

SPRAWL
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feel of the current layout," said David Godschalk, chairman of the Master Plan's design and operations team.

This draft features new residence halls, academic and research buildings, a transit corridor and a new entrance from Fordham Boulevard.

Weathering the Storm

Residents of the neighborhoods surrounding the campus say they understand the University's need to grow but are concerned about the environmental impacts of the proposed changes.

Residents are worried that the increased campus development will lead to a higher volume of stormwater running into their neighborhoods. But planners say the Master Plan shows a net decrease in the amount of impervious surface - ground that cannot absorb water.

"Less impervious surface is better for stormwater management," said Roger Waldon, Chapel Hill planning director.

Planners contend that a reorganization of the space for parking on campus will decrease the net impervious surface.

Reducing the number of surface parking lots will lead to more water-absorbing ground, Godschalk said.

Additionally, grass might be planted on top of some of these new parking decks, creating more water-absorbing surface.

There are also plans to build decks below ground or beneath buildings.

But Hope C. Taylor, executive director of the Clean Water Fund of North Carolina, disagrees with some of the planners' conclusions about the Master Plan's potential environmental impacts and effect on stormwater management.

"The University should be modeling improved stormwater management practices for the region and state before

it considers further increases in impervious surface on campus," she said.

But drainage is not the only concern.

In the House of Noise and Light?

Issues of noise and light pollution also have surfaced, as some residents already find living near the massive medical research buildings on Manning Drive and South Columbia Street overwhelming.

"(Residents) had been concerned prior to even seeing the Master Plan due to all of the massive buildings being built that did not seem to be in perspective with the north side of the campus," said Elaine Barney, a resident of the Westwood neighborhood.

Barney said she was concerned that additional construction of biomedical research buildings would mean more noise and light pollution. She, as well as residents and planners, said there should be a clear boundary between the town and the University. But the exact nature of this boundary remains undetermined.

When the Smith Center was constructed, a provision of the Chapel Hill Town Council special-use permit stated that there would be no other construction in that area within 200 feet of the University border. The goal of the provision was to create a buffer between the University and the Mason Farm neighborhoods.

Jonathan Howes, chairman of the Master Plan's Executive Steering Team, concedes that the University will ask the Chapel Hill Town Council to decrease the size of the buffer. But some residents say the buffer should stay as it is. "If they remove the buffer of the trees that act as a sound as well as visual barriers, that will affect the people whose homes are on Mason Farm Road," Barney said.

Town Council members said no decisions have been made at this time.

Travelin' Blues

No matter where people park their

cars on campus, they still have to get there, and that worries residents.

Barney said she is worried because more cars on campus means an increase in traffic through her neighborhood, something that isn't addressed in the plan.

Planners are aware of these concerns and are trying to decrease the flow of traffic through neighboring communities by encouraging park and ride and creating a new road that would pass through part of the Mason Farm neighborhood.

But this proposed new road, one of three options being considered by the planners, has been one of the most contentious issues of the Master Plan. Its creation would lead to the destruction of eight private homes.

Residents contend that there are other ways to reduce traffic that don't involve the sacrifice of their neighbors' homes. Many would like to see the University's Horace Williams property and its developable land near the Friday Center given further consideration.

Overall Outlook

Planners see this blueprint as something that will preserve the surrounding neighborhoods. "In the long run, we think these changes will protect these neighborhoods," Howes said.

While there are disagreements about the specifics of the plan, all concede that the future of both the town and the University are inextricably linked.

"I think that the town's interests and the University's interests are the same," said Town Council member Bill Strom. "It is not productive to look at things in black and white. There are many scenarios that benefit both the town and the University as the plan goes forward, and it behooves the town and the University to look for these areas of agreement."

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

ENVIRONMENT
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Officials say in previous development schemes for UNC, the health of these streams was not taken into consideration. Pollution has affected those downstream from campus, and aside from the quality of the water itself, streambeds have suffered from erosion caused by swiftly flowing runoff on South Campus slopes.

