

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Roger L. Stancil, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Public Participation for Carolina North

DATE: January 11, 2010

PURPOSE

On June 22, 2009, the Town Council adopted a [resolution](#) requesting that the Town Manager submit to the Council “a detailed plan for public notice and participation, utilizing existing advisory boards to consider the issues in the context of the entire Town, during development of the first 800,000 square feet of floor area at Carolina North.” This memorandum proposes a public participation process for Carolina North that maximizes the Town’s existing resources with new approaches.

BACKGROUND

The Carolina North Campus has been the focus of a series of planning efforts and community discussions that culminated with the Town and University's June 2009 approval of a [development agreement](#). The development agreement contains guidelines and standards for the development of the first 3 million square feet of a mixed-use research and academic campus on 133 acres. Early development is anticipated to occur near the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Piney Mountain Road intersection. The agreement also contains guidelines for the rest of the property that will not be developed in the near future. The Town has identified key staff to manage the requirements of the development agreement and Town and University staffs continue to meet to maintain clear communications between the two parties.

DISCUSSION

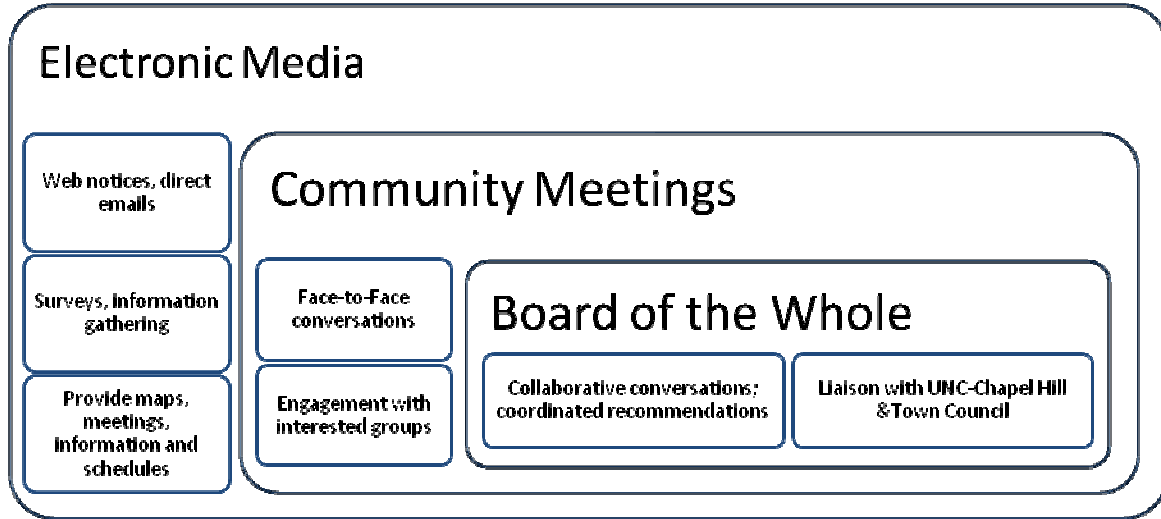
The goal of public participation during the first phase of Carolina North is to allow ample opportunities for interested parties to “make information about all aspects of the implementation of the development agreement fully available for public review” as planning and development proceed. Carolina North activities must also be informed by the other activities of the Town.

Based on conversation with the University staff and our mutual understanding of the goals of public participation, Town staff recommends three methods of communications:

- 1) Enhanced use of electronic media
- 2) Continued community meetings, and
- 3) A regular advisory board, referred to as a “Board of the Whole.”

These three methods of communications and input would be coordinated by the Town staff with regular participation by University staff through the Joint Staff Working Group.

Three Methods of Communication



Electronic Media

The Town's electronic resources support the public participation process. The [Carolina North webpage](#) will be the Town's central location for distributing information, announcements and communications related to Carolina North. The site has already been used to share a quarterly schedule for implementation activities and milestones. Meeting announcements for the Campus to Campus connector workshop and the Transportation Impact Analysis information meeting were posted at the website along with the materials used at those meetings.

