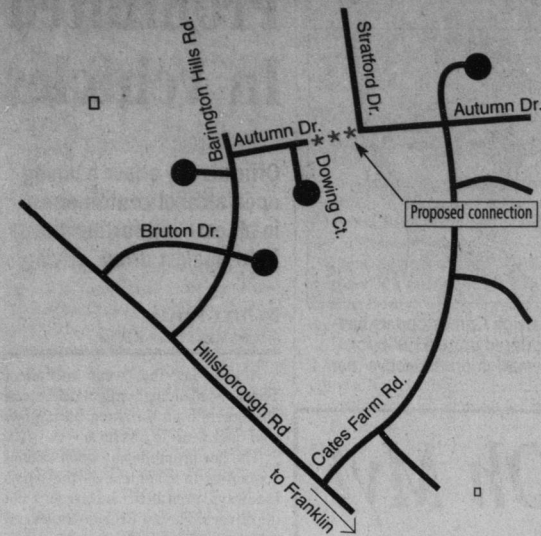


Making the Connection

Citing numerous safety concerns, residents of three area subdivisions are asking the Carrboro Board of Aldermen to reconsider a decision to connect both sides of Autumn Drive.



SOURCE: TOWN OF CARRBORO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Residents Dispute Connecting Road

By KELLIE DIXON
Assistant City Editor

About 30 feet of undeveloped property has sparked controversy between local landowners and the Carrboro Board of Aldermen.

Residents of Barington Hills, Wexford and Cates Farm subdivisions, located off Hillsborough Road, are protesting construction on Autumn Drive. The aldermen have already approved the project, which would link the three subdivisions by joining both sides of Autumn Drive.

Although the town has promised sidewalks along the connection, residents are afraid an increase in traffic will endanger their children who walk to local McDougle Schools and create chaos in the neighborhood.

While the board approved the plan to allow the road construction in March, residents approached the aldermen in August with a list of questions and a request to have the issue revisited.

Stephanie Padilla, who has lived in Barington Hills for 10 years, said she opposes the connection because the neighborhood was old and had narrow roads. "They built another Autumn Drive (in Wexford)," she said. "We were promised there was no chance the roads would be connected."

Alderman Jacquelyn Gist said she had voted against the connection in the board's 6-1 decision. "I didn't think it was right. The neighbors didn't want it. The developers didn't want it. The town doesn't need to be connected to traffic."

Gist also said the topic should be revisited. "To spend that much money in a neighborhood that doesn't even want the road is a misuse of taxpayers' dol-

lars," she said.

But Alderman Allen Spalt said connector roads would create a network that would help relieve traffic on the main roads. He also said the town would put in sidewalks, stop signs and speed bumps to increase pedestrian safety.

"Ordinarily, people who benefit from a sidewalk have to pay," he said. "In this case, the board has said the town will bear the cost of the sidewalk. I think (residents) don't believe us when we say we want the road connected safely."

Town Manager Robert Morgan said the cost for the town to add sidewalks to the existing streets, including Autumn Drive, would be about \$130,000.

Morgan said the planning department recommended this connection be

made because this is the best way to deal with heavy town traffic.

Initially, Padilla and her neighbors asked the aldermen for a referendum but were denied. The board held a public hearing instead, where the connection was approved. Spalt said he disapproved of a referendum because he thinks the town should be run by its local officials. "I doubt the (N.C.) General Assembly will look kindly on (having a referendum) because they haven't in the past," Spalt said. "And if they did do that, it's likely to take a long time. It would be faster for (the residents) to do a recall."

Padilla said residents have discussed a recall, which is a petition calling for a vote to determine whether certain aldermen should remain in office. But she hopes the situation wouldn't call for that. "We're trying to make this a positive thing for the town."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

Mayors Cooperate to Curb Transit Woes

Four area mayors are considering several options, including a regional tax, to fund future transit projects.

By PHIL PERRY
Staff Writer

Four Triangle-area mayors have joined forces to find possible solutions for the area's transportation headaches. Mayors Rosemary Waldorf of Chapel Hill, Nick Tennyson of Durham, Paul Coble of Raleigh and Glen Lang of Cary have formed an alliance to secure state or private funding for projects being considered by the two metropolitan planning organizations that service the area.

One MPO draws plans for Wake County and the other covers the Durham, Chapel Hill and Carrboro area.

