I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 AM by ITE Committee Chair Brent Ogden. The meeting minutes from the last meeting at TRB were approved.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

There were 11 participants present:

Brent Ogden  AECOM  Chair  ITE Fellow
Tom Lancaster  Lancaster Engineering  Secretary  ITE Fellow
Phil Poichuk  Transport Canada  Participant  ITE Fellow
Eugene Russell  Kansas State University (Emeritus)  Participant  ITE Fellow
Brian Gilleran  Federal Railroad Administration  Participant  ITE Member
Robert Seyfried  0  Participant  ITE Fellow
Steven Venglar  Texas Transportation Institute  Participant  ITE Member
Joe Palsa  Clary Corporation  Participant  ITE Member
Rick Campbell  Campbell Technologies  Participant  ITE Member
Rock Miller  KOA Corporation  Participant  ITE Fellow
Philip Caruso  ITE  ITE Staff  ITE Staff

III. ITE ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. ITE Publications

Lisa Tierney, who could not attend, was represented by Phil Caruso of ITE. Philip noted that the Traffic Signal Timing Manual, the Transportation Planning Handbook, and the Traffic Engineering Handbook were published in March 2009. The Traffic Signal Maintenance Handbook is scheduled to be published in the second quarter of 2010; the draft chapters will be submitted in September 2009. The Parking Generation Manual (4th Edition) is still accepting data for regression analysis and will be published in 2010. The Geometric Design Manual for Rural Highways, the Introduction to Transportation Studies, and the Traffic Engineering Studies manual will all be published in 2010. A new MUTCD is being prepared by FHWA, with a likely publication date of early 2010. The Trip Generation manual is also being updated, and will likely be published in 2010.

b. ITE Conferences

The ITE Technical Conference will be in Savannah, GA, from March 14 to 17, 2010, and the ITE annual meeting will be in Vancouver, BC, August 8 to 11, 2010.
IV. ITE COMMITTEE ITEMS

a. ITE Grade Crossing Web Page

No significant progress has been made on the establishment of a rail-road crossing web page. Further progress is pending a meeting between ITE and FHWA to clarify the relationship between the two agencies with regard to a web page, and to clarify the relationship of the web page to the Grade Crossing Handbook.

The committee had previously agreed that there is a need for this website whether or not it is supported by FHWA. The committee had also been advised that an ITE web-site not supported by FHWA would need to have a disclaimer stating that the materials had not been reviewed or approved by FHWA. Also, in the absence of balloting, the web-site could be considered only as informational, not as a recommended practice. Brent suggested that the committee should proceed to develop the site even if it is not initially hosted by ITE, and move it over to ITE when ITE is prepared to accept it. There was further discussion of suggested content and people who might be recruited to maintain the site.

b. Maintenance of ITE Publication Recommended Practice for the Preemption of Traffic Signals near Railroad Crossings

There have been many changes in traffic signal preemption since the publication of the RP, including more mature technology and new traffic signal timing tools. In contrast to the time when the RP was published, nearly all of the available traffic signal hardware can now address most of the requirements of signal preemption implementation and operation. Also, there are now signal preemption timing templates and state standards that are available to perform signal timing computations which don’t require converting the theoretical information in the RP into application methodology.

At the recent Volpe Center Research Needs Workshop it was noted by a state official that a recent review of crashes at railroad crossings identified the presence of a nearby traffic signal as a key indicator. Disseminating and/or updating information on preemption implementation remains a high priority, both near term with respect to publicizing the concerns as well as longer term with a possible update to the ITE Recommended Practice. Phil Caruso stated that ITE does not like to update RPs unless the information in the current RP is obsolete. There was considerable discussion generally concluding that it is not that the current RP is no longer valid but that there is some new information and there are tools which have been developed since it was developed.

For short-term update information, Rock reports that the Traffic Engineering Council Newsletter would accept an article on preemption, and the ITE Journal might also. The information could be in the form or a quiz to raise awareness of and interest in preemption issues.

There was some discussion of whether the requirement in the proposed new MUTCD for a back-up power supply at preempted traffic signals should be a “should” condition or a “shall” condition.
The committee agreed that more examples of preemption timing may be needed, as well as information as to when advance preemption is appropriate. If the Recommended Practice is revised, it should probably include less theory and more “how-to” information with photographs and drawings of examples. Examples could be included in articles submitted to the TE Council Newsletter. Also, the committee should have a representative at the Traffic Engineering Council meetings.

Brent will send suggestions and outlines to Rock of short articles that would be appropriate for the TE Council Newsletter. One suggested issue is that some agencies are not investigating the possibility that queues may extend over a crossing even if the crossing is more than 200 ft from a signalized intersection, and some are not examining the potential for queuing even when the intersection is closer than 200 ft.

The committee would like to have input on other ITE publications if information on railroad crossings is included. Phil Caruso will assist with this.

c. Conference Sessions Update

A session at 2 PM this afternoon at the ITE International Meeting will include Rick Campbell on the use of gate-down detection to avoid potential problems with advance preemption, Brian Gilleran of FRA highlighting the issues and potential approaches to dealing with roundabouts near grade crossings, Tom Lancaster regarding proposed revisions to Part 8 of the MUTCD, and Tim Huya of BNSF discussing the railroad perspective on pedestrian treatments for crossings.

The possibility of a different presentation format for a presentation at next year’s ITE International Meeting in Vancouver was discussed. A site visit is a possibility, although that has the potential for creating legal problems if safety issues are found. Other possibilities include a session on diagnostic teams or high-speed rail, or an interactive roundtable discussion rather than PowerPoint presentations. Brian noted that the FRA believes that there is an absence of information regarding requirements for crossings with train speeds between 79 and 110 mph. The presentation could include LRT (crossings as well as street running), urban and rural crossings, and the use of queue-cutter signals.

There were some concerns expressed that attendance at next year’s meeting in Vancouver could be lower than usual due to decreased funding for out-of-state and out-of-country travel for both US and Canadian members.

d. Webinars

There have been no railroad crossing webinars in the last year. There is not sufficient information available yet for a webinar on railroad crossings near roundabouts. Another potential topic is the treatment of railroad crossings for pedestrians, but this topic should await the publication of the new MUTCD as well as the development of other new information.
Brent suggested that until some of these issues are resolved, the development of new railroad crossing webinars should be delayed and efforts concentrated on the web page and preemption issues.

V. OTHER BUSINESS


Based on the earlier discussion of railroad preemption issues, the committee asked Phil Caruso if the committee could provide input to the pending Traffic Signal Maintenance Manual. Phil agreed to send draft copies of Chapter 7 to committee members for review. Comments should be sent to Tom or Brent for forwarding to Phil. Phil noted that the manual is proceeding toward publication, so any comment submittals should be expedited.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next committee meeting will be in conjunction with the Transportation Re-search Board meeting at Washington, DC in January 2010.

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM.