Federal Highway Administration 5 April 2021  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Serious concerns about the existing Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

Dear Acting Administrator Pollack and Secretary Buttigieg:

I support the goals of America Walks, Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies. I am a physician trained in public health with expertise on health and the built environment. I care deeply about promoting Public Health in my community, Barnstable, Massachusetts, and understand the evidence-based, scientific data supporting the increased level of public health possible when residents feel safe walking and biking as their preferred and easy transportation choices. I have serious concerns about the current draft MUTCD undergoing revision. The MUTCD, an obscure technical document, is often a major obstacle to the design of humane, health-promoting street level changes that are needed in my community and others across the United States.

Much of the guidance is outdated and based on the premise that speeding cars through intersections is the most important goal of transportation design.

I join America Walks and other advocacy groups to ask that U.S. DOT perform a comprehensive overhaul of the MUTCD, prioritizing safety, equity and accessibility for pedestrians, people on bikes and other multi-modal transit. We need a rule book that is designed to support healthier and safer communities. An improved MUTCD would:

* Ensure 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 clearly painted crosswalks.
* Set speed limits based on safety, not designed to move motor vehicles quickly
* Give local residents a voice in what kind of infrastructure is needed.
* Give engineers flexibility to design urban streets that are safe enough for children, the elderly and our special needs citizens to navigate.
* Include redesign of intersections to increase safety for people cycling. Such as including additional traffic lights that give the cyclists some lead time to transit intersections safely and before motor vehicles

**Please direct FHA to reframe and rewrite the MUTCD to more closely align with guidance in Complete Streets, Vision Zero, and the equity, safety, and sustainability goals of American cities. This improved MUTCD will help improve our level of public health and safety, in line with the goals of the Biden Administration.**

Thank you.

Jane Ward, MD, MPH, Colonel (retired) USAF

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