



May 14, 2021

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

**RE: Request for an expedited reframing of the MUTCD as a proactive safety regulation**

Dear Acting Administrator Pollack:

Forward Pinellas respectfully **requests that FHWA reframe and rewrite the MUTCD, creating a path for the creation of comprehensive safety-based guidance.** Doing so will allow FHWA to make strides towards equity and sustainability, while reducing traffic deaths and serious injuries.

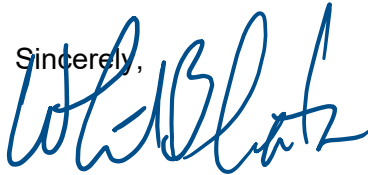
Forward Pinellas serves as the metropolitan planning organization for Pinellas County, Florida. In our transportation planning activities, we often encounter issues with the MUTCD. MUTCD guidelines stand in the way of innovative approaches to improving safety and hold us back from making improvements in our communities that cannot meet the rigidity of the Manual.

To date, the MUTCD has done little to help stem the approximately 40,000 traffic deaths the U.S. sees each year. This is due largely to the Manual's over-emphasis on motor vehicle operations and efficiency on rural highways, and neglect of other modes and contexts. In Pinellas County alone, we see an average of two people killed or seriously injured each day. We have adopted the Safe Streets Pinellas Action Plan, a vision zero effort, but our ability to implement this plan is limited by the MUTCD. To guide the development of an improved, safety-oriented document that supports the equity, safety, economic opportunity, and sustainability vision of the Biden Administration, Forward Pinellas **calls attention to the following fundamental problems that must be addressed in an updated MUTCD:**

- Continued reliance on the 85th percentile approach to setting speed limits over a safe systems approach.
- Outdated signal warrant requirements that ignore known conflicts and land use.
- The draft 11th Edition of the MUTCD, released in December 2020, introduces new barriers to implementing environmentally responsible bicycle and transit infrastructure and does little to address existing ones.
- Traffic control devices appropriate for urban contexts, such as red transit lanes and pedestrian safety measures, are subject to unnecessarily high standards of testing.
- Elements of the new draft, particularly a new section aimed at accommodating automated vehicles, exacerbate already prohibitive cost burdens for cities.

The issues described above are endemic to the document's underlying approach and undercut efforts to provide safe, multimodal accessibility in urban settings. The MUTCD needs holistic reframing to support cost-effective, sustainable, and equitable city street design and improve safety and accessibility for the most vulnerable users. **We respectfully request 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.** Forward Pinellas stands ready to work with you. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Whit Blanton', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Whit Blanton, FAICP  
Executive Director