

news

# Crosswalk studies continue

By Jeff Bowers

It may be a year before the crosswalk on Franklin Street near the NCNB Plaza gets a signal light, a town spokesman said Monday.

"We were hoping we could get the light before school starts, but that doesn't seem practical," said Bill Morris of the Chapel Hill Transportation Department.

Morris said the N. C. Department of Transportation has agreed to install the light during its next fiscal year, but the exact date has not been set.

"They (DOT) want to figure out when in the fiscal year the funds will be available," he said.

Recently, the DOT asked the town to provide information on accidents which have occurred on the block of Franklin Street between Columbia and Henderson streets, where the crosswalk is located.

Morris said the DOT needs such accident information to evaluate the priority for installation of the light.

"They use the accident information to get a cost-benefit ratio which determines the project's priority," he said. "We're now sending the information to the DOT."

In June the Town Council approved a resolution that asked the state to install the light at the NCNB crosswalk and to create a crosswalk on Franklin Street near the Morehead Planetarium.

DOT officials have said that a study will be conducted after the fall semester begins to determine if enough pedestrians cross the street at the Planetarium to warrant a crosswalk there.

The state already has conducted such a study at the NCNB crosswalk and recommended that a light be installed.

UNC Student Government has endorsed the proposal for the Planetarium crosswalk, but the proposal for the signal light at the NCNB Plaza has met opposition from both UNC students and some town officials.

Opponents of the light say it would make Franklin Street faster for traffic rather than safer for pedestrians.

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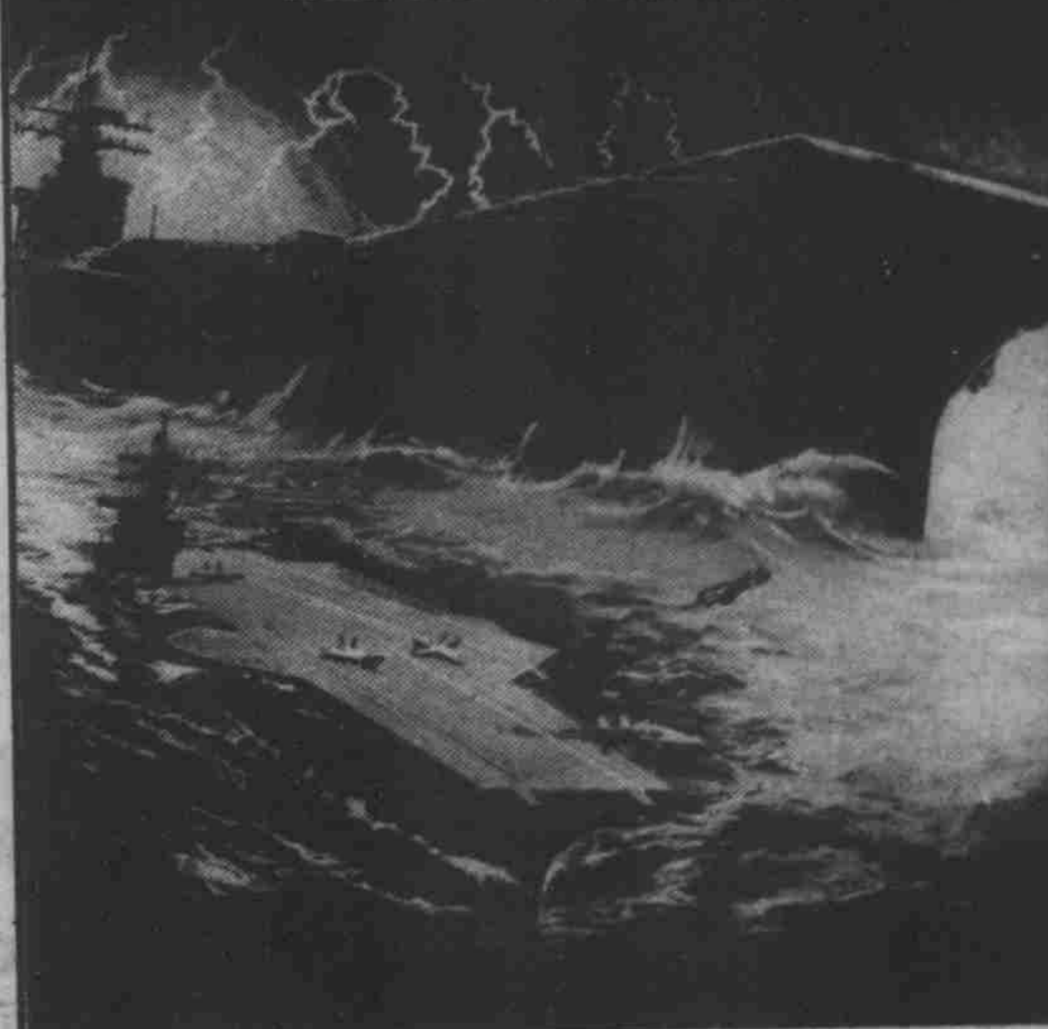
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