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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Room 111 *city-county building, madison, wisconsin 53709*

# CITY OF MADISON

August 1, 1979

To: Transportation Commission

From: Floyd I. Jones, City Traffic Engineer

Subject: Request of Alderman Holt, File No. 4954-1082, that pedestrian crossing lights be installed at the intersection of Sawyer Terrace and Segoe Road

For the past several years, much concern has been expressed about safety for pedestrians along North Segoe Road between Regent Street and Sheboygan Avenue. North Segoe Road physically separates the office and shopping area and the new Segoe Terrace Community Program facilities for the elderly on the east side of the street from the high-density apartment developments on the west side. The block bounded by Segoe Road, Sheboygan Avenue, Eau Claire Avenue, and Regent Street is composed of seven apartment or nursing care complexes which contain an approximate total of 1,865 residents. An informal survey of apartment managers indicates that approximately 36 percent of these residents, a relatively high percentage, are over 60 years old.

Segoe Road is a boulevard street with two lanes of traffic in each direction between Regent Street and Sheboygan Avenue. The traffic volume on this street, approximately 9,000 vehicles per weekday, has remained nearly the same since 1970. Residents of the area are concerned that the volume and the speed of traffic on Segoe Road makes it unsafe for pedestrians to cross. In addition, many residents feel that turning traffic at various intersections, such as Kelab and Sawyer, contributes to the problem. With Hilldale Shopping Center and numerous other medical buildings and stores to the east and north of Segoe Road, residents feel that a lack of traffic control along Segoe significantly restricts their walking to area facilities.

## Current Traffic Control Along Segoe Road

A speed limit of 30 miles per hour is posted on Segoe Road. In addition, during the past four years several things have been done to promote the safety and convenience of pedestrians crossing Segoe. In July 1975, crosswalks were marked at the intersections of Sheboygan, Sawyer, Kelab and Vernon, and they have been remarked on an annual basis. In December, 1977, Sawyer Terrace was changed from a two-way street to one way leading away from Segoe Road, and various parking restrictions were installed near the Post Office at the intersection of Segoe and Sawyer Terrace. The conversion to one way had the effect of decreasing the amount of turning traffic and reducing some of the congestion at this intersection. In June 1978, a special (zebra stripe) crosswalk was painted on Segoe Road at Sawyer Terrace. In addition, an overhead pedestrian crossing sign at the inter-

section and an advance "Pedestrian Crossing" sign were installed for southbound traffic on Segoe Road.

These actions followed intensive traffic studies and pedestrian counts which indicated that the Sheboygan Avenue intersection is the most heavily used pedestrian crossing location along Segoe Road; however, most of the crossing is by State Office Building employees during the noon hour. Elderly pedestrians have been crossing at many intersections on Segoe Road, but the Sawyer Terrace intersection is now the most heavily used by them. There continues to be pedestrian crossing at Kelab Drive, Sheboygan Avenue, and midblock between these intersections.

In 1975 the Police Department became involved in pedestrian safety education because many pedestrians were crossing at undesirable locations. Some apartment managers indicate that literature regarding pedestrian safety is distributed to their residents, but they continue to cross at midblock, unmarked locations.

#### Current Status

The alderman and area residents ask that consideration be given to using a pedestrian-actuated traffic signal at Sawyer Terrace and Segoe Road. From a numerical standpoint, neither the Sawyer Terrace or the Sheboygan intersection meets the warrant for either a pedestrian-actuated or a vehicle-actuated traffic signal. Beyond considering just the numbers of pedestrians and vehicles involved, we would like to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of a pedestrian-actuated traffic signal at Sawyer Terrace and Segoe Road.

A signal that would alternately assign right-of-way to motorists and pedestrians would ideally provide a period of time when pedestrians could cross while Segoe Road vehicle traffic is stopped. This would especially aid pedestrians crossing during the peak traffic hours when adequate gaps in traffic for pedestrian crossings occur infrequently, but the cost of such an installation is always a consideration and in this case would likely be between \$20,000 to \$25,000 depending on the complexity of the equipment and whether it is installed by City crews or under contract to a private electrical firm. Since Sawyer Terrace is one way away from Segoe Road, the traffic signal would only be for control of vehicle traffic on Segoe Road and pedestrians crossing Segoe Road. The signal would operate basically so that Segoe Road traffic would have a green light at all times unless a pedestrian presses the "Walk" button for crossing Segoe Road, in which case traffic on Segoe Road would stop and the "Walk/flashing "Don't Walk" would appear.

The pedestrians potentially using this signal are those who have difficulty judging time-distance relationships with regard to moving vehicles, and we would be concerned about their safety. We see motorists running the yellow and even the red light at signals, and we would likely have even more of that problem at a location like this where the red light for Segoe Road traffic would appear somewhat infrequently since it would be totally dependent on the number of times a pedestrian needs to cross Segoe Road at Sawyer and actually pushes the button to activate the pedestrian phase. Even with the traffic signal, pedestrians would have to exercise good judgment and make sure that all traffic approaching a red light on Segoe is stopped or stopping.