Pat Evans, a member of the Chapel Hill Town Council and the Master Plan's design and operations team, said developers had to change the way they conceived of projects to avoid those situations. "I think in the past this topic was not addressed - you can pinpoint that by the fact that streams are buried," Evans said.

Sharon Myers, who was a member of the Environmental Advisory Group and the UNC Sustainability Coalition, said the problems surrounding stormwater management are not unique to UNC.

"When you urbanize an area, these are the things that happen," Myers said, referring to polluted runoff and eroded streambeds. "When you harden surfaces, the water runs off instead of soaking in, and when there are storms, the

amount of water increases."

The final version of the Master Plan, released in September, adopted many of Andropogon Associates and Cahill Associates' suggestions for new water management techniques. Durkin said the ideas discussed included the use of porous pavement in parking lots, planted areas on top of parking decks that would absorb some potential runoff and silt fencing to prevent soil erosion during construction.

Several construction projects were altered after reviewing the consultants' additions. Durkin said the planners moved the site of the proposed Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center - which will break ground in April - after learning that they would have to alter the course of an existing streambed.

Despite all the positive input, Fransisco said some advisory group members were frustrated they did not have as much influence as they felt was needed.

"The environmental scope of the Master Plan was not conceived until very late in the game," Fransisco said. "Some of us were disappointed that the time frame was so short."

Jonathan Howes, chairman of the Master Plan's Executive Steering Team,

readily acknowledged the vital contributions made by the consultants.

But he also said the plan is only a guide for future developers.

"The decisions that are made in the end are made by the (Board of Trustees)," Howes said. "The plan is worth as much as the decision-makers put into it."

Legally, UNC will have to implement some of the decisions made in the Master Plan because of new federal regulations regarding stormwater quality. James Mergner, deputy for facilities services at UNC, said cities throughout the state will have to get stormwater permits by 2003, and these will only be obtainable by adhering to strict guidelines.

As Chapel Hill expands to accommodate growth in the Triangle, UNC will have to expand as well. With the Environmental Master Plan, Durkin said she thinks the University is prepared to accomplish this expansion wisely.

"People whom we met (in the Environmental Advisory Group) seemed to have great ideas," Durkin said. "I don't see it as a situation just giving lip service to the environment."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

Campus Calendar
Today

4 p.m. - Christos Papadimitriou of the University of California at Berkeley will speak about "Algorithmic Problems Related to the Internet."

His speech, in 011 Sitterson Hall, is part of the Triangle Computer Science Distinguished Lecturer Series.

For more information, check out www.cs.unc.edu/Events/DistLectures.

6 p.m. - A march for victims of domestic violence will start at the Women's Center in Chapel Hill.

7 p.m. - DiPhi will sponsor a "town

hall" mock presidential debate between the Young Democrats, Tar Heel Libertarians and College Republicans, followed by speeches from the audience.

7:30 p.m. - Join the UNC Fellowship of Christian Athletes for small group discussions on faith. All are welcome to the Ram's Room of Kenan Field House.

8:15 p.m. - Lab! Theatre presents "Raised in Captivity," a dark comedy by Nicky Silver, in the Kenan Theatre. Admission is free.

For more information, go to www.unc.edu/student/orgs/lab.

Tuesday

5 p.m. - Lab! Theatre presents: "Raised in Captivity," a dark comedy by Nicky Silver, in the Kenan Theatre, next to Cobb Residence Hall. Admission is free.

For more information, go to www.unc.edu/student/orgs/lab.

For the Record

The caption for the photo in Friday's article "Speaker Explains Visual Deception" incorrectly identified Dan Korem as Don Korem.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

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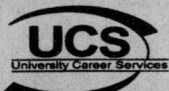
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- Boston University
- Brooklyn Law School
- Campbell University
- Cardozo School of Law
- Case Western Reserve University
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- University of Dayton
- University of DC
- Dickinson School of Law (Penn. State)
- Duke University
- Emory University
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(*Top Five in the U.S., U.S. News & World Report, September 2000)

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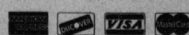
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