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Widening Randall may cause problems for UNCW

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Plans are under way to widen Randall Parkway, but this issue has sparked some controversy.

A traffic study done in June 2001 by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., concluded that the UNCW daily traffic on Randall Parkway was beyond capacity. The widening of Randall has been proposed in the past as a possible solution to the problem.

According to the report, "Capacity is defined as the maximum number of vehicles that can pass over a particular road or

rying significantly more traffic than their design value of approximately 12,000 vehicles per day. The study also included that "The contribution of non-University traffic using Randall Drive as a 'short-cut' remains significant during these same hours."

Sharon Boyd, associate vice chancellor of Business and Support Services said, "Generally as a University, we've been opposed to the widening of Randall Parkway because we would be widening it for through traffic, not for our constituents, and it's just going to create more traffic." There is the concern that

Randall will be widened from two to four lanes from South College Road to Independence sometime next year. Jim Flechtner, Traffic Engineering manager for the City of Wilmington said, "We're in the process of selecting a consultant to design the project."

Funding has already been approved, and now the contract will be finalized and will need approval by City Council.

Mark Tinkler, senior transportation planner, stated that interviews for the design firm are currently being held, "so that the project will be done probably within the next 12-18 months."

Construction could begin earlier than that. "As far as extension into campus, that was something from the long range planning point of view that had been on the plans for some time, but was then completely dropped due to opposition from the university." Tinkler also mentioned that planning alterations such as medians and pedestrian crosswalks could be utilized to lessen the congestion due to more lanes.

Michael White, professor of creative writing and member of the Parking and Transportation Committee, and Building and Grounds Committee, said, "I do know that most faculty and administrators I've spoken with have staunchly opposed it." White considered alternative transportation an essential variable. Some other alternatives to expanding Randall Parkway



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The City of Wilmington plans to widen Randall Parkway between South College Road and Independence Boulevard.

would be to promote alternative transportation such as the shuttle service, bike paths, more pedestrian crosswalks, the "one-mile radius rule" and car pooling.

Even the possibility of designated parking on campus has been suggested. Boyd said, "One thing that we want to do next year, and I stress that we want to do it; we want to go to designated parking, and that's putting the commuters similar to the resident students in designated zones. And that would keep people from moving around from one parking lot to another parking lot all day."

Thus, it could contribute to a more pedestrian centered campus. Boyd also said right now an immediate step is a traffic study to occur at the intersection of

Racine and Crews Drive (at the Water Tower) in order to approve a crosswalk to make it safer.

Another goal could be to promote underutilized entrances such as Hurst Drive. Also, the schedules could be spread out to prevent an abundance of traffic at peak hours of the day. This could mean later hours for dining, class schedules, other campus activities and visitors that come to UNCW to do business or campus tours.

"I don't believe those extra lanes would cause more congestion," said Robert Bass, senior of creative writing.

As of yet there are no plans for the extension of Randall onto campus as of now. There lies the definite concern that something needs to be done.



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UNCW officials are unsure whether the plan will solve or create more problems with campus traffic congestion.

through a particular intersection within a set time duration." In 1996, the 24-hour volume of traffic on Randall was 14,707 and in 2001, 12,922.

Reportedly, Randall and Crews Drive as two-lane roads, are "car-

more lanes could make the road more difficult to cross.

Yet with the addition of the Watson School of Education and the future Fine Arts building, more traffic will be contributed to the same trouble area of campus.

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