



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

FEB 28 2017

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

In Reply Refer to:  
HOTO-1

Corey Aldridge  
General Manager  
Missoula Urban Transportation District  
1221 Shakespeare, Missoula MT 59802

Jessica Morriss  
Transportation Planning Manager  
Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization

Dear Mr. Aldridge and Ms. Morriss:

Thank you for your November 7, 2016, letter requesting an official interpretation concerning the applicability of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) to public transit bus-stop signs. For purposes of this letter, bus-stop signs are signs installed in the right-of-way of streets and highways for the purpose of identifying where transit buses stops to pick up and discharge passengers while providing pedestrian customers route and service information.

It is our official interpretation that a bus-stop sign is not a traffic control device as long as the content and design of the message is not intended for road users in general, i.e. it does not have a general traffic control purpose, but rather its message is only important to individuals who have been instructed in the sign meaning such as transit customers and bus route drivers.

The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) addresses signs and devices that do not have a general traffic control purpose in Section 1A.08 and therefore all provisions of that section of the Manual apply, including the following standard text: **“Signs and other devices that do not have any traffic control purpose that are placed within the highway right-of-way shall not be located where they will interfere with, or detract from, traffic control devices.”** The example bus-stop sign assembly design you provided with your letter shows a NO PARKING sign attached to it, albeit of a non-standard size. This is prohibited by the standard text above as a NO PARKING sign is intended to communicate with motorist in general and therefore is a traffic control device. Lastly, to help ensure that a bus-stop sign does not provide a message to or distract motorist, its design should not resemble a traffic control device and its overall size should be minimized to that which is only needed by transit bus operators and their pedestrian customers.

We have numbered and titled this official interpretation as “2(09)-129 (I) – Bus Stop Signs.” Please reference this number in any further communications on this matter. If you have further questions, please contact Mr. Martin Calawa at 603-410-4864 or [martin.calawa@dot.gov](mailto:martin.calawa@dot.gov)

Thank you for your interest in improving the clarity of the provisions contained in the MUTCD.

Sincerely yours,

Mark R. Kehrli  
Director, Office of Transportation Operations