

To view a complete listing of all questions/comment received at the various Carolina North meetings, please visit [Summary of Key Interests - Carolina North Planning Process](#) (pdf) or [Summary of Key Interests - Carolina North Planning Process](#) (MS Word).

**Summary of Key Interests
Council-Trustees Work Session
June 16, 2009**

The following questions/comments were raised during the Chapel Hill Town Council/UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees Joint Work Session that was held on Tuesday, June 16, 2009:

Interests Raised by Council Members

- Most important part of the proposed natural areas is the large undisturbed areas. Recommend no new trails as cutting new trails creates new edges and introduces non-interior edge species and is generally detrimental to the overall natural integrity of these areas. Need to keep this philosophy in mind and maintain the existing trails in as sensitive a manner as possible.
- To whom does the University contemplate granting the conservation easement? Needs to be an entity that has experiences and strong opinions regarding the preservation of the natural areas.
- Concern regarding the current mountain biking use of the natural trails and potential future implications, including additional damage to the integrity of the natural areas.
- The woods are better off with no trail than an ecologically sensitive trail.
- Assuming that a non-MLK bike route can be determined between the main campus and Carolina North, what timetable should be associated with such a venture?
- Once it is clear that a non-MLK bike route can be provided between the main campus and Carolina North, believe that a definite period of time should be attached to the project, although how to determine the appropriate amount of time is difficult.
- Perhaps there is some way to attach some sort of performance criteria to the achievement of the envisioned bike route between main campus and Carolina North, rather than attaching a time frame?
- A pedestrian and bicycle crossing of Estes Drive Extension remains a top priority, to be achieved early in the life of the development agreement.
- As soon as there is a destination for people to get to at Carolina North, the Town needs for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure components to be in place. It is not like buying several buses; these types of improvements are a lot less expensive and are more within our control. Accordingly, believe that a means to cross Estes Drive should be put in place early on.
- Is there a benefit to crossing Estes Drive Extension, even if there is not a trail on each side?
- Unsure as to the benefit of prioritizing greenway connections in the Development Agreement due to potential variations in funding. Being prescriptive about what happens and when it happens may be jumping the gun. Better to let a committee figure out the fastest and cheapest way to provide connectivity between the main campus and Carolina North. Need to incorporate something into the language to indicate that it needs to occur as soon as possible.
- In terms of timing, as soon as there is a draw for folks on the main campus to go to Carolina North, there needs to be a safe way to bike there.

- May be better to proceed with a bicycle/pedestrian/greenway crossing on Estes Drive Extension that is separate from the envisioned Bolin Creek greenway, which would intersect Estes Drive Extension at a very significant grade differential such that how users would get up from the greenway (which is down near the creek) to Estes Drive Extension has not yet been solved. A separate Estes Drive Crossing at a location without these elevation issues could potentially be incorporated into the Bolin Creek greenway as a spur at some future date.
- What about the Greenways Commission's recommendation that the greenway triggers be ratcheted downward (meaning that these improvements occur earlier when less development has taken place) in order to encourage connectivity up front?
- Given that northern greenway connections could easily happen sooner, it really does not make sense to prioritize and try to dictate the order in which connections occur as part of the Development Agreement.
- Seems that everyone would like to see the Bolin Creek Greenway connect to Estes Drive Extension, and then the University continue the greenway into Carolina North. The real question is when will the Town be able to complete its portion of the greenway, and this is something that we cannot predict at the present time. Given this uncertainty, are we comfortable making this our top priority?
- Probably makes more sense to list some specific greenway priorities and leave flexibility as to the order in which these greenways occur. The question then becomes what triggers should be utilized?
- Although the current Traffic Impact Analysis studied the 800,000 SF and the 3,000,000 SF development program scenarios, it does not provide fine grain analysis of what happens at 400,000 SF, 600,000 SF, etc. In addition, the required future analysis and planning (subsequent traffic impact analyses are scheduled to occur this fall and then at 800,000 square feet increments or every 5 years, whichever occurs first) may not necessarily coincide with when actual transportation improvements need to occur.
- Although it may be possible to identify improvements that are needed with individual buildings as part of each site development proposal, the problem with the current draft of the Development Agreement is that given the way it is worded, those improvements would only have to be installed every 800,000 SF.
- Supports the pay as you go approach. If transit is working really well and certain traffic impacts are not being experienced and thus the thresholds for previously identified improvements are not being met, then it goes both ways and the University should not be required to make such improvements prior to the need for the improvement actually being reached.
- General support for the idea of doing "short range" Traffic Impact Analysis when new buildings are proposed, without having to do a full-blown study.
- What kinds of things would change the landscape and require the use of new traffic counts?
- The bottom line is what is actually happening, not what the model says. Need to make sure that if the University is negatively impacting an intersection to the point that improvements are needed, that the University makes the improvements to address the associated incremental and cumulative impacts.

- Is every 800,000 SF an appropriate threshold at which to do a full updated Traffic Impact Analysis?
- Every one of the Town's greenways is ten (10) feet wide. Would like to ask that the Carolina North greenways also be a minimum of ten (10) feet wide, with those on the main campus area at Carolina North being a minimum of twelve (12) feet wide.
- Would suggest simply stipulating that greenways be built to Town standards.
- Looking at traffic impacts on a regular basis, perhaps building by building much in the same manner that the Town considers a Special Use Permit, would make sense and would be consistent with how the Town usually does business.
- As far as parking ratios are concerned, would like some documentation of the dialogue between the Town and University regarding the reduction of parking and emphasis on transit. Would like to better elaborate on what is meant by the commitment being discussed here between the two parties. Possible to reference some discussions to perhaps add some teeth and more clearly guide this agreement in the direction of reducing parking ratios.
- Regarding the committee that is going to be looking at bike, pedestrian and greenway issues during the next year, is this group going to only meet for one year and disband? Or will this be a group that has ongoing responsibilities? Or is this something to still be determined? Would be good to clarify if this group is going to have a life beyond the first year of its existence.
- Appears that the committee that is going to look at bike, pedestrian and greenway issues is going to involve Carrboro. Believes that this is a real issue and that Carrboro needs to be included in these discussions.

Interests Raised by University Participants

- The University does not have a preference regarding who takes over maintenance and control of the conservation easement.
- Although the University has worked with local mountain biking groups in an effort to better guide their use of the trails in a more ecologically sensitive manner, the University does not have a preference as to how the Town and the entity maintaining the conservation easement want to handle this existing use.
- Completely agree that there is not a good way to ride a bike from the main campus to Carolina North. If someone could come up with such a path, the University would be willing to be a financial partner in such an endeavor. The University is happy to participate in any conversation that would seek to provide a solution to this situation.
- Okay supporting a reasonable plan for a non-MLK bike route between the main campus and Carolina North, but would not want to have to agree that it would all be worked out before the University could start anything else.
- What is the benefit at this point in time of the Estes Drive Extension crossing?
- If the Town has completed Bolin Creek Greenway to Estes Drive Extension, then it makes sense for the University to collaborate and figure out how to make a connection to the greenway.

- There does not seem to be a good reason to build an Estes Drive Extension crossing until it has something to which it can connect.
- If the University could stick with the currently proposed triggers for greenway development (1st greenway segment built at 800,000 SF), the University would be happy for the Town to dictate which order in which the greenway segments actually get built.
- It seems that certain levels of occupancy should trigger the need for specific transportation improvements to keep everything operational. Is it not this simple?
- Is there any reason why the traffic consultant could not update the analysis with each building that is proposed? It should be fairly simple to add the additional floor area and then re-run the analysis solely for the purpose of determining if that building triggers the need for any additional transportation improvements. Would not be a new TIA, rather would just be updating the existing TIA to reflect the additional incremental impact of the new building. Is it not possible to proceed in this manner? Understand that it would involve a limited scope of analysis based on the same assumptions utilized when the last TIA was prepared.
- As far as traffic improvements are concerned, the University is willing to pay as it goes. If the University is going to build a building that causes a particular intersection to fail, then the University should be responsible for fixing that intersection prior to occupying that building.
- Given limited opportunities to count traffic given the school calendar, perhaps it makes sense for the University to be proposing improvements and a schedule for those improvements as part of the site development permit for each building? The idea would be that these identified improvements would be installed prior to occupancy of each building.
- How hard is it to identify impacts per every 100,000 square feet?
- What if the University develops two different scenarios for the first 800,000 SF, allowing the Fall 2009 Traffic Impact Analysis to be run for both scenarios, thereby providing a sense as to how necessary improvements vary according to differences in development program. This analysis would then provide enough information for the University to propose what improvements should specifically be linked to each building going forward. Thus, rather than fixating on one schedule, this approach would allow both the Town and the University to consider two different scenarios, providing better information for determining what improvements are required and proposing when they would occur.
- Attempting to develop a scenario that provides commitments to making identified traffic improvements in a timely manner. As long as there is some basis per the TIA, the University does not mind making the improvements in an “as needed, pay-as-you-go” manner.

