



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

October 15, 2002

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Refer to: HOTO-1

Ms. Teresa Becher
Interim Director
State of California
Office of Traffic Safety
7000 Franklin Boulevard, Suite 440
Sacramento, CA 95823-1899

Dear Ms. Becher:

Thank you for your September 10 letter forwarding a request from the city of Whittier to experiment with electronic speed signs to reduce travel speeds around school zones. We have reviewed the evaluation plan and conditional approval is given based on the receipt of the following additional information:

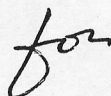
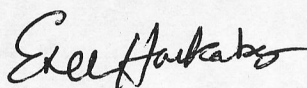
1. Include a diagram of the experimental device along with a diagram showing where it will be installed.
2. The electronic speed sign should replicate the color features described for changeable message signs in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Table 2A-4. This table indicates that the legend shall be white or yellow on a black background. If the device is used to display the speed limit, the color is white legend on a black background. If the device is used to provide driver feedback about their speed, then the legend color is yellow on a black background.
3. Include reporting dates. A semiannual progress report and a final report must be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
4. Include an agreement to restore or modify the installation sites pending the outcome of the MUTCD revision 2 proposed changes. The FHWA has proposed a change to Section 2B.11 that would allow the option of installing changeable message signs to display to approaching drivers the speed at which they are traveling. The proposal indicates that the changeable message sign would be installed in conjunction with a Speed Limit sign (see proposed changes at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>).
5. Include an agreement to terminate the experimentation should it be determined that significant safety concerns are directly or indirectly attributed to the experimentation.



6. The problem statement addresses the statistical data. It states that a total of 153 traffic collisions have occurred during normal school arrival and departure times over the past 8 years. Did these traffic collisions involve pedestrians and if so, how many pedestrians? This number will be important to your evaluation process of measuring effectiveness.
7. Given that speeds are very much influenced by enforcement, we are curious to know the current level of speed enforcement in terms of number of hours per site location and number of citations issued within the past 12 months. Will these enforcement numbers stay the same during the electronic speed sign evaluation?
8. We notice that the experimentation period is from April to September 2003. How do you plan to evaluate this experimental device during the months that schools are closed for summer vacation?

We have assigned your request the following official ruling number and title: "2-507(E), City of Whittier, California: Electronic Speed Display Signs." Please refer to this number in your future correspondence. We look forward to your experimentation and believe that it will provide us with useful information. In order to expedite the process, you may fax the response to us at 202-366-3225. If you have questions, please contact Ms. Linda L. Brown at 202-366-2192.

Sincerely yours,



Shelley J. Row, P.E.
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations