2017 TRB Annual Meeting (Washington Convention Center – Washington, DC)

I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM EST by Committee Chair Brent Ogden.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was held at the 2017 TRB Annual Meeting at the Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC. There were eighteen members and guests who participated:

- Brent Ogden
- Tom Lancaster
- Phil Olekszyk
- Gene Russell
- Brian Gilleran
- Dee Chapell
- John Van Hoff
- Steve Laffey
- Casey Murdie
- JoNette Kkunau
- Lisa Fontana
- Phil Poichuk
- Darin Kosmak
- Alexandre Nolet
- Steve Venglar
- Benjamin Sperry
- Bruce Friedman
- Kelly Morton

III. ITE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lisa Fontana (ITE staff) reported on several ITE-related items:

- ITE has a contract with FRA and FHWA to produce a new grade crossing handbook. The existing 2007 handbook was an updated version of the 1986 handbook, but the new handbook is intended to be a new document. Dee Chappell stated that the Office of Safety and Office of Operations at FHWA would both be involved. The new handbook will be applications-based, possibly in volumes, and will be a guideline rather than a standard or requirement. This is in recognition of every grade crossing being different, with no single set of standards applicable to all. A working group will be assembled as a resource. Kelly Morton and Bruce Friedman of FHWA and Brian Gilleran of FRA will be involved. An accompanying guidebook on preemption of traffic signals near railroad crossings is intended to be a high-level overview of preemption issues, not a technical handbook.

Brent stated that in addition to comments and critiques, the contribution of content to the new handbook will be welcome. The handbook will likely include a discussion of grade crossing hazard prediction models, although he noted that no hazard prediction models are currently available for light-rail crossings.

Benjamin Sperry, Ph. D. and professor of Civil Engineering at Ohio University who participated in the meeting indicated he could develop content on risk formulas.
• *Vision Zero* is a strategic focus area for ITE. A toolbox handbook is expected to be published in about two months.

• The *Trip Generation* handbook will be updated this year. The focus will be on urban person-trips rather than vehicle-trips.

• ITE will publish a report on self-enforcing roadways this Spring.

• A Recommended Practice for traffic signal change and clearance intervals, which has been in development for a long time, is expected to be available this year.

• It is hoped that there will be a session on railroad grade crossing at the ITE Annual Meeting in Toronto in August.

IV. ITE COMMITTEE ITEMS

1. Prior Action Items Review

All action items from the previous meeting are closed, although activity continues with postings to the ITE Community.

2. ITE Grade Crossing Web Page

Brent reported that the web page is now up-to-date, and railroad-crossing-related sessions from the 2016 Annual Meeting have been posted. There is one dead link on the site, and Brent stated that he would remove it.

If more visibility for our web page is desired, more postings on the ITE Community would be beneficial, particularly if they are related to a topic that the readers find interesting. Joaquin Siques has been helpful in implementing Community postings. Completion of the Recommended Practice on traffic signal preemption should result in some postings.

3. Update of *Recommended Practice for the Preemption of Traffic Signals Near Grade Crossings*

Tom Lancaster reported that a draft of the Recommended Practice was submitted to ITE in September 2016. The next steps will be for ITE to send the draft out to the RP Task Force for a formal vote, assemble a review panel to assess the draft and note any conflicts with other standards, and publish the draft as a proposed RP for a 60-day comment period. This process is expected take four to six months.

4. MUTCD Items

Brent reported that at the meeting of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices the previous week, no railroad-related items were submitted for a vote. There was a discussion
within the Railroad/Light Rail Transit Technical Committee of suggested changes to the Uniform Vehicle Code related to railroads and light rail.

There was an extensive discussion at the NCUTCD meeting on connected and autonomous vehicles. One speaker reported that fully autonomous vehicles are not expected to be in widespread use until about 2075 due to the complications involved in assuring a high level of safety and reliability.

The FHWA discussed interim MUTCD approvals, and reported that an interim approval of the Clearview sign font has been rescinded, although that decision will be reconsidered. Also, an interpretation is likely to be issued soon that will indicate that continuing pavement edge lines through railroad crossings is permissible. On January 18, FHWA will host a free webinar which will discuss the MUTCD.

5. Second/Another Train Coming Task Force

Brent Ogden reported that the MUTCD RR/LRT Task Force concluded that the development of a second train coming traffic control device will require human factors research, but identifying available research funding has been difficult.

Brent mentioned that reliable track circuitry has been reported as a technical challenge in certain rail environments.

Steve Venglar stated that it would be helpful to know the frequency of incidents related to a second train coming, but reliable and complete data is not available. Brent suggested that as an alternative, a description of a few improvements that have been successful in reducing these incidents could be helpful.

6. Conference Sessions Update

Brent reported that a proposal has been submitted for a conference session related to railroad crossings for the August 2017 ITE Annual Meeting in Toronto. The proposed title is “Toward Vision Zero – Railroad Grade Crossings”. The proposed presenters include Karen Hankinson on technical issues in the Recommend Practice on preemption, Kevin Balke on the new Texas preemption timing guidelines, Jay Rieger, Chief Engineer, Signals and Crossings, Transport Canada on the Canadian railroad grade crossing handbook, and Brent Ogden on the upcoming new railroad grade crossing handbook.

7. Texas Transportation Institute review of Texas Preemption Policies

Steve Venglar reported that the revised preemption timing worksheets and instructions for TxDOT are expected to be completed in February. He stated that the work is focused on TxDOT typical state practice, and no comparison was made to LADOT or other agency preemption worksheets. Brent stated that a comparison of worksheets from several agencies might be included in the new grade crossing handbook. Tom Lancaster stated that the draft Recommended
Practice on preemption includes references to the TxDOT and LADOT worksheets, but does not include a discussion of them.


    Tom Lancaster reported that a draft of this Synthesis has been completed and submitted, but because the new Recommended Practice for preemption has not been approved, a discussion of it will not be included in the Synthesis.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Brent stated that because ITE does not promote committee meetings during the ITE Annual Meeting, finding a meeting room for this Committee can be difficult. The consensus of a discussion was that it is probably not necessary to have a meeting and conference call during the Annual Meeting. Brent will consider having a conference call meeting after the meeting, possibly after Labor Day. Brent noted that there was good attendance at the unofficial railroad crossing field trip sponsored by RailPros during the Anaheim Annual Meeting. The field trip included observations of pre-signals and queue-cutter signals.

VI. UPCOMING MEETINGS

- ITE 2017 Annual Meeting and Exhibit, Sunday, July 30 – Wednesday, August 2, 2017, Sheraton Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, Washington DC, Sunday, January 7 – Thursday, January 11, 2018
- ITE 2018 Annual Meeting and Exhibit, Monday, August 20 – Thursday, August 23, Hilton Minneapolis, Minneapolis, MN

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.