

## MEETING NOTES

# ITE Grade Crossing Committee Meeting

April 17, 2025 8:00 AM PST (Microsoft Teams Meeting)

## Agenda

1. Welcome/Introductions (Karen)
2. General ITE News/Events (Doug)
  - General Update
  - Committee Member Awards
  - Annual Meeting – August 10-13, 2025
  - ITE Grade Crossings Committee Website Updates
3. Committee Liaison Updates
  - FHWA (Scott)
  - FRA (Brian/Dee)
  - AAR/Railroads (TBD)
  - Canada (Maryam)
  - AREMA (Karen)
4. Committee Products + Task Force Updates
  - Cyclists Considerations at Grade Crossings Task Force (Nino+)
  - Another Train Coming Technical Paper (Doug)
  - Roundabouts and Grade Crossings Task Force (Joanna)
  - Traffic Signal Maintenance at Interconnected Crossings Quick Bite (Karen)
  - Recommended Practice: Preemption of Traffic Signals Near Railroad Grade Crossings + MUTCD 11<sup>th</sup> Edition Updates Task Force (Nick/Kevin/Doug)
  - Queue Cutter Traffic Signal Detection Placement Quick Bite (Mark)
5. Committee Webinars (John)
  - Webinar ideas: Quiet Zone Series, Traffic Signal Maintenance at Interconnected Grade Crossings
6. Another Train Coming Technical Paper Highlight Presentation (Brent)



## Attendees

- Karen Hankinson - Committee Chair (Olsson, Irvine, CA)
- Nicole Jackson - Committee Vice Chair (Benesch, Fort Worth, TX)
- Douglas E. Noble (ITE)
- Maryam Hedayati – Committee Secretary (Transport Canada, Montreal, Canada)
- Lauren Jumanan (Kimley Horn, San Diego, CA)
- Stephen Laffey (Illinois Commerce Commission, Springfield, IL)
- Paul Menaker (GHD, Northern California)
- Tom Lancaster (Retired, Lancaster Engineering, Portland, OR)
- Travis Bailey (Olsson)
- Wes McClure (Olsson)
- Mike Travis (Olsson)
- Joanna Bush (Mead and Hunt, Madison, WI)
- Harper Cameron (Freight Rail & Port Division, Washington Dot)
- Mark Mathis (GFT, North Texas)
- Mike Cynecki (Lee Engineering, Phoenix, AZ)
- Brent Ogden (Kimley-Horn and Associates, LA)
- Shayne Gill (Program Director Multimodal Transportation, Washington, DC)
- Charles Meyer (FHWA, Office of safety)
- Brian Gilleran (FRA)
- Melanie Spencer (Province of Manitoba, Canada)
- Kevin Aguiqui (Kimley-Horn and Associates, LA)
- Nicholas Elliott (Benesch, Detroit, MI)
- Chuck Huffine (Chair ITE TEC, Mead & Hunt)
- Richard Smith (City of Houston)
- Amber Stoffels (UPRR)
- Michael May



# Meeting Notes

## 1.0 Introduction and Welcome

Karen Hankinson welcomed participants and introduced members.

## 2.0 General ITE News/Events (Doug)

### *ITE Safety Roadmap*

As many of you are aware, the ITS community has adopted a new Road Safety Roadmap and Action Plan. This plan focuses on various components, some of which directly relate to our technical products. One significant element under discussion is the "duty of care" for all users, a concept being developed through a dedicated committee.

This concept will eventually influence how we frame our documents and technical content. We can't afford to ignore or omit reference to it, especially in areas where user safety is central to the narrative. Final details are expected to be confirmed at the upcoming Annual Meeting, so please keep an eye out for that.

