

September 12, 2005

Good evening Mayor Foy and Council:

My name is Michael Collins, and I live at 723 Williams Circle, in the Colonial Heights neighborhood. Colonial Heights is just south of Estes Drive and west of MLK Blvd., and adjoins Elkin Hills and Pinebrook Estates.

I am here tonight to petition the Council to ask the Town staff to assist our neighborhoods in dealing with a variety of traffic issues.

Our three neighborhoods were built in the 1950's and 60's. They are full of steep slopes, rolling hills, and much greenery. The housing is a vibrant mix ranging from large single-family homes to apartments and duplexes.

Our neighbors include professionals, laborers, graduate and undergraduate students, artists, musicians, and more. At any given time during the day you will see us strolling about our neighborhoods, often pushing strollers or leading small children by the hand.

Our neighborhoods have no sidewalks. What they do have is steep hills and many, many blind curves. We have noticed an increase in the number of frightening pedestrian-car near-misses, particularly near these curves and hills. The situation is made more dangerous due to an increasing frequency of UNC employees from the facilities on Airport Drive parking in our neighborhood and walking to the new Human Resources Building (or other facilities) on Airport Drive. Other non-residents are also parking on our streets to catch the buses going downtown or to campus.

Specifically, our problems include:

- Multiple non-resident vehicles parked on the easement at the sharp curve at Severin and Bradley
- Multiple non-resident vehicles parked on Branch St., Airport Dr., and Bradley Rd.
- Speeding on Barclay Rd., Bradley Rd. and elsewhere
- Running stop signs at various locations, including Umstead and Bradley, Severin and Bradley, and Bradley and Williams Circle
- Cut-through traffic from MLK to Umstead Drive, and vice-versa

I've attached a selection of comments from our neighborhoods gathered in the course of a couple weeks. This is only a representative sample, but it's enough to show that there is a problem.

Our neighborhoods will soon be undertaking an internal awareness effort aimed at reminding ourselves and our neighbors of the need to drive carefully on our streets. We recognize that there are many things that we ourselves can do to improve the situation in our neighborhoods.

However, solving some of the problems will require help from the town. We ask that you instruct the town staff to work with our neighborhoods and help us identify our options and come to a reasonable decision on what measures will be most effective and appropriate for us.

Thank you for your consideration.

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## Sample of resident responses to a broadcast query regarding traffic concerns

### ELKIN HILLS

[Molly Starback, Barclay Rd.]

Mike, I'm so glad you are addressing this - speeding is the biggest bee in my bonnet! The other morning Peter and I actually had to jump in the ditch to avoid a white car that was going about 45 mph down Barclay and swerving all over the road (I've seen it since, and think it's someone who lives on Severin). [B]

I've also noticed a definite increase in morning and afternoon speeding and cut-through traffic since the UNC HR building opened (as well as an increasing number of cars parked on the streets during the day, presumably so the HR workers don't have to pay for a parking pass - the blue Jeep Cherokee that's always parked on Bradley St. next to the Roberts' vegetable garden, for example, and a growing number of cars at the end of Branch. But parking is probably another issue entirely). [J]

When I'm walking, I feel most unsafe:

1. On the stretch of Barclay between Wyrick and MLK. That part of Barclay is a series of little hills, and people love to zoom up and down them; their own private rollercoaster. If you are at the base of a hill, they don't see you until they crest the top, and if they're flying they don't always see you. Don't get me started on how fast the Saturday bus drives through. [B]

I think part of the problem with Barclay is the medians. They're beautiful and they're the signature of Barclay Road, but drivers think, "Oh, that person should just hop in the median and get out of my way", not "that pedestrian has a right to be in the road, and I should slow down." I don't know how you combat that perception.

2. "Dead Man's Curve" on Severin (I'm sure this is everyone's number-one danger spot). I practically run through there with the dogs because I'm so afraid of all the people who speed around that blind curve. It's not safe to walk on either side of the street. And of course, as the days grow shorter, the problem worsens - it's dark by 5, and people fly \*up\* the curve to get home after work. And as you mentioned, the bottom of the curve has become a de-facto parking lot. [E, D]

3. Walking up Bradley from Umstead. Everyone speeds down that hill. I walk on the wrong side of the road because again, with the blind curves, they don't see you. [D]

...I can tell you that twice in the past year I have called both UNC Police and the Chapel Hill Police to express my concern about the increase in neighborhood parking by UNC workers. Both times, I got the runaround - UNC said it was a town issue, the town said it was a UNC issue. I'm glad to hear that you got a straight answer. ...

