

The FHWA received a request from a citizen to install the telephone symbols along the Interstate system to direct motorists to the buildings and facilities which are accessible for the hearing impaired. The FHWA is soliciting public input as to whether or not this request has merit and can be practically implemented. Should such signs be used in conjunction with General Service signs and/or Specific Service signs, or could they stand alone? Once motorists were directed to the appropriate freeway exit, they would still need to be guided to the appropriate building or facility. Does a series of confirming sign assemblies need to be installed to reassure the traveler that they are headed in the right direction? Are the proposed sign designs legible to the motorist at high speeds? Will the motorist comprehend the intended sign message? What effect will this proposed change have on the local level? How is information of this nature currently made available to the hearing-impaired community?

Your response to these questions or any other comments which you may be able to provide will help us to reach an appropriate decision regarding this request.

(13) Request II-211(C)—Non-Carrier Airport Symbol

The AASHTO submitted a resolution to the FHWA recommending a new symbol sign in the MUTCD to identify non-carrier airports. Non-carrier airports are airports which do not provide commercial or scheduled air service.

The MUTCD section 2D-48, "General Information Signs," contains provisions for signing routes leading to a transportation facility, including a

symbol for airports. Rather than adopting a different symbol sign for non-carrier airports, the FHWA prefers the use of the standard airport symbol (I-5) along with a supplemental plaque to indicate the specific name of the non-carrier airport. The FHWA believes that this would be easier for the motorist to recognize and comprehend as opposed to trying to distinguish the difference between two airplane symbols. From a distance and at high speeds, the two airplane symbols could appear very similar to the motorist.

Although the FHWA does not intend to adopt a new symbol sign for non-carrier airports, it does propose to include a discussion in the MUTCD on these two types of airport signing. When used, these signs will be considered supplemental guide signs which are appropriate for use on the Interstate, other freeways, and conventional State highways. However, adequate trailblazing signs would have to be in place prior to installing these airport signs.

(14) Request II-212(C)—Increased Letter Size of Street Name Signs

The NCUTCD submitted a request to the FHWA to improve the visibility of street name signs by increasing the minimum letter size from 4 inches to 6 inches. If uppercase and lowercase letters are used, then the uppercase letters would be 6 inches with 4½ inch lowercase letters. Abbreviated lettering to indicate the type of street or section of city (e.g., Ave., N.W., etc.) would be at least 3 inches instead of 2 inches. The NCUTCD also recommends that retroreflectivity be required on all street name signs.

The FHWA recognizes the need to improve sign visibility and legibility, particularly for the older driver population. The Transportation Research Board (TRB) Special Report No. 218, "Transportation in an Aging Society," identified highway and street name signs as a major concern for older drivers. The FHWA proposes to increase the letter size of signs and include the recommended dimensions in MUTCD section 2D-39. Since this proposed amendment would impose some additional costs on State and local highway officials, the FHWA would establish an implementation period.

(15) Request II-214(C)—Golf Course Recreational Area Symbol

The Montana Department of Transportation (MTDOT) submitted a request to the FHWA to include a symbol in the Recreational and Cultural Interest Area Signs (MUTCD section 2H) to direct motorists to golf courses. This symbol would be white on a brown background and it would be included in the RG or RL series.

The proposed symbol submitted by the MTDOT and shown below needs to be evaluated along with other possible designs to determine if they can be safely seen, read, and comprehended by the motorists without creating any traffic operational problems. The FHWA is soliciting comments on the proposed design. The FHWA is also interested in receiving other possible designs for evaluation purposes. The FHWA does not have any conclusive evaluation data at this time to make an informed decision concerning the proposed sign.

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