Direct email invitations supplement the notices provided in TOWNweek, announcements on facebook and the website, advisory board notifications and electronic Council updates.

As a central hub, the website also provides opportunities to extend public participation through new forms of public feedback, such as surveys, when useful. Project specific email addresses are easily established and posted, to direct comments to the right staff person. The website will also be used to post links to recorded meetings, updated reports and survey findings.

Community Meetings

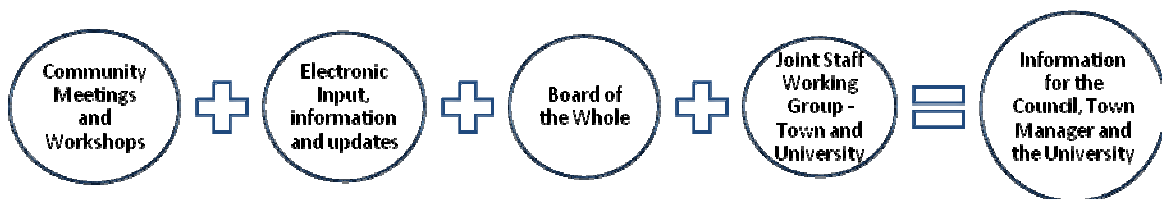
There are requirements in the development agreement for targeted public input on work such as the Transportation Impact Analysis Update and the Campus to Campus route. The staff can use web-based approaches to gather and disseminate information, but we believe public meetings and workshops are also beneficial. For example, faculty and staff, students, neighborhood representatives and cyclists attended the December 1, 2009 community workshop on the Campus to Campus connector. They were able to talk to one another and generate new options and information for the staffs to consider. If the Town and University staffs organize a community workshop that includes participants from a variety of interest groups, technical experts and other affected parties, we are better able to meet the Council's expectations for well-informed professional recommendations. Town and University staffs would use public workshop to complement and strengthen the input from the advisory boards and technical experts.

Board of the Whole

The third focus for regular public feedback would come through a collaborative, open conversation between the Town's existing advisory boards. The interests represented by individual advisory boards are often interrelated and the staff, advisory board volunteers and community members could benefit from a coordinated discussion about a project as complex as Carolina North. Staff proposes that the Council convene a 'Board of the Whole' on a regular basis, where the chairs or appointees of advisory boards would represent the interests of their respective boards. These meetings would be open to the public and announced through the electronic means described above. The Board of the Whole would provide coordinated input to the University and Town staffs as the development moves forward. The individual boards would continue to be invited to participate in meetings on key topics, as was the case for the Campus-to-Campus connector workshop.

These three layers of communication would support the Staff's ability to collect input from various sources and to work with the University staff to provide the best quality information in a timely fashion. The Town and University staffs believe that a coordinated flow of information and responses is critical to providing quality information about the implementation of the development agreement.

Flow of Information



We have developed a quarterly schedule for Carolina North as a guide for implementation of the agreement. This [schedule](#) is available on the website. It provides a snapshot of the upcoming milestones for the project. The staff will continue to develop announcements and information for each step of the agreement.

NEXT STEPS

We have already used the some of the methods described here for general communications (website), the Campus to Campus connector (December 1, 2009, community workshop) and the Transportation Impact Analysis Update (December 10, 2009, public meeting).

The proposed next steps, based on the outline described here are:

- 1) Distribute information about the Council's recommendation for public participation.
- 2) Meet with staff liaisons to advisory boards, advisory board chairs and Council liaisons to explain the Board of the Whole concept.
- 3) Schedule a regular meeting time for the Board of the Whole.
- 4) Continue working with University staff through the Joint Staff Working Group.
- 5) Coordinate public outreach for the following specific projects:
 - a. Campus-to-Campus connector
 - b. Short Range Transit Plan
 - c. UNC Chapel Hill's first annual report
 - d. Other projects as needed.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt the attached Resolution endorsing this process.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Quarterly schedule (p. 6).
2. Carolina North Website address : <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/index.aspx?page=900>