



Traffic Engineering and Parking Divisions

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TO: Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission
FROM: David C. Dryer, P.E., City Traffic Engineer
RE: Request of J. Matzner to the Commission on People With Disabilities (1/26/06)

Ms. Matzner submitted a complaint/request at the January 26, 2006 Commission on People With Disabilities meeting (as well as the February 28, 2006 PBMVC meeting) asking that traffic signals on University Avenue from Lake Street to Randall Avenue be looked at in regard to the following:

- She asserted that current timing of the lights is insufficient for pedestrians to cross, particularly for disabled pedestrians.
- She requested that countdown pedestrian signals be considered.
- She also requested that the crash history for these signalized intersections be looked at.

Traffic Engineering has completed a review of the signalized intersections on University Avenue in the campus area. The following is a summary of this study.

The timing provided for pedestrian crossings at all of the study intersections was found to meet or exceed the criteria currently required by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD).

Recent revisions to the 2003 MUTCD include a change to how pedestrian clearance intervals are to be calculated. The compliance date for this change is December 22, 2008.

Revisions approved on January 20, 2006 by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD) include a new guidance statement recommending that the total crossing time (including both the WALK interval and the pedestrian clearance time) provided be calculated using a walking speed of 3 feet per second and be based on the pedestrian crossing from the location of the pedestrian detector or, if none, from a point 6 feet from the curb face. This change has not yet been included in the MUTCD and its effective compliance date is not yet known.

While not required, engineers have recently made some timing changes to the pedestrian WALK and pedestrian clearance intervals, which will be in compliance with the proposed MUTCD changes as well as the NCUTCD recommended changes for total crossing time intervals. These timing changes included increasing the time of the WALK intervals at some locations.

A common complaint received from the public regarding pedestrian timing is that the WALK interval is too short. It is a common mistake that many people think that the WALK interval should be long enough to completely cross an intersection. The purpose of the WALK is to provide a time interval during which pedestrians may proceed into the roadway. Following the WALK interval, additional time is provided to enable pedestrians to cross to a safe location.

Countdown pedestrians are useful in providing information to pedestrians, that following the WALK interval there is additional time to cross. Countdown pedestrian signals are planned to be installed at the following intersections on University Avenue in the campus area: Frances, Lake, Park and Charter. They are also planned to be installed at the Johnson-Park and Johnson-Lake intersections.

The crash history since 1996 at each of the signalized University Avenue intersections in the campus area was reviewed. Pedestrian timing interval lengths were not found to be a factor in any of the reported pedestrian-related crashes.

DCD:BJS:gep