### *Annual Meeting – August 10-13, 2025*

The annual meeting plenary speakers for the upcoming event:

- Greg Slater, Executive Director of the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority, will kick things off during our opening plenary on *innovation*.
- Lorraine Martin, President and CEO of the National Safety Council, will present as part of our *Safety Road Map*. Her talk will take a TED-style approach, focusing on *integrative strategies* across vehicles, infrastructure, behavior, and policy.
- Shailen Bhatt will deliver the *closing plenary*. Many will recognize Shailen from his leadership roles across various organizations and state DOTs over the years.

### *ITE Grade Crossing Website Updates:*

The Rail Grade Crossing Committee webpage has been updated by Nicole and Karen to ensure current and to reflect the latest information, including:

- General resources and key documents (with links)
- Updates related to the 11th Edition of the MUTCD, replacing older interim approval references

Members are encouraged to review the page and suggest additional materials that would benefit the committee.



## *E-Community Engagement*

The Railroad Grade Crossing E-Community serves as a forum for discussions on operations, safety, and technology, where members are encouraged to post questions or share project information either to the committee-specific forum, the general ITE forum, or both to reach a broader audience.

### 3.0 Committee Liaison Updates

**FHWA (Charles Meyer)** shared that FHWA is currently experiencing significant organization changes. These changes are expected to impact the agency's work, although the exact adjustments have yet to be determined. Despite this, FHWA recognizes its evolving role and emphasizes the importance of continued collaboration with partners to improve safety. FHWA noted that reauthorization efforts for the upcoming transportation bill are underway, with FHWA developing specific principles and recommendations, particularly related to the Section 130 crossing program. Annual reporting for states will open in May and continue through August. Additionally, a joint webinar with FRA is planned for June. FHWA is also working on case studies, including one on advanced crossing warning technologies and another featuring a grade separation project in Utah, both expected to be published soon.

**FRA (Brian Gilleran)** - FRA is modernizing its public data dashboards to improve how data is presented and used for planning and decision-making. A key focus is the Blocked Crossing Portal, which is starting to gather meaningful large-scale data. FRA is also continuing targeted inspections and increasing attention on quiet zones and Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign compliance under 49 CFR 234. Public authorities are being reminded of their responsibility to maintain quiet zones and related infrastructure, with non-compliance potentially leading to suspension or termination. The Quiet Zone website is also being updated, and questions can be directed to the FRA contact.

**AAR/Railroads (Amber)** – No updates

**TRB (Dave)** – No updates

**Canada (Ana/Maryam)** -No updates

**AREMA (Karen)** At the AREMA Committee 36 meeting, which focuses on grade crossings and contributes to standards and recommendations for the AREMA Manual, there were no major updates or approvals relevant to this group. However, a few updates were shared in the open forum and will be addressed later.



## 4.0 Committee Products + Task Force Updates

### Cyclists Considerations at Grade Crossings Task Force (*Nino*)

Karen and Doug advised that there's been a lot of discussion regarding cyclists at grade crossings. Between the Rail and Bike Committees, there have been discussions about various topics.

Regarding committee products and task force updates, although Nino couldn't attend, he had coordinated well and led updates on two "Quick Bites" last year. He's now re-engaging and has reached out to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Standing Committee to collaborate on shared concerns. He already had a kickoff meeting with some members and will speak at their upcoming meeting on May 12.

The task force is in a brainstorming phase and welcomes participation—especially from those involved in multimodal or complete streets projects. Grade crossing issues related to bike lanes and cycle tracks can be complex, and the goal is to develop useful content for practitioners in this space.