Interests Raised by Citizens

- Approximately 60% of the traffic impact of Carolina North is projected to consist of commuter traffic from outside of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area. Of all of the projected traffic impact, 23% will be going out through Carrboro per the projected employee trip distribution. This amounts to about 4,000 trips per day – a huge burden on Carrboro roads. This is an especially large burden when one considers that Carrboro does not have any roads like MLK, and tends to rely

on east-west corridors like Estes Drive Extension. Encourage the Town to look at further reducing parking, perhaps a 40% constrained ratio. Please consider looking out for Carrboro.

- If there was a lot more housing provided in all income brackets at Carolina North, it would definitely help to reduce the trips per day generated. If there was a lot more emphasis on transportation/transit corridors with housing in them, that could provide impetus for using public transit to reduce the number of trips per day. Light rail access should be championed in the development plan. Need to use housing density and transit planning to reduce the traffic impact and the number of vehicle trips generated per day.
- We cannot ignore the impact that Carolina North will have on transportation infrastructure in Chapel Hill nor the impact on citizens who are being asked to pay for it. And the citizens will pay one way or another; whether higher local taxes or state taxes, the consequences of not taking action, deteriorating infrastructure, gridlock, abandoned downtown real estate, or inevitable property depreciation. Recommend one simple addition to the Agreement; linkage between building occupancy and transportation improvements. Need concurrent investment in infrastructure with the growth of Carolina North. No less true of transportation that it is with water, sewer or power. Because there is a lengthy lead time for such transportation-related improvements, ideally these needs should be identified and planned for, not reacted to. Concerned that despite our best intentions, our failure to anticipate or inability to act in a timely fashion will inevitably lead to failed intersections. There is nothing in the current Agreement to prevent such a scenario from occurring. We need a safeguard mechanism that will halt occupancy at Carolina North until appropriate transportation fixes can be made when these intersections fail. We aren't talking about financial responsibility here, just asking for a sensible statement that we don't want to see a transportation failure and that we are willing to hold off building occupancy to avoid it. Nobody will benefit if we fail to do the right thing.
- Disturbing that the discussions regarding transportation all seem to assume that all of the traffic impact will be due to Carolina North. As previously indicated by the Traffic Impact Analysis consultant, there is a certain amount of growth especially coming from Chatham County. US 15-501 has been widened and gained additional lanes and is available to accommodate these additional private vehicles. For that matter, US 15-501 is currently being widened in Durham. It seems unrealistic to bubble-wrap Chapel Hill and say that the Town has lovely countrified roads that shall not be widened or improved because we are just going to have the congestion in Chapel Hill. Concerned that the aggravation that is caused will prevent people from coming to Chapel Hill or stopping in Chapel Hill to buy goods and services – in other words, it will undermine some of the business that we are trying to develop now. Accordingly, believe that improving the roads is another facet of the impact that the Town needs to seriously consider.
- Regarding parking, people are not going to go out to dinner or go shopping on the bus with their kids, they are going to take a personal vehicle. The Town just needs to accept that people are going to use their personal vehicles. Buses are great for going between the two campuses and very conducive for people who have a regular schedule going back and forth to work 5 or 6 days per week. But there is a great deal going on in Chapel and Carrboro that people will use their personal vehicles for, and if we do not plan for this, we are just compounding our problems.
- There seems to be a mythology at work here that if you don't build it (e.g. parking), they will not come. This is not what will really happen. Need to accommodate development with

appropriate parking and roads, otherwise people will just choose to live elsewhere and commute into Town.