April 29, 2004

Anissa Williams, Traffic and Engineering Planner

Johnson County Council of Governments

410 E. Washington Street

Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Re: End of the Clinic Semester

Dear Anissa:

The clinic semester has drawn to a close and I will no longer be working with the Johnson County Coalition For People With Disabilities on the Burlington and Dubuque intersection project. I want to thank you for your support this semester. Your willingness to supply us with information about the intersection and attend the Coalition meeting on March 1st was invaluable as we sought to address pedestrian concerns.

This letter will briefly recap developments over the past few months and look ahead to the future.

Our involvement with this project began as Coalition members and other residents of Iowa City had expressed concerns about the intersection of Burlington and Dubuque streets. Members of the community mainly felt they did not have enough time to cross Burlington Street at this intersection. To begin taking action, the Clinic prepared a survey to better assess the nature of these concerns and distributed it to members of the Coalition as well as residents of the Capital House Apartments. We followed up the survey with a field study at the intersection. Participants in both the survey and field study felt they lacked sufficient time to cross, complained of aggressive driver behavior, and identified the intersection as popular in providing access to the pedestrian mall, work, the library, shopping, and returns home.

Soon after the field study, you attended a Coalition meeting where we presented the results of the survey and field study and proposed several solutions to address pedestrian complaints. These suggested measures included increasing the pedestrian interval, installing a “no turn on red sign” on Dubuque Street, delaying the green signal for traffic departing from the Sheraton, and adding a countdown timer to the intersection and an

audible device to assist pedestrians who are vision-impaired to judge the amount of time they have to cross.

Through our work, it became increasingly clear that the members of the community care deeply about this issue as evidenced by their participation in our survey and field study, the editorial and letters to the editor that appeared in the Iowa City Press-Citizen, and PATV’s commitment to edit and air a video of the field study shot by Coalition member Louise Young.

We must say that we were pleased and encouraged to learn of the recent efforts by you and your supervisor, Jeff Davidson, to make concrete changes at the intersection and investigate further. Your April 13th e-mail mentioned that you have recommended to Jeff that a countdown timer signal be installed at the intersection. I understand that you will need to clear some hurdles with the State of Iowa before bringing this to fruition. I want you to know, though, that all those involved with the project are very excited by the prospect of this change as it will enable pedestrians to know precisely the amount of time they have remaining to cross the street. This will make it less likely that they will get “stranded” while crossing. We hope that your recommendation will soon become a reality.

You also mentioned that continental crosswalks would be added to Burlington Street at Dubuque. We think that this will be a great addition. We wanted to know exactly which type of continental crosswalk would be installed, by way of features and design, and when the city is planning to paint it.

We want to take this opportunity to suggest that the city use the annual ADA Festival on July 24, 2004 to unveil the crosswalk and the countdown signal. The city-sponsored festival has traditionally drawn a turnout of several hundred participants. We expect that it will once again invite a high percentage of persons with disabilities living in Iowa City, the mayor, and individuals from around the state. In the past, the city has held ceremonies at Hickory Hill Park to open accessible trails and as well as highlight a Universal Design home on B Street. This is a prime opportunity for the city to demonstrate city awareness, response, and commitment to ensuring the health and safety of its citizens. Keith Ruff of the Evert Conner Center For Independent Living is in charge of this year’s festival planning committee and can be reached at 338-3870. I have taken the courtesy of sending him of a copy of the letter.

Finally in your e-mail, you referred to your office’s plan to conduct a thorough study of the Burlington corridor that would encompass its intersection with Dubuque Street. This again, is a much needed and welcome commitment that hopefully will produce more comprehensive data about pedestrian issues in that area. When the city decides on a time frame for the study we would like to be informed. Overall, we seek to be involved in this process and to be kept abreast of developments regarding the study, the countdown timer, and the continental crosswalk.

The Johnson County Coalition and the Legal Clinic have benefited markedly from your investment in this project. We look forward to working with you further to continue addressing pedestrian concerns at this intersection and possibly others. The student legal intern who will replace me will begin working with the Coalition in late May and will contact you in early June. Coalition members Louise Young and Jordan Pettus (who furnished data on the signal timing and operation for the field study) will remain primary contact and committee members. If you need to contact the Clinic in the interim, you may reach Len at 335-9023.

Sincerely,

Milan Bhatt

Student Legal Intern

CC: Jeff Davidson, Jordan Pettus, Louise Young, Keith Ruff