

From: Jonathan Drake [jonathandrake@gmail.com](mailto:jonathandrake@gmail.com)  
To: Megan Wooley [mwooley@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mwooley@townofchapelhill.org)

Subject: Fwd: Central West impact on Phillips Middle School  
Sent: Thu 9/5/2013 12:38 PM

Greetings Megan. Kindly post the following letter (that our Phillips S.I.T. sent to the Central West Steering Committee in early July) on the Town of Chapel Hill public community comment webpage, if you have not already done so. Kindly confirm after you have.

Thanks and regards,  
Jonathan

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jonathan Drake** <[jonathandrake@gmail.com](mailto:jonathandrake@gmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jul 1, 2013 at 5:41 PM  
Subject: Central West impact on Phillips Middle School  
To: Abby Parcell <[abby.parcell@gmail.com](mailto:abby.parcell@gmail.com)>, Amy Ryan <[amymorrisryan@gmail.com](mailto:amymorrisryan@gmail.com)>, Anothony Carey - Gmail <[thecareysare@gmail.com](mailto:thecareysare@gmail.com)>, Anthony Carey <[acarey@sienahotel.com](mailto:acarey@sienahotel.com)>, [mcclintock.julie@gmail.com](mailto:mcclintock.julie@gmail.com), Bruce Murray <[BMurray@chcymca.org](mailto:BMurray@chcymca.org)>, Buffie Webber <[buffie@kw.com](mailto:buffie@kw.com)>, David Bonk <[dbonk@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:dbonk@townofchapelhill.org)>, David Tuttle <[tuttledavs@aol.com](mailto:tuttledavs@aol.com)>, Deana Rhodeside <[deanar@rhodeside-harwell.com](mailto:deanar@rhodeside-harwell.com)>, Eric Hyman <[ehyman@nc.rr.com](mailto:ehyman@nc.rr.com)>, Firoz Mistry <[fmistry@hotmail.com](mailto:fmistry@hotmail.com)>, Gordon Merklein <[merklein@unc.edu](mailto:merklein@unc.edu)>, Jared Simmons <[jsimmonsphotography@gmail.com](mailto:jsimmonsphotography@gmail.com)>, JB Culpepper <[jculpepper@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:jculpepper@townofchapelhill.org)>, Jeff Kidd <[Jeff.Kidd@facilities.unc.edu](mailto:Jeff.Kidd@facilities.unc.edu)>, Jim Ward <[jimward@nc.rr.com](mailto:jimward@nc.rr.com)>, john ager <[agerjohn@gmail.com](mailto:agerjohn@gmail.com)>, Loryn Clark <[lclark@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:lclark@townofchapelhill.org)>, Lucy Carol Davis <[lucycdavis@gmail.com](mailto:lucycdavis@gmail.com)>, Mary Jane Nirdlinger <[mnirdlinger@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mnirdlinger@townofchapelhill.org)>, Megan Wooley <[mwooley@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mwooley@townofchapelhill.org)>, Meredith Judy <[meredithj@rhodeside-harwell.com](mailto:meredithj@rhodeside-harwell.com)>, Mia Burroughs <[mia@miaburroughs.com](mailto:mia@miaburroughs.com)>, Michael Parker <[miparker1@aol.com](mailto:miparker1@aol.com)>, Mickey Jo Sorrell <[mjsorrell@gmail.com](mailto:mjsorrell@gmail.com)>, Sarah McIntee <[SarahKaMc@gmail.com](mailto:SarahKaMc@gmail.com)>, Todd LoFrese <[tlofrese@chccs.k12.nc.us](mailto:tlofrese@chccs.k12.nc.us)>, Whit Rummel <[whitr@aol.com](mailto:whitr@aol.com)>  
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We, the members of the School Improvement Team for Guy B. Phillips Middle School, are interested in the proposed Central West focus area development proposals, and wish to express some concerns related to that process.

There are about 670 students and 90 staff at our school, which is directly next to the Central West plot, much of which falls within our school's walk zone. Immediately next to Guy B. Phillips sits one of our feeder schools, Estes Hills Elementary, which itself has about 500 students and 95 staff.

In short, there are more than thirteen hundred students and staff at these two schools. A substantial number of our students walk to their schools, and some must cross very busy roads to get there. The rest, of course, are transported to and from campus aboard a vehicle.

Both schools are accessed by Estes Drive, obviously, which we are told is currently classified a grade F road under North Carolina Department of Transportation standards. Parents of Phillips and Estes Hills students are already painfully aware of how congested this and nearby roads become in the morning at school drop-off times, when their vehicles are combined with those of work commuters using this heavily-traversed artery. Similarly, after sporting and post-school events at Phillips, sometimes even a single car emerging from our campus must wait three or four minutes for a break in the rush-hour traffic that saturates Estes Drive.

It's a given that the Central West project will add to the traffic volume on Estes Drive. Added to this reality is the future development of nearby Carolina North -- estimated to bring 1500 parking spaces in the first phase alone.

We believe that it is paramount that any final approved plan for the Central West project emphasize and respect the well being of the children attending our schools, by addressing the likelihood of even more burdensome traffic on Estes Drive, and by considering the safety of our students on a campus that could be a stone's throw from any businesses and other establishments that locate within the newly developed zone.

We are not opposed to reasonable and responsible development of the Central West plot, but are concerned that to date, the process narrowing down proposals for the development have not properly incorporated the interests of our students, staff and parents. We would hope that the Central West steering committee would officially solicit feedback about the project and its likely impact on our schools from our administration, faculty and the parents of our students.

Nothing of the sort has yet transpired; indeed, we are not aware of any official communication between the steering committee and our two schools, either through broadcasts to its parents, or via organizations representing our specific interests, such as the School Improvement Teams and the Parent Teacher Associations.

Some ideas that we think merit serious consideration in your planning process are for a density level that does not unnecessarily burden current and future infrastructure in the area; traffic calming measures on Estes Drive; careful creation of safe and attractive bicycle and pedestrian lanes; and placement of genuinely safe pedestrian crossing points (including possibly overhead pedestrian/bike bridges). Crucially, the arrangement of any aspects of Central West that would yield significantly more traffic, such as the commercial part of the development, would best feed directly in from and out onto MLK Boulevard, sparing further congestion on Estes Drive.

From our perspective, a central question is how can we ensure that measures to protect children's safety will be adopted before zoning changes are made. We sincerely feel that a careful and deliberate process that involves school stakeholders, rather than rushing to meet a September or November deadline for the finalization of a small area plan, is merited.

Yours respectfully,

Guy B Phillips Middle School Improvement Team  
(co-chairs Eric Dingfelder <[EricDingfelder@yahoo.com](mailto:EricDingfelder@yahoo.com)> and Katie Savelli <[ksavelli@chccs.k12.nc.us](mailto:ksavelli@chccs.k12.nc.us)>)