you to think about supporting the work that we do so we can continue to partner with our great allies here and keep working to create better streets for everyone, safe streets, that are open, accessible, equitable and inclusive. So thank you all for joining us.