Both MPOs have formulated plans that forecast transportation and transit problems caused by future growth of the area and the improvements and funds needed to solve them.

"If we look at these plans over the next 25 years, it is very obvious that we have nowhere near the money we need to complete these projects," Waldorf said. "If we want to sustain reasonably good mobility in our region we are going to need additional funding for our area."

The mayors hope the alliance will allow them to lobby for transportation



Chapel Hill Mayor Rosemary Waldorf said a referendum would be held to decide on a possible regional sales tax.

funding more effectively. Possible sources of income include state funding, money from major employers, increased impact fees, coordinated land-use planning or regional taxation.

For the last option, Waldorf said a referendum would be held in Wake, Orange and Durham counties to decide if residents want to impose a sales tax for transportation. If the tax passes the referendum, the proposal would go before local governments, the N.C. General Assembly and county commissioners.

Coordinating land-use planning could generate considerable revenue, Lang said. By his estimate, areas could save half the money needed by reevaluating their land-use plans. But that will not be enough. "I think there will be a regional tax of some sort," Lang said. "It's a very broad-based solution to the problem."

But the problem is not just securing funds. Because the MPOs service two different areas, they have offered separate plans that do not encompass the entire problem. To eradicate that problem, the mayors hired the planning consultant firm Martin/Alexiou/Bryson of Raleigh to consolidate the plans.

George Alexiou, a principle in the firm, agreed there were problems with the plans. "All of these improvements

that are included in the long-term plans are not funded," he said.

Alexiou said his firm will form one conceptual plan from a combination of those offered by the MPOs and Triangle Transit Authority, along with a recent N.C. Department of Transportation study, which states that high occupancy vehicle lanes are feasible along some parts of Interstate 40. "We are not actually going to develop the plan (that will be used), just a conceptual plan to determine just how much additional funding would be needed to achieve that plan," Alexiou said.

Alexiou said the work his firm is doing cannot replace the work done by the MPOs. Rather, the firm is working with the MPOs to find a solution.

Alexiou said Martin/Alexiou/Bryson would have the plan finished by January, before the state legislature is back in session.

Once the plans are finalized, the problem of how to fund the changes will still exist. "There's a myriad of ways to raise funds to do this," Lang said.

"What you have to do is make everyone a bit unhappy to make sure traffic doesn't drop to a stall."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

Ackland Illuminates Multimedia Exhibit

By GEOFF WESSEL
Staff Writer

Dropping their chisels and brushes, artists have picked up more modern tools to express their vision.

"Illuminations: Contemporary Film and Video Art" is the Ackland Art Museum's first exhibition that doesn't just sit on a wall.

The museum recently purchased projectors of various sizes, DVD players and sound equipment to present "Illuminations" and expand the Ackland collection's potential. Now that the museum owns the equipment for multimedia projects, exhibition curator Barbara Matilski said "Illuminations" will not be the Ackland's last video art exhibition.

"I think that we're at a period now where video has become as important as painting and sculpture," Matilski said. "There are as many exciting things coming out of the video area as out of traditional areas, and it is very exciting."

Ackland's new technology creates a wide variety of possible tools for artists. Some of the artists in the collection present their work with customary multimedia methods, displaying their art on a monitor or a wall.

But some artists use electronic media to push their art even further. Among the work in the exhibition is

Tony Oursler's "Eye in the Sky," which projects a giant human eye onto a suspended sphere. Pepón Osorio's "Canción de Cuna para una Madre" is a multimedia representation examining teenage pregnancy. Because of interactive works such as Jim Campbell's "Experiments in Touching Color," Matilski said "Illuminations" was intended to appeal to today's youth.

"Television and film is really the media students have learned to see through," she said. "Students often don't come to art galleries, unfortunately. This might be something that would interest them more."

Nam June Paik, whose "Eagle Eye," along with Oursler's "Eye in the Sky," are part of the Ackland's permanent collection, is considered the father of video art. In "Eagle Eye," Paik uses disparate technologies and images to draw together the span of human history in a present-day medium.

"Video art is a lot more engaging," said junior mathematics major Aaron Bednar, one of the exhibition's visitors. "The technology is about this century; it relates more to me just because it is of the time period I live in."

"Illuminations: Contemporary Film and Video Art" is running in the Ackland until Oct. 8.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

"I think that we're at a period now where video has become as important as painting and sculpture."

BARBARA MATILSKI
Exhibition Curator, Ackland Art Museum

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