

From: Betsy Malpass [mailto:betsymalpass@juno.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2006 2:11 PM
To: Carol Abernethy
Cc: morgancreek@lists.ibiblio.org; Kevin Foy, Sally@ibiblio.org; Cal Horton; windsorcircle@mindspring.com
Subject: Re: Email FW: Citizen Petition 2/13/06 Manning/Fordham Area Pedestrian Crossing Needed

Ms. Abernethy and Members of the Town Council:

I do not have Word on my computer, but for those who could not open the email I sent on AOL, here is a reprint of my prepared remarks:

The Intersection at Manning Drive and Fordham Boulevard is **not safe for man nor beast**. I think if we look at the map, you can see the two big reasons why.

The first reason is because a great many people and vehicles converge at this intersection. There are **magnets** that pull us up Manning Drive to the many parking decks that have been constructed and that continue to be constructed on the hill, and as it stands, we need vehicles to protect ourselves (at least in some measure) when we cross Fordham Boulevard.

The second reason crossing Fordham is not safe is a huge influx of out of town traffic caused by the **lack of regional planning** for a real bypass around Chapel Hill.

First, let's take a look at the intersection's magnets:

1. At the top of the hill is UNC Hospitals, the region's **largest employer**--never mind the patients and visitors that arrive daily. Just think of that.
2. The **Dean Smith Center and Kenan Stadium**, home of the famous Tar Heels, are on that hill. Not only ball games--both big and small--are hosted here, but also concerts, July 4 celebrations and the like. Also utilizing the new multistory 24-7 parking deck next to Kenan Stadium is the **Carolina Club and the Alumni Center** where various social events, art exhibits, and classes are held.
3. And HERE closer to Fordham Blvd, is the **Family Practice Center** (a medical out patient clinic) and the **Pinetum** where Green Angels work and joggers jog.

The vehicular traffic up and down Manning Drive is not to be believed. But even during special events when policemen control the traffic lights by hand, there is not a safe spot for people on foot or on a bike to cross Fordham Boulevard. But cross they must.

4. There are also magnets East of Fordham that draw students and their

families resident on campus as well as Carolina athletes, students and faculty to the other side:

-The most obvious one is the **NC Botanical Garden**, a real gem with its **Totten Center** and exhibits and **trails** through the woods on down to Morgan Creek.

NOTE: As we all know, the Garden is planning a new classroom building (HERE) and in this connection convinced the Town Council last year of the necessity to close Laurel Hill Road to protect pedestrians crossing it. (HERE)

-And of course there is **Finley Golf Course**. Between the Pinetum on the West side of Fordham and the Garden and the Golf Course on the East side of Fordham, there are plenty of paths for athletes to jog, and they could do it safely, **if they had a way to cross Fordham above or below ground level**.

5. It is worth noting that the **Ronald McDonald House** is located HERE next to the Botanical Garden, and I believe there is another guest house for families of hospital patients in the planning stage for this same area. Visitors frequenting these facilities will not only want to travel across Fordham Blvd to the hospital, but may also wish to attend one of the **two churches** across that Boulevard--if they could cross safely.

The second reason for this unnecessarily dangerous intersection is that there has been a stunning **lack of planning**.

Look at this overview map. About 50 years ago, what we now call Fordham Blvd may **have been a bypass**. It took the traffic off of Airport Road and South Columbia Street (then accommodating two-way traffic) North and South. There was no 1-40, and Hwy 54 was the way to Raleigh and points East and West.

But times have changed. Not only has the Town and the University grown, but the **very recent addition of huge dorms and family student housing** apartments to south campus has put an additional strain on the environment and on town traffic patterns. Closing Laurel Hill Road and adding a classroom building inside the NC Botanical Garden will not help matters at the Manning/Fordham intersection either.

South of Chapel Hill along the 15-501 corridor development has expanded at such a rate that before we knew it, the two-lane road between Chapel Hill and Pittsboro had grown to four plus. The census bureau now wants to refer to Raleigh-Durham-Sanford as the Triangle, but traffic from the South has no way to reach 1-40 except through Chapel Hill's Fordham Blvd. And those heading north to Washington, D. C. or to New York City reach 1-85 via Chapel Hill's Fordham Blvd. These out-of-town drivers and the ever increasing truck drivers do not feel like they are in a town with pedestrians. They are not impressed with the 45 mph speed limit and are certainly not expecting to encounter a stop light at the bottom of the hill on

Fordham at Manning. (SHOW ON BIG MAP)

CONCLUSION

The upshot of this situation is that since we have neither planned for a true bypass nor built one, and since we have contributed ourselves to exacerbating this dangerous situation at the Manning/Fordham intersection with absolutely no provision at all for the safe crossing of pedestrians, in just the last few years we have lost two neighbors that I know about: Ruth Falk and David Galinsky.

It is past time now to take responsibility and get the job done. No way will a pedestrian light suffice. We need either a pedestrian skyway above ground level or a tunnel under Fordham Blvd.

Storm water passes under Fordham in several places, because the bottom of the hill is in the KMMC neighborhood, as is Morgan Creek.

Duke Power lines, OWASA sewer pipes and water reuse pipes cross under Fordham in huge conduits as well. (SHOW POWER/OWASA STATIONS)

Meeting of the Waters Creek crosses under Fordham Blvd. (HERE)

WHY CAN'T PEDESTRIANS AND BIKERS CROSS UNDER
FORDHAM BLVD AS WELL? WHAT IS ONE LIVE SAVED WORTH?
WHAT ABOUT TWO LIVES SAVED?

If we want to encourage walking and biking in Chapel Hill we need to make it safe. Let's start by clearing up the most dangerous intersection in Town. Let's do it now.

Betsy Malpass
Feb 13,2006