



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY  
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT  
SECRETARY

May 5, 2006

Mr. Kumar Neppalli, Traffic Engineer  
Town of Chapel Hill  
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dear Mr. Neppalli:

At your request I have enclosed the technical information generated during the investigation of the two January pedestrian fatalities on US 15-501. The information includes traffic counts, 10-year bicycle/pedestrian crash histories, and 10-year vehicular crash histories. The crash histories are available through the North Carolina Crash Database. Please note many crashes go unreported for a variety of reasons and the database reflects only those crashes reported to the Division of Motor Vehicles.

Sixteen-hour traffic counts were performed in February by private engineering firms and are attached. Note the total pedestrian volumes are considerably lower than the hourly pedestrian volumes established in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) is published by the Federal Highway Administration and is the nationwide standard for design, application, and placement of traffic control devices including signs, traffic signals, and pavement markings.

Regarding our telephone conversation, there seems to be several misunderstandings. As I recall, we discussed Town staff performed pedestrian counts at Manning Drive and US 15-501 before and after a special event at the University. NCDOT staff were on-site for about an hour at each location to investigate and observe intersection operations. NCDOT staff counted 3 pedestrians at Manning Drive and US 15-501 and no pedestrians at Bennett Road and US 15-501 during our investigations. Sufficient funds are not available for further counts at these locations. If the Town wishes to obtain additional counts over "an extended period of time" they may do so.

We have no problem providing copies of the crash histories at each location and have included them herein. However, we understand Town staff has direct access to the North Carolina Crash Database through the Traffic Engineering Accident Analysis System

(TEAAS). The intent was not to convey that providing crash data is unnecessary; rather the intent was to express that the Town could have directly and without delay obtained the requested information.

After Town staff has reviewed and analyzed the attached data, we are confident you will arrive at the same conclusion and can verify that pedestrian signals and crosswalks are not warranted at this time. We also believe you will agree that the addition of roadway lighting at these locations is justified and will benefit all roadway users. Further, considering all of the contributing factors to the two pedestrian crashes, roadway lighting likely could have changed the outcome of the series of events leading to the crashes more than the presence of pedestrian signals and crosswalks.

We appreciate your interest in highway safety. Please let me if know you have questions or desire additional information.

Attachment

Sincerely,



Brian C. Thomas, P.E.  
Regional Traffic Safety Engineer