ITE GRADE CROSSING COMMITTEE 102-02
Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2009

2009 TRB Annual Meeting
Marriott Wardman Park Tower – Suite 8219
Washington, DC

I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM by ITE Committee Chair Brent Ogden.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

There were 11 ITE members and guests present:

Brent Ogden, AECOM  Chair
Tom Lancaster, Lancaster Engineering  Member
Anya Carroll, Volpe Center  Friend
Phil Poichuk, Transport Canada  Member
Andy Davis, Quixote Transportation Safety  Member
Bill Browder, AAR  Friend
Eugene Russell  Member
Ray Lewis  Member
Steve Laffey, AHB60 Chair  Friend
John Sharkey, Campbell Technologies  Friend
Lisa Fontana-Tierney  ITE Staff

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Lisa Tierney discussed ITE resources that are being updated: The Traffic Engineering Handbook and the Transportation Planning handbook are expected to be released in the first quarter of 2009. A geometric design guide for urban roads and the 8th Edition of the Trip Generation Handbook have recently been published. The Signal Maintenance Handbook is scheduled to be published by the end of 2009. It will include information on battery back-up systems, but it is not certain if there will be any information on railroad preemption. Lisa will send an outline of the handbook to Brent. The focus of this handbook will be on hardware rather than software or signal timing.

b. There is an ITE web seminar program currently being prepared. There will be seminars on traffic engineering fundamentals, planning fundamentals, and safety fundamentals. Each seminar will be a series of eight sessions. They are expected to be completed in Spring 2009.

c. The ITE Technical Conference will be in Phoenix at the Phoenix Convention Center from March 22 to 25. The theme will be transportation operations. The ITE annual meeting will be in San Antonio August 9 to 12.
IV. ITE COMMITTEE ITEMS

a. Conference Sessions Update

The railroad session at the ITE annual meeting in Anaheim in August 2008 was well-attended with a fully-occupied room. A railroad session has been approved for the ITE annual meeting in San Antonio. Tentative presenters are Rick Campbell of Campbell Technology to discuss the gate-down circuit, Brian Gilleran of FRA to discuss grade crossings in or near roundabouts, Tim Huya of BNSF to discuss advances in pedestrian safety treatments at grade crossings, and Joaquin Siques of the City of Pasadena to discuss the proposed MUTCD updates for railroad crossings...

b. US DOT Grade Crossing Handbook / Web Page

A request has been submitted to ITE for a web page that, as discussed in previous meetings, could be used by this committee to post information on grade crossings, including information to supplement the Grade Crossing Handbook. It has been suggested that the page have an individual domain and a descriptive name so that it would be easy to find from the ITE web site and could be readily found by a Google search. ITE would probably cover the annual cost of domain registration. Potential topics to be included on the web page include revised accident prediction calculations, handbook errata, pre-signal design and operation updates, changes to the MUTCD, updates to the Rail Safety Act, and other statutory or regulatory changes affecting grade crossings.

Lisa said that a web page would be considered informational rather than a recommended practice. A recommended practice contains guidance which requires review and balloting by two separate ITE committees.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding possible problems with including updates or supplements to the Grade Crossing handbook on the site. Brent and Lisa will meet with FHWA to discuss the potential relationship of the site to the handbook. If FHWA wishes to sanction this page as an official site for updates to the handbook, FHWA could be asked for funding.

c. Webinars

The issue of railroad crossings in or adjacent to roundabouts was suggested as a topic for a future webinar, but it will be necessary to find a presenter. The issue could be raised at the next ITE Roundabout Committee meeting. Mark Morrison of Wisconsin DOT might be another source of information. Other possible webinar topics could include the planned ITE railroad crossing web page or temporary traffic control at railroad crossings. Bruce Friedman is the FHWA staff person for Parts 8 and 10 of the MUTCD. A more general topic which could include several crossing issues would be a review of problems and mitigations of queuing at railroad crossings.
V. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Bill Browder stated that NCUTLO (National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances) has been abolished, and no work has been done on the model traffic code since 2000. Bill questioned why FHWA has not become involved in this work, as it is critical to the support of the MUTCD. The absence of a model traffic code organization has been discussed at the National MUTCD committee. Bill asked if ITE should become involved in this work. AASHTO sells copies of the last version of the model traffic code, but there have apparently been few sales, partly because it is outdated.

It was suggested that NTSA (National Traffic Safety Association) might be the most logical group to take over the model traffic code. Another possibility might be IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police). ITE’s role would likely be limited to re-viewing the sections of the model traffic code pertaining to railroad crossings. Lisa will discuss the issue with other ITE staff.

b. Brian Gilleran stated that Section 201 of the Rail Safety Act requires the FRA to develop guidance material on four topics relating to railroad crossings: auditory warnings, visual warnings, pedestrian crossings, and methods to prevent pedestrians from crossing tracks. Brian asked that any photos or information that anyone has on these topics be sent to him. It was mentioned that CalTrain has pedestrian crossing standards for station areas, and Canada also has pedestrian crossing standards. Gene Russell has a French grade crossing standards handbook. The Blue line in Los Angeles has a pedestrian safety study.

c. Ray Lewis stated that there are new ADA standards for pedestrian crossings that might conflict with the upcoming revisions to the MUTCD.

d. Bill Browder distributed a list of upcoming railroad-related meetings and conferences.

e. Anya Carroll stated that FRA Research and Development plans to have a research needs workshop around the time of the MUTCD meeting in New Hampshire in June 2009 at the Volpe Center in Cambridge.

f. Stephen Laffey (Illinois Commerce Commission) is the new chair of the TRB Railroad Committee (AHB60).

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next committee meeting will be at the ITE 2009 annual meeting in San Antonio, possibly on Tuesday morning August 11.

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.