



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL  
Office of the Chancellor

James C. Moeser  
Chancellor

103 South Building  
Campus Box 9100  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-9100  
(919) 962-1365 Fax (919) 962-1647  
james\_moeser@unc.edu

March 27, 2001

Secretary Lyndo Tippet  
Department of Transportation  
State of North Carolina  
1501 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1501

Dear Secretary Tippet:

I am writing with regard to improvements to South Columbia Street (NC 86) in Chapel Hill. The current Transportation Improvement Program includes the following item: U-624 NC 86 (SOUTH COLUMBIA STREET), SR 1906 (PUREFOY ROAD) to SR 1904 (MASON FARM ROAD), WIDEN TO INCLUDE BICYCLE LANES, and planning is in progress.

When the Town of Chapel Hill and the Department of Transportation were discussing the improvements to South Columbia Street about three years ago, the Town desired no significant widening of the road, and the University agreed not to object. However, as the result of knowledge gained in its recently concluded master planning effort, which included detailed study of transportation to and from the main campus, the University believes that it is vitally important to reopen this issue. At its meeting on March 22, 2001, the University's Board of Trustees passed a resolution asking the University to work with the Town of Chapel Hill and the State Department of Transportation to redefine the current improvements to South Columbia Street.

South Columbia Street is a significant means of access for patients and employees of the UNC Health Care System, primarily UNC Hospitals. Over 30% of the employees come to Chapel Hill from the southwest and west, and their access to UNC Hospitals is via South Columbia Street. In addition, roughly 45% of patients travel to Chapel Hill from these same areas. The volume of traffic on South Columbia Street south of Mason Farm Road in 2000 was 16,500 vehicles per day while the capacity of the road was 13,000 vehicles. The improvements included in the present TIP will increase the capacity only to 16,200 vehicles per day, less than sufficient for today's volume, and traffic volume is expected to be 22,800 by 2025. In spite of the improvements, the vehicle/capacity ratio will worsen, from the present 1.27 to 1.41. The only other access to UNC Hospitals is from US 15-501, which presently has a vehicle/capacity ratio of 1.21 between South Columbia and Manning Drive, and that is expected to worsen to 1.53 by 2025. UNC Health Care, the State's premier health care facility, is critically important to the region and the state, and optimal access must be assured for employees, patients, and the myriad of emergency vehicles that arrive daily from across the region. South Columbia Street cannot be

viewed as a roadway for the Town of Chapel Hill alone. We recognize the planning that has been done to date, but we believe more capacity is needed to ensure the viability of UNC Hospitals.

I greatly appreciate your attention to this important matter for the University as well as the State. I will ensure that appropriate University representatives are available at your convenience to begin these discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Moeser', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

James Moeser

Cc: Board of Trustees  
President Molly Broad  
Vice Chancellor Jeffrey Houpt