

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chapel Hill Town Council

FROM: Chapel Hill Planning Board

CC: Transportation Board

DATE: January 13, 2003

SUBJECT: Transportation Management Plans

As you know, Transportation Management Plans (TMPs) were initiated ten years ago as an alternative to payment-in-lieu for parking and to encourage businesses to discourage single-occupant vehicle use in the downtown area. In later years, TMPs were also required in Special Use Permit Applications in locations all over town. These plans included strategies such as: preferred parking for car-poolers, showers and locked facilities for cyclists, designating in-house transportation coordinators, offering "flextime" to reduce peak-hour traffic, and purchasing bus passes for employees to use. Of these, purchasing bus passes is the most tangible, revenue-producing, and easily measured strategy. One unintended consequence of implementing fare-free buses has been to make this aspect of TMPs redundant.

In recent development reviews, the subject of Transportation Management Plans has come to our attention. We are concerned that this well-intentioned program is not accomplishing all that it could, and in the meantime may be depriving the Town of potential revenue from payments-in-lieu for downtown parking. We would like to see the Town ensure that this program is strengthened so that we can measure a true public benefit from reduction of automobile traffic.

Some of our specific concerns are:

- TMPs apply to buildings, rather than employers. Many residents are unaware that their building is subject to a TMP.
- No bus passes to purchase any more.
- Ineffective measurement and evaluation. Annual reports do not indicate percentage of employees responding and are voluntary.
- No enforcement mechanism. There must be consequences for violation that are as meaningful as payments-in-lieu are.

We recommend that the Council consider initiating a process to review this program and to improve this program by developing better reporting and enforcement mechanisms, and that you seek the input of the Transportation Board and Planning Board, business owners, downtown owners, employees and the general public to that end.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.