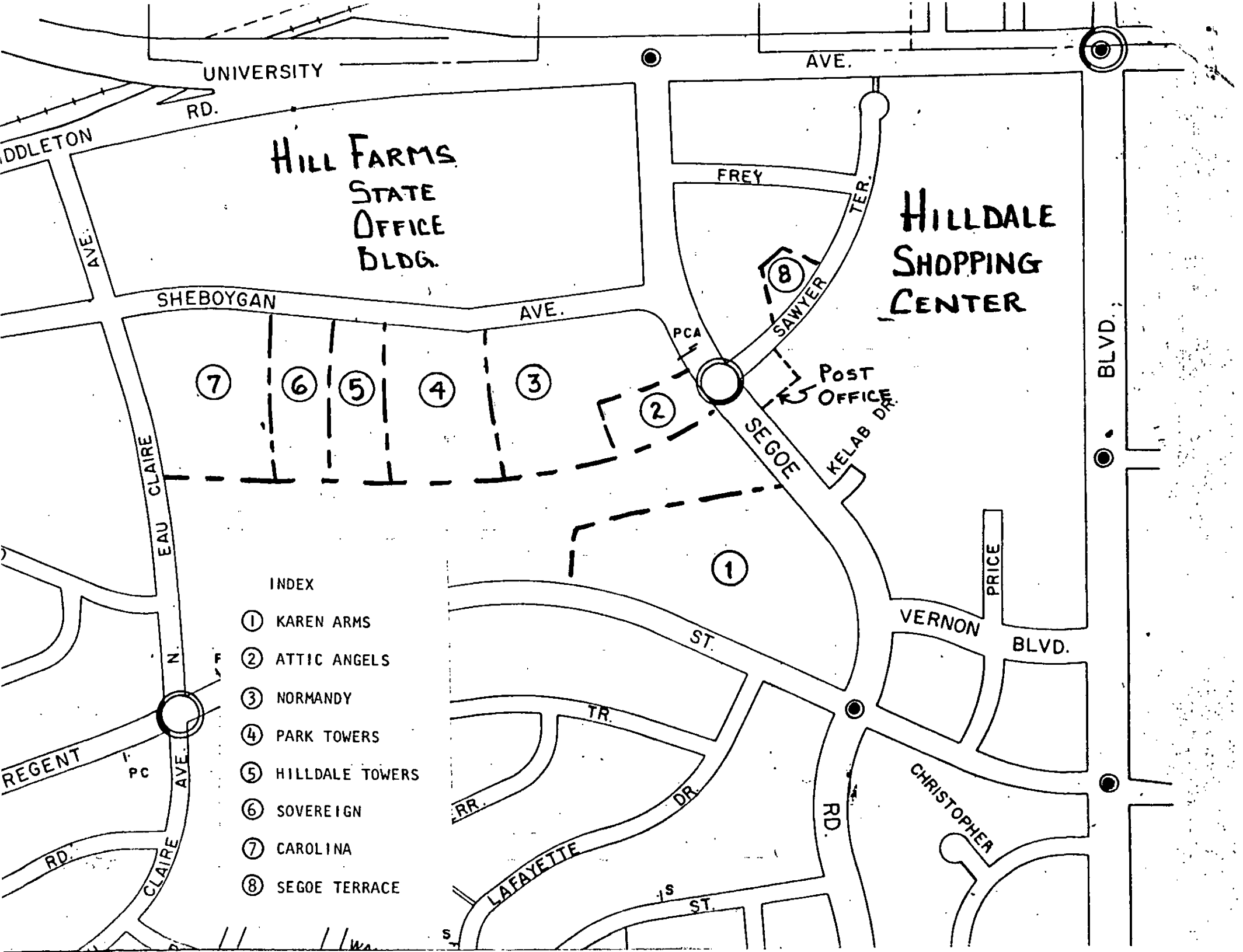
From our pedestrian counts, we know that there is a demand for pedestrian

crossings at other intersections along Segoe Road. At a recent meeting we asked residents who live in the Karen Arms Apartments whether they would be willing to walk an extra block if a traffic signal were installed at the Segoe-Sawyer Terrace intersection. Those present at this meeting stated emphatically that they would not walk up to Sawyer but would rather still cross at Kelab. This illustrates how difficult it is to provide safe crossings for all of the residents west of Segoe Road unless those residents are willing to walk the extra distance to take advantage of the traffic signals.

Possible Courses of Action

1. Install a flashing beacon adjacent to the overhead pedestrian crossing warning sign for southbound Segoe Road traffic -  
This flashing light could be connected to a pedestrian-actuated push button so that the light would only flash when the button is pushed. This would provide better warning for motorists but will not result in longer gaps between vehicles. The approximate cost of such an installation would be approximately \$1,000.
2. Install a pedestrian-actuated pedestrian signal at the Segoe Road-Sawyer Terrace intersection -  
We have already discussed the functional merits and cost of such an installation. There is a possibility that Flad Development Corporation (developer and owner of Segoe Terrace complex) would be willing to pay part of the cost of such a signal. If such a signal is authorized, its installation could be accomplished in any one of several ways.
  - A. Installation by City crews as time permits -  
The Traffic Engineering Electrical Section currently has more maintenance and installation work than they can with present manpower accomplish this year. However, if mandated, we would attempt to install it as soon as possible without jeopardizing required maintenance work on other traffic signals and street lights.
  - B. Install under contract with private company -  
With the time required to prepare plans and specifications and to go through the bidding process, we would be very close to the onset of winter before actual construction could begin. In addition, there is considerable extra cost involved due to the relatively small amount of work involved and the fact that the contractors include a profit margin in their bids.
  - C. Plan for installation in 1980 - This project could be combined with other similar projects and be scheduled for spring or early summer of 1980.
3. Develop an effective safety education program and organize the neighborhood residents into active pedestrian crossing protection groups -  
Some residents have indicated they would like to be more involved in helping other area residents cross Segoe Road.

*Floyd I. Jones*  
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