[Jyoti Duwadi & Barbara Matilsky, 231 Barclay Road, Chapel Hill]

Thanks for undertaking the traffic issues in our neighborhood. One suggestion we have is regarding the Barclay Road street sign at the intersection on MLK (Airport Road). Since the sign is so small, it is very difficult to see, especially at night. We would like the city to put up a new, larger Barclay Road sign at the intersection, and if possible, even setup a street light there. [A]

### COLONIAL HEIGHTS

[Patrick Kavanaugh, Williams Circle]

We're fine, thanks. It was on Bradley. Ella and I were walking uphill between Williams and Severin facing oncoming traffic. We were just entering the blind curve, just before Jen, John, and Lucious' house on the left. A car was coming up from behind me traveling up Bradley. Another car was traveling downhill towards my direction. She saw the other car before seeing me and swerved before I came into view. I quickly moved to the curb. She corrected towards the passing car and there remained about 5 feet between us when she passed. She was clearly traveling too fast for any braking maneuvers to have been of any benefit. The driver looked young enough to be a college or maybe a grad student.

PK

[D]

[Resident, Williams Circle]

...One thing that I have observed are vehicles cutting through that are avoiding the morning and afternoon traffic on Airport Rd. These vehicles are taking Estes Dr Ext to Airport Dr to Branch St to Barclay to Bradley to Umstead and vice versa... [A → H, and vice-versa]

[Bettie Bradford]

On our morning walk Roy and I have had gravel from driveways washed by rain onto Barclay Road thrown on us by the tires of speeding cars. Some drivers slow down when passing a pedestrian, but most don't. Virtually no one abides by the 25 mile an hour speed limit . They are ignored - as are most speed limit signs everywhere. I think a few strategically placed speed bumps like the ones on Pine Street in Carrboro are what is needed. I seriously doubt anything less will be effective. [A]

[Jean Plow]

Another issue are all the cars that park on Bradley between Umstead and Williams to catch the bus. These folks should be parking at the park and ride near the airport. [E, J]

[Chris Kaminski – Williams Circle, new arrival]

I have already been witness to several speedy drivers .... I think speed bumps in the right places would be ideal. [general]

[Daran Edmonds]

I would imagine one of the biggest problem streets is Bradley because it's used as a cut through between Umstead & MLK (Airport). During morning and evening rush hour it's especially bad. I know Barclay is a drag strip. Even the buses haul ass down that road! [B, A → H]

[Pekar, Williams Circle]

Besides all else, profuse parking on the street is the biggest pedestrian hazard, because there is not enough room for a parked car and two cars passing each other while pedestrians are trying to get out of the way. [E, J, general]

[Baxter, Bradley Rd.]

This is not current information, just a little background. In the years that I have lived here, I think every mailbox on Bradley (all on the East side) has been knocked down at least once. This is mostly from vehicles coming down Bradley too fast (in one case, a school bus), but the last time my box was hit it was by a car coming up Bradley; knocked it clear to the other side of the yard. Haven't seen or heard of any in the last couple of years, but cars still come down too fast, and swing too wide on the curve. [D]

### **PINEBROOK ESTATES**

[Steve Peterson, Wesley Drive]

I agree that we need to do something about the traffic. I live on Wesley drive and live in constant fear for our eight-year old and three-year old. The cars, Fed-ex trucks, construction vehicles, etc zoom by our house well in excess of the 25 MPH speed limit. As the posted speed limits do not seem to work, I would be in favor of some kind of traffic 'calming' strategies, such as speed bumps, round-about, and more 'children playing' signs. Let me know what I can do to help. [G]

[Sandi Bates, 322 Umstead Drive]

Dear Neighbors,

I haven't heard any mention of Umstead Drive. We are also members of the Pinebrook Neighborhood...322 Umstead Drive. There is a constant flood of speeders from the Exchange Pool to the Stop sign at Pritchard Extension. It is not unusual for cars to disregard the stop signs. It is more noticable now that school is back in session. I have personally witnessed cars taking the curve around the ball park so fast that right front wheels come onto the sidewalk. There is usually tire tead marks on the concrete. [H]

While speed bumps may not be the best solution along Umstead Drive (but I'm not altogether opposed,) I believe that more signage and greater enforcement would help reduce these safety concerns. As traffic continues to increase, more folks are using Umstead Drive as to cut across to Rt. 86.

Just wanted to get the Umstead Drive issues on the agenda. The bus stop (schools and City), park and exchange pool are all areas of high foot and bike traffic.

