



17 April 2006

Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission
David Dryer, City Traffic Engineer
Suite 100, Madison Municipal Building
215 Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd.
Madison, Wisconsin 53710

Dear Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission Members:

I am writing in support of adjustments to greatly improve access and accommodation for pedestrians at some intersections along University Avenue on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. Specifically, I am hoping for three changes to these intersections: increase the amount of time for pedestrians to cross, install count-down pedestrian signals, and add audible signals.

In the Offices of the Dean of Students, we want everyone who comes to our campus to feel welcome and safe. In fact, we have made safety a priority and last year we added a Campus Safety Coordinator position to our division. Since the main mode of transportation on campus is by foot, we hope that the City of Madison Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission will do everything within their power to re-examine the current system and make these reasonable accommodations to ensure that all pedestrians are afforded the ability to cross our streets safely.

In his letter to City Traffic Engineer David Dryer, dated March 13, 2006, Rob Kennedy, Senior Transportation Planner with the University, states that "At intersections such as North Park Street and North Charter Street we have counted over 1,500 pedestrians crossing north and south within an hour. Our concern for safety at these and other locations is especially strong in the case of persons with mobility impairments." In his letter, Kennedy requests count-down pedestrian signals, but I believe reasonable additional modifications can be made that will better protect the campus community and numerous guests that visit our campus every day.

The City of Madison uses the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) when developing policy. In MUTCD Section 4D.03 Provisions for Pedestrians, it supports "accessible pedestrian signals" and "sufficient time to cross the roadway by adjusting the traffic control

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signal operation and timing to provide sufficient crossing time.” As stated in Section 4D.03:

Standard:

The design and operation of traffic control signals shall take into consideration the needs of pedestrian as well as vehicular traffic.

Guidance:

Safety considerations should include the installation, where appropriate, of accessible pedestrian signals (see Sections 4E.06 and 4E.08) that provide information in nonvisual format (such as audible tones, verbal messages, and/or vibrating surfaces).

Where pedestrian movements regularly occur, pedestrians should be provided with sufficient time to cross the roadway by adjusting the traffic control signal operation and timing to provide sufficient crossing time every cycle or by providing pedestrian detectors.

Furthermore, these requests are consistent with the City of Madison Municipal Code. In 3.72, Section 5, it speaks to Nondiscrimination Based on Disability in City Facilities and City-Assisted Programs and Activities.

We have a large and diverse pedestrian population on campus that includes people from all age groups and people with varying degrees of physical ability. It is for all those with mobility concerns and visual impairments that we particularly need to address these issues. Crossing the street safely is important every single day, but these issues become even more poignant in winter when snow and ice present significant challenges to those with mobility concerns. Winters are especially challenging for those with disabilities and the campus sidewalks and streets are often not accessible for many days after a storm. Additional time to cross the streets, countdown signals, and audible signals will dramatically improve the safety of our intersections during inclement weather.

As these requests are consistent with the MUTCD guidelines and the City of Madison’s Municipal Code, and given the large pedestrian traffic that crosses University Avenue on the UW campus, I hope that the Pedestrian/Bicycle Committee will address this situation and make reasonable accommodations by adding more time to cross busy campus intersections, installing count-down pedestrian signals, and adding audible signals.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Lori M. Berquam
Interim Dean of Students