

58

-----Original Message-----

From: George J Cianciolo
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2003 2:23 PM
To: Town Council
Subject: UNC Development Plan

Dear Mr. Mayor and Council Members:

Having expressed, as a member of the T-Board, some of my concerns about the UNC development plan and having sat through all of last evening's public hearing I would now like to share with you some additional thoughts and concerns regarding the University's plans.

1. The University representatives repeatedly made the point that the Master Plan will provide an additional 10 acres of green space to the campus through elimination of surface parking and replacement of surface parking with parking decks. However, they do not highlight the fact that the Master Plan provides for an additional 1500 parking spaces on campus (beyond what is there now). Thus there may be more green space to walk and ride on campus (depending on how this newly-created green space is developed) but it may potentially be negated by the >3000 vehicular trips/day that their Master Plan will generate, most of these trips occurring on the central campus.

2. The University representatives seem to put a significant premium on providing proximal parking to the employees. They repeatedly pointed out that all of the decks under discussion last night are on the Master Plan. Even though they define the Manning deck (the one they propose to eliminate) as proximal, it is still on the periphery of today's campus. If the University is truly committed to providing a pedestrian and cyclist friendly campus they should be willing to build the furthestmost decks first. Later, if additional parking needs can be demonstrated, they could build additional decks on the interior of the campus. Such a policy would serve two purposes: it would lessen, at least for the immediate future, the vehicular traffic on the central campus and it would give the University an opportunity to "educate" their employees regarding the benefits of parking on the periphery. This "education" could include financial incentives to the employees such as suggested by Heidi Perry in her recent memo. It would hopefully include the increased quality of life on campus resulting from reduced vehicular traffic (i.e., employees might be able to traverse the campus without fear for their safety and well-being as was described by a faculty member last evening).

One last note: it was interesting to me that no one at last evening's meeting asked what the students might want or what is in the best interest of the students. Although sometimes it may be easy to think of the students as a "transient" citizen population, their quality of life and safety while they are here should be as important as that of the employees of the University and the other citizens of Chapel Hill. I would be very surprised if additional parking decks on central campus are high on the students' current priority list.

Best wishes,

George Cianciolo