[385 Wesley Court]

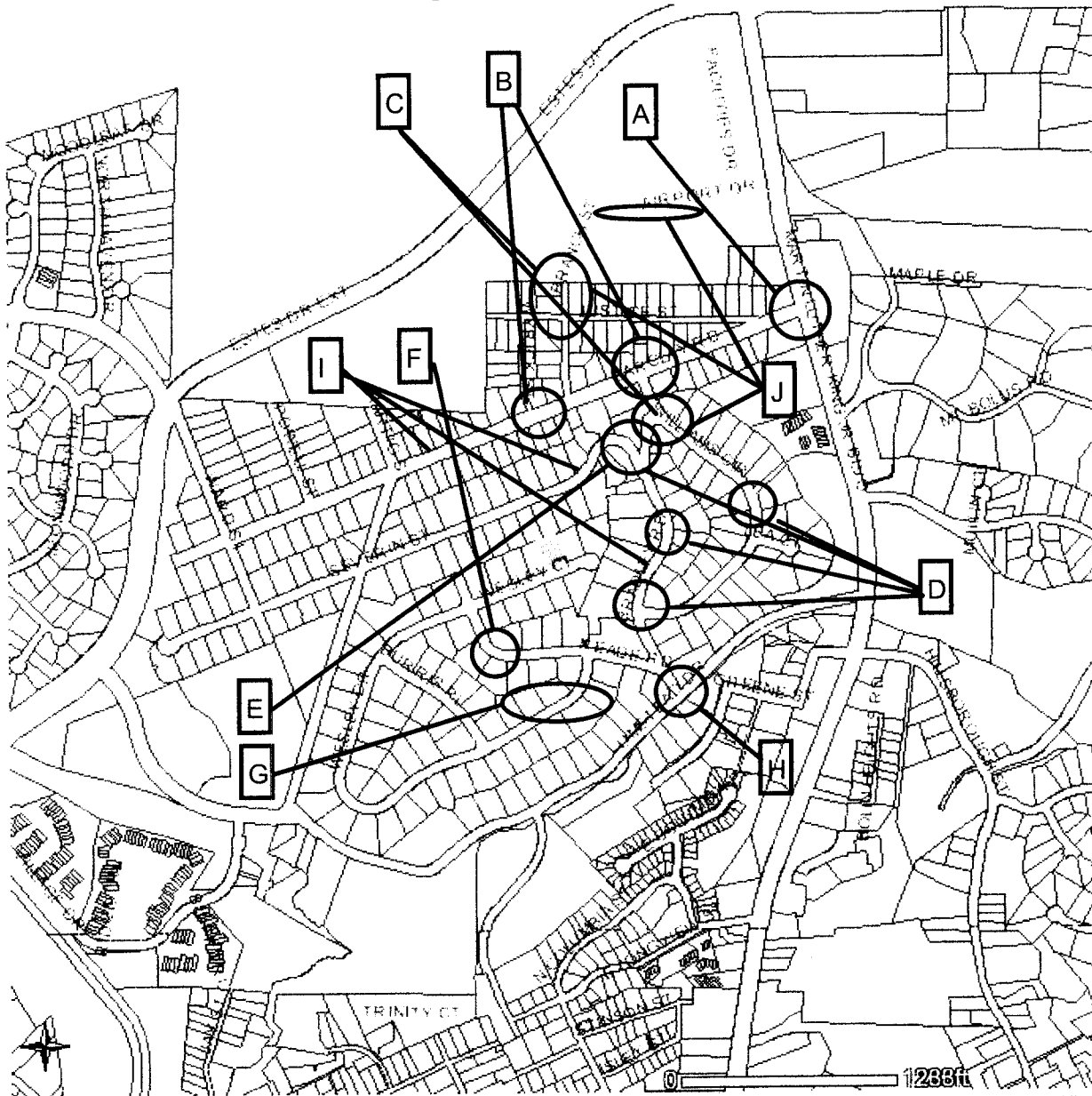
At 8:15PM I was coming down the hill on Bradley and someone in a late model 4-door sedan (Toyota or Nissan I believe) ran the stop sign at Reade and Bradley. They made a right onto Bradley at which time I began blowing my horn. The person turned right onto Umstead, paused for a few seconds and then drove on. [F, H]

I spoke to some neighbors who happened to be walking down Wesley Drive and had just turned up the hill on Reade and they said the person just came flying by them on the bottom part of Wesley Drive (presumably not stopping at that stop sign either).

**Key to map:**

- A Steep hill, gravel, busy intersection
- B Blind hills, sun from west, foliage at corner of Branch and Barclay
- C Stop signs (frequently run)
- D Blind curves
- E Cars parked on easement, mailbox on curve, bus line, commercial trucks, straight shot on to Bradley encourages running stop sign
- F Blind curve, sign covered by tree
- G Blind hills
- H Stop signs (frequently run)
- I Speeding on blind hills
- J Cars parked from UNC HR building

### Orange County N.C. GIS Map



This map contains parcels prepared for the inventory of real property within Orange County, and is compiled from recorded deeds, plats, and other public records and data. Users of this map are hereby notified that the aforementioned public primary information sources should be consulted for verification of the information contained on this map. The county and its mapping companies assume no legal responsibility for the information contained on this map.

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Parcels Current Thru 8/24/2005. Owner Information Current Thru 8/23/2005

Parcel Identification Number: 9789222108

**Summary**  **Building**  **Land**  **Documents**  **Prior Owners**  **Addresses**

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