U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

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In Reply Refer to:
HOTO-1

Alexander J. Litwornia, P.E., P.P.
Litwornia Associates, Inc.
3 Trading Post Way
Medford Lakes, NJ 08055

Dear Mr. Litwornia:

Thank you for your August 16 letter requesting an official interpretation on the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD) regarding the use of textured colored pavement to supplement the roadway between a series of crosswalks. These pavement treatments are proposed on private property that is open to public travel in a shopping center in Mount Laurel Township, New Jersey.

Paragraph 05 of Section 3B.18 of the MUTCD only provides Guidance for the minimum width of a crosswalk. A maximum distance between transverse lines used to mark the crosswalk is not defined. A maximum distance if diagonal or longitudinal lines are used without transverse lines to mark a crosswalk is also not defined. However, Paragraph 08 of Section 3B.18 states that crosswalk lines should not be used indiscriminately.

It is our Official Interpretation that crosswalks with a dimension of 90 feet between its defining transverse lines or used as the length of longitudinal markings are not in accordance with Paragraph 08 of Section 3B.18. Crosswalks with this expanse lose their intended benefits to become immediately discernible and also to provide conspicuity and functionality to both pedestrians and vehicular road users. The basis for this interpretation is as follows.

Pedestrian movements at entrances and exits to shopping centers are ubiquitous and are difficult to guide to a focal crossing point. Providing one large crosswalk 90 feet in length does compromise the legitimacy of the crossing since pedestrians are encouraged to enter the parking lot in any direction they desire when exiting the store; thereby encouraging diagonal crossings. This can induce a false sense of security for pedestrians and can degrade pedestrian safety rather than improve upon it. Further, as you described, crosswalks of this size are typically used to enhance the front of the store which is not the intent of a traffic control device. This enhancement of the storefront area is one of many that affirms and attracts vehicles to stop, load or unload and stand in the crosswalk thereby increasing the potential for conflicts and sight obstructions.

Separate individual crosswalks using marking patterns in accordance with Section 3B.18 of the MUTCD should be provided from the store's front perimeter to the parking aisles where

appropriate. However, the crosswalk should not be a near exact width of the two-way travel aisle as proposed in Figure 2 since this can encourage pedestrians to walk down the center of the crosswalk into potential oncoming traffic. The crosswalks should be limited to the perceived outside edges of the travel aisles, which are the areas of the parking lot that facilitate the greatest number of pedestrians. This meets the expectations of all users.

Designing crosswalks in this manner and in these locations as described above address a majority of the pedestrian desire lines, pedestrian sensitivity to out-of-the-way travel and provide reasonable accommodations to make crossings convenient. To that end, the textured pavement proposed between each subsequent crosswalk is superfluous and most likely an unnecessary treatment for a series of crosswalks. In fact, the use of colored textured pavement between a series of crosswalks may be misconstrued as simply a continuing demarcation of an overall area that pedestrians are legally allowed to occupy.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. The MUTCD continues to work toward developing more strategies on private roads open to public travel. We hope that you find this information helpful. Your request has been assigned an official interpretation number and title: "3(09)-17 (I) – Textured Pavement Between Crosswalks." Please refer to this number in any future correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

Mark R. Kehrli
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations