

January 28, 2003

Refer to: HOTO-1

Mr. Loren W. Epton, Jr.
District Traffic Engineer
Virginia Department of Transportation
14685 Avion Parkway
Chantilly, VA 20151

Dear Mr. Epton:

Thank you for your January 3 letter requesting approval to experiment with pedestrian countdown signal displays at four intersections in the U.S. Route 1 corridor in Fairfax County.

As you may be aware, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has published in the Federal Register a Notice of Proposed Amendment (NPA) for Revision No. 2 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). That NPA includes the proposed addition of pedestrian countdown displays for optional use, with uniform design and operation when used. The docket for comments on this and the other proposals closed on August 19, 2002, and a Final Rule for Revision No. 2 is anticipated sometime in the summer or fall of 2003. Until such time as a Final Rule is issued, countdown pedestrian displays are still considered experimental. We approve your request to experiment with pedestrian countdown displays at the four locations, with the following conditions:

1. The countdown displays and operation should correspond to those detailed in the proposed MUTCD Revision No. 2. This includes displaying the countdown only during the flashing "Don't Walk" interval, as you have proposed, and a number of other operational and design details. Please review proposed Section 4E.07 (Countdown Pedestrian Signals) in the proposed MUTCD Revision No. 2, which can be accessed via http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno-millennium_npa.htm.
2. Per Section 1A.10 of the MUTCD, please note that the FHWA's Office of Transportation Operations retains the right to terminate approval of the experimentation at any time if there is an indication of safety concerns.

Your request to experiment is approved for 1 year or until such time as a final ruling on the proposed MUTCD Revision No. 2 is made, whichever occurs first. Upon issuance of a final ruling on proposed MUTCD Revision No. 2, the Virginia Department of Transportation may be required to modify or remove the pedestrian countdown displays depending on the details of the Final Rule.

For future reference purposes, we have assigned the following official experimentation number to your request: "4-253 (EX)." Please refer to this number in future correspondence

Again, we do appreciate your interest in improving conditions for pedestrians and if we can be of further assistance, please contact Mr. Scott Wainwright at 202-366-0857.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

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