

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Refer to: HOTO-1

February 3, 2000

Mr. James H. Bloodgood  
Traffic Operations Manager  
Snohomish County Public Works  
2930 Wetmore Avenue  
Everett, WA 98201

Dear Mr. Bloodgood:

We have reviewed your December 17, 1999, letter transmitting additional information regarding your request for approval to experiment with in-roadway flashing warning lights for crosswalks (IV-166(Ex)) and your January 11, 2000, letter regarding your request for approval to experiment with an LED-Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Symbol Sign and have the following comments.

We commend your efforts to heighten the awareness of drivers to the fact that there are pedestrians waiting to use the crosswalk, or are already in the crosswalk. As you stated, your intention is to ensure maximum visibility. However, we feel that the in-roadway flashing warning lights should not be solely relied upon by pedestrians to decide when it is safe to cross the street. Please emphasize this in the information material you plan to develop to distribute to the elementary school students and parents.

The LED-Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Symbol sign shown on page two of your January 11 letter and on sheets 8 and 9 of your December 17 letter should be revised to show the flashing amber lights in lieu of the crosswalk lines on both sides of the pedestrians. See attached drawing for clarification.

In your request you mentioned your intention to install gated LED-Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Symbol signs. Please clarify the benefits on gating these signs.

Please be aware that in the June 24, 1999, Federal Register notice the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposes to delete the crosswalk lines on the existing S2-1, School Crossing Sign since motorist comprehension studies show that people are not able to differentiate between the S2-1 sign and the S1-1, School Advance Sign. We are proposing a crossing sign with a supplemental downward pointing arrow plaque be used.

In your request you mention the possibility of mounting an educational plaque with the LED-Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Symbol signs. What message would be used on this educational plaque?

Since this is the first request we have had to use an LED-Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Symbol sign with the in-roadway flashing warning lights for crosswalks, we want you to perform two additional experiments. The first would be to use in-roadway flashing warning lights with the S-2, School Crossing Sign, and hazard beacons mounted on the sign to call attention to the crosswalk. The beacon should be wired to flash only when the in-roadway flashing warning lights are activated. The second additional experiment would be the control condition, i.e., using the in-roadway flashing warning lights for crosswalks and just the standard S-2, School Crossing Sign.

Please revise your request to show an understanding of the following statement: If the results of your experiment are favorable and you request a change be made to the MUTCD to include this modified sign, you can request that the device remain in place until FHWA considers the device for inclusion in the MUTCD. This needs to be approved by FHWA or the sign needs to be removed at the conclusion of the experiment.

Your request to experiment with an LED-Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Symbol Sign will be approved contingent on receipt and review of a revised evaluation plan, including the items listed above. For future reference purposes, we have assigned the following official experimentation number and title to your request: IV-172(Ex) - "LED-Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Symbol Sign."

In regards to your request for approval to experiment with in-roadway flashing warning lights for crosswalks (IV-166(Ex)), thank you for the additional information you supplied on the evaluation plan. Once we receive, review, and approve your revised request (IV-172(Ex)) for experimentation with the LED-Enhanced School Crossing sign, we will send you a letter approving the in-roadway flashing warning lights for crosswalks experimentation.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact Ms. Louisa M.Ward on 202-366-4372.

Sincerely yours,

Donald P. Steinke  
Director, Office of Transportation  
Operations