

Federal Highway Administration
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Serious concerns about the MUTCD in its current form

Dear Acting Administrator Pollack and Secretary Buttigieg:

I write, as a supporter of America Walks, and a person who cares very deeply about my community, Seattle, Washington, to raise serious concerns about the current draft MUTCD under revision by the agency. The MUTCD, an obscure technical document, is a major obstacle to the kind of humane, activity-supporting street level changes that are needed in my community and others across the United States.

Grassroots advocates like myself have valuable local knowledge that is too often brushed aside by traffic engineers based on the rule-bound dictates of the MUTCD. To make matters worse, much of the guidance is outdated, pseudoscientific and based on the premise that speeding cars through intersections is the most important goal. We must drop the destructive constraints of the current draft of the MUTCD and envision a transportation system that is safe, sustainable, and equitable.

I join America Walks and other groups to ask that U.S. DOT perform a comprehensive overhaul of the MUTCD, centering safety, equity and accessibility. We need a rule book that is designed to support healthier safer communities, one that:

- Ensures every urban and suburban signalized intersection has accessible pedestrian infrastructure, including curb ramps, audible and tactile signals, pedestrian signal heads that display “Walk” and “Don’t Walk” messages, and painted crosswalks.
- Gives local residents a voice in what kind of infrastructure is needed.
- Gives engineers flexibility to design urban streets that are safe enough for children to navigate.
- Centers the MUTCD around the pillars of transportation that do not rely on the use of SOVs and fossil fuels. For a future that will necessitate us to move away from fossil fuels we need more of our neighbors to have safe facilities for walking, biking, and rolling.
- Prioritizes the rapid implementation of modern transit facilities that serve the communities in the most need of reliable and safe ways of getting to jobs, schools, stores, and recreational opportunities.

I join America Walks in asking that FHWA reframe and rewrite the MUTCD, creating a path for guidance that more closely aligns with the equity, safety, and sustainability goals of American cities, as well as those of the Biden Administration.

Thank you,

Matthew Bates

matthewdbates@outlook.com