



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

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The Honorable Kevin Foy, Mayor
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

The Honorable Mark Chilton, Mayor
Town of Carrboro
301 West Main Street
Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

Dear Kevin and Mark:

Following up on my April 22 conversation with Kevin and the discussions at the June 1,2006, meeting of the Carolina North Leadership Advisory Committee, I write to clarify the University's position on transportation planning for Carolina North.

The University has always viewed public transit as the most important component of any transportation plan for Carolina North. However, we know that almost 70 percent of University and UNC Hospitals employees live outside the Chapel Hill Transit service area, and the number living in the service area has dropped by 20 percent since 2001. Although we expect housing at Carolina North to help reverse this trend; issues of regional access to Carolina North and our main campus by faculty, staff, students, and visitors will not be addressed by a study of transit within the Chapel Hill Transit service area alone.

Because we recognize that transit will not serve all of the needs for travel to Carolina North. we believe that a comprehensive transportation study that looks at transit as one piece of an overall transportation system is also needed.

However, the University agrees that moving forward with transit planning is critical. As was pointed out at the Leadership Advisory Committee on June 1, the University and the Town of Chapel Hill had agreed to work together on a mutually satisfactory revision of the Town's draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a consultant to perform a transit study.

The University submitted a revised draft of the RFQ to the Town and received the Town's comments on June 6, 2006. The University accepts the June 6th version as edited by the Town. provided that two matters of special concern to us are addressed:

1. The oversight committee envisioned by the RFQ will be a Steering Committee with representation from Chapel Hill and Carrboro, the University, the Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). This Steering Committee will select the consultants and guide their work.
2. This transit study should be used to inform the DCHC's upcoming 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. Transportation needs in specific corridors that cannot be met cost-effectively by the transit strategies identified by the transit study will be addressed by the 2035 Plan.

We have every confidence that agreement will be reached on these details.

Underlining the importance of this study, the University expects to pay a major share of its cost. Consistent with the University's current level of funding support to Chapel Hill Transit operations, we commit to covering 60 percent of the cost of the study not funded by external sources, including DCHC and NC DOT.

Let me point with pride to the fact that the University is a recognized leader nationally in the use of transportation demand management strategies for which we have received several national awards. The most recent recognition came in May from the Environmental Protection Agency, which recognized Carolina as one of 72 college and university "Best Workplaces for Commuters."

Our employees and students have embraced both transit use from home and park-and-ride services. Since the Chapel Hill Town Council approved the Development Plan in 2001, transit use from home has increased by over 60 percent for students and 33 percent for our employees. Park-and-ride use has increased by 33 percent for our students and over 100 percent for our employees.

On campus, the cost of a parking permit has risen dramatically. We have implemented a tiered pricing system to create a powerful incentive to use transit rather than drive to campus. This year, the cost of a parking permit for University and Health Care System employees ranged from \$402 to \$905 based on the employee's salary and location of the parking.

However, for many employees and students, parking is simply not available on campus. The number of spaces on campus continues to be severely constrained. While we currently have 0.61 parking spaces per employee, that ratio will drop to 0.48 by the end of the Development Plan. These are remarkable reductions to dependency on single-occupancy vehicles in a very compressed period and are solid evidence of our current commitment to transit.

Our financial investment in transit continues to increase. Since 2001, the University's contribution to Chapel Hill Transit has risen by \$2.8 million annually, half of which pays for new service. Our total annual contribution now stands at over \$5 million, and is expected to exceed \$6 million in 2006-07.

And, I am very proud to announce that beginning this fall, our employees and students will ride free on Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) routes, with the cost borne fully by the University.

Along with initiating and investing in fare-free transit, we have also committed over \$6 million on new park-and-ride lot construction since 2001. Park-and-ride service is in great demand, and we continue to look for new locations that serve our employees and students. In April, the Chapel Hill Town Council reviewed a concept plan for a park-and-ride lot in the north U.S. 15-501 corridor, and we look forward to having those spaces available for our employees in March 2007.

Although we believe that aggressive transportation demand management is imperative, we recognize that oftentimes these changes require a difficult change in behavior. While some students and employees find the transit services a great solution for their commute, for many the cost of campus parking is a hardship and adjusting to transit is difficult. We have learned that to be successful in getting people out of their cars, we must provide a menu of choices, including financial incentives, numerous options for travel to campus and ways to get around once on campus. That is why we were the state's first agency to introduce the Zipcar, recognizing that employees coming to campus without a car might need a vehicle while here.

We urge all local employers, including Chapel Hill and Carrboro, to match the University's commitment to transit by examining transportation strategies and current free parking for their workforces.

I would also like to address concerns raised about parking at Carolina North. The 2003-04 concept plan was put forth as a *preliminary* document, to be adjusted based on community input. As you know, I formally stated at the initial meeting of the Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) that the concept plan was off the table so that, through the work of the LAC, we could receive unconstrained input. To make this commitment clear as it relates to transportation matters, I want to formally state that the University will not seek approval for 17,000 parking spaces as shown on the 2003-04 concept plan. Any proposal for parking at Carolina North will be informed by the results of the proposed transit study, by aggressive, cost-effective transportation demand management strategies, and by the guiding principles developed by the Carolina North Leadership Advisory Committee.

I believe that our commitment to public transit is demonstrated every day. We will not waver in that commitment as Carolina North becomes a reality.

Sincerely,



James Moeser