**Another Train Coming Technical Paper (*Doug*)** *Another train incidents happen when a second (or third or more) train arrives after active warning devices have already been triggered by the previous train. There are two main scenarios: one where the following train is hidden behind the previous, causing people to mistakenly assume it's safe, and another where pedestrians focus on the initial train and don't notice another train approaching from the opposite side, which can be especially confusing in situations like push-pull train operations.*

*Various passive signs have been tested to address this, but they have limitations. The train type is often unclear in icons, and when active warning devices are triggered, people tend to ignore passive signs altogether. Because of this, active sign solutions were prototyped and tested. One active sign, recognized in the MUTCD and tested by FRA in Garfield, NJ, showed a slight reduction in another train violations but it wasn't statistically significant. Interestingly, it also increased violations related to the initial train, possibly because some people misinterpret the signals or audible cues as a prompt to hurry rather than stop. This effect was similarly observed in Salt Lake City during tests of an audible device at pedestrian crossings.*

### Roundabouts and Grade Crossings Task Force (*Joanna Bush*)

Joanna Bush explained that, as is typical with committee-led efforts, progress takes time. They are currently vetting all the collected information on existing roundabouts near grade crossings to ensure accuracy before releasing a list of locations people can reference. The next step will be to determine what kind of documentation they can confidently prepare and share with the broader ITE community to help agencies make better decisions about installing roundabouts near grade crossings. This won't be a definitive study but rather a resource highlighting the positives, negatives, and unique challenges to consider.



Joanna also mentioned that she submitted an abstract and will be presenting on the topic “Roundabouts near grade crossings “at the upcoming ITE annual meeting. This work is being done by a joint task force made up of members from this committee and the Roundabout Committee, aiming to fill a significant gap in current guidance. Despite nearly 100 roundabouts installed near grade crossings, existing guidance often just says “consider” without detailing what factors to consider. Their goal is to provide practical insights and add more substance to this area.

## Recommended Practice: Preemption of Traffic Signals Near Railroad Grade Crossings + MUTCD 11th Edition Updates Task Force *(Kevin)*

The team has gathered all comments and modifications for the preemption recommended practice and now needs to prepare a backend documentation report. This report will outline what has been done, including identifying committee members and the peer review panel. The plan is to complete this report next week and then send it to the peer review group, allowing about three weeks for review.

A few people have already expressed interest in being peer reviewers, and there’s room for a couple more. Anyone interested is encouraged to reach out to Doug Noble via email. After peer review, because this update is substantial, the document will be sent out for a public comment period of at least 45 days. Comments received during this time will be reviewed and addressed by the committee.

The document will also be directly shared with relevant federal agencies FRA, FHWA, AREMA, and representatives from Class 1 railroads, who usually provide feedback as well. This process is nearing the final stages before public release.

## Queue Cutter Traffic Signal Detection Placement Quick Bite *(Mark)*

A new methodology for queue cutter traffic signal detection placement has been developed by Mark Esposito (Olsson). This method helps practitioners decide where to place detection when queue cutters are installed. Mark is drafting a document that will go through peer review before publication. Anyone interested in joining the peer review group can put their name in the chat.

## 5.0 Committee Webinars *(Nicole)*

Upcoming webinars are being planned for later this year and into the fall. Topics likely include quiet zones/ whistle cessation (coming from this committee), and traffic signal maintenance. These will also tie into the “quick bite” and annual meeting sessions.

Doug noted that ITE has a series of webinars, separate from the MUTCD certificate course, that is part of a 7-part on-demand learning course; it is available from the ITE professional development website.



#### Upcoming conferences and events:

- **2025 Mid-States Conference** -covers multiple topics and runs over a half-day on Wednesday and Thursday. It's held annually and attendees are encouraged to check it out if they haven't before.
- **2025 AREMA Annual Meeting** -On September 16th, Stephen Phillips and the speaker will present on "Navigating Complexity: Best Practices for Hwy-Rail Grade Crossing Projects." The presentation will cover challenges with constructability, signalized project staging, roadway widening, maintaining traffic, and counterflow restrictions, along with case studies. There will be an associated paper.
- **National Grade Crossing Conference** -Held every two years; last one was in San Diego (Aug-Sept 2024), next one is announced for Atlanta, April 6–9, 2026. The website currently still references 2024 but will be updated soon.

## 6.0 Another Train Coming Technical Paper Highlights Presentation

Keep an eye on updates on Second Train Publication coming soon.

## 7.0 Open Forum

