

# Town Officials Delay Improvement Plans

By ERIKA HEYDER  
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill officials are working to prioritize capital improvements projects in light of the release of the town's 2002-03 proposed budget, which includes delaying some projects.

Bill Stockard, assistant to the town manager, said the town's original \$1.2 million budget for its Capital Improvements Plan - a 15-year financial strategy to meet the town's major infrastructure needs - has been decreased by 60 percent.

The 2002-03 recommended Capital Improvements Plan budget is \$478,000, \$238,000 of which will come from the

town's general fund. The remaining \$240,000 will come from money already in the town's Capital Improvements Fund.

No discussion was held concerning the plan or the town's budget at Monday's Chapel Hill Town Council meeting, where Town Manager Cal Horton presented his recommended 2002-03 budget for the first time.

But talks have been ongoing for months about both topics, especially because the town expects to face a \$2.9 million revenue shortfall for the 2002-03 fiscal year, \$1.4 million of which stems from money Gov. Mike Easley has withheld from the state's municipalities.

"A lot of things had to be cut back

because of budget restraints," Stockard said.

Despite the cutbacks, town officials say they have prioritized capital projects so the most important ones can go forward next year.

Projects that have a council mandate or have legal requirements that need to be performed or completed are at the top of the lists.

Some of the projects that have been given top priority are improvements to the Hargraves Recreation Center and the A.D. Clark Pool as well as the construction of a community gym at Meadowmont Elementary School.

Other secondary projects include resurfacing sidewalks, making improvements to town and public works facilities, placing new traffic lights and beautifying cemeteries.

"Most of the CIP budget involves debt payment on facilities like the public works facility," Stockard said.

Facilities requiring debt payments

include the Inter-Faith Council Center and a new town transit facility.

Council member Flicka Bateman expressed concern about the town's lack of funds. "We're trying to work with what we have, but we have more needs than money to pay for it all," she said.

Stockard also is worried about how the town will manage to fund many of its important projects with a significant amount of funds expected to be withheld by the state government.

"It all depends on what the government releases back to the local governments," Stockard said.

Stockard said finding ways to increase some public salaries and return money to the Capital Improvements Plan are town officials' top priorities during the budget crafting process. The town plans to finalize its budget before July 1.

"We would feel lucky to do more."

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

## Developments in the War on Terrorism

### Police Testify on Pearl Kidnapping

Islamic militant Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh admitted his role in the kidnap-slaying of reporter Daniel Pearl and said he expected to be extradited to the United States, two police officers testified Tuesday, the second day of testimony against Saeed and three other men.



### 94 Washington-Area Airport Workers Arrested

Federal authorities have arrested 94 workers at two Washington-area airports on charges of fraudulently obtaining airport security badges. "There will be zero tolerance of security breaches at our nation's airports," said Attorney General John Ashcroft.

### Germany Says It Crushed Terror Cell

Germany claimed Tuesday it crushed a terror cell led by a London-based cleric linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, arresting 11 suspected Islamic militants in raids throughout the country.

# Commuter, Freight Trains Collide in Calif., Killing 2

The Associated Press

PLACENTIA, Calif. - A freight train plowed head-on into a Southern California commuter train during the morning rush hour Tuesday, hurling people out of their seats. Two people were killed and at least 260 were injured.

Authorities were investigating how the trains ended up on the same track. It was the nation's second deadly train wreck in less than a week.

The accident happened just after 8 a.m., 35 miles southeast of Los Angeles. The southbound Metrolink train was traveling from Riverside, Calif., to San Juan Capistrano, Calif., with more than 300 passengers when it collided with a Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight en route from Los Angeles to Clovis, N.M., with 67 loaded containers.

Commuters were hurled from their seats by the thundering impact, and pas-

sengers, many of them bleeding, scrambled to help others out of the double-deck Metrolink cars. "I was thrown forward onto my knees with my face into the seat, and I was just confused. I just saw darkness, and I didn't know what happened," passenger Kim Bailey said.

Passenger Bill Marin said some riders, apparently thinking the train had reached its next station, stood up when it came to a halt and were the most seriously injured.

Robert Kube, 59, of Moreno Valley, Calif., died at the scene. Another passenger, a 48-year-old man, died at a hospital. His name was not immediately released. Officials said 162 people were taken to hospitals; 19 were reported to have serious injuries.

The National Transportation Safety Board sent investigators from Washington, D.C. It was the worst accident in the nine-year history of Metrolink, which carries 32,000 passengers on 128 trains daily.

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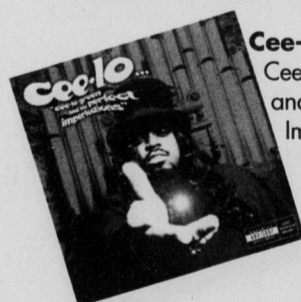


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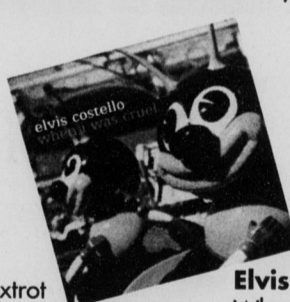
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## Campus Calendar

Thursday

noon - The Office of the Provost invites you to meet with the architects from Polshek Partnership who are planning the Arts Common. Three members of the firm will be in the Pit until 1 p.m.

Find out about the planning process and help shape the future of the Arts Common.

8 p.m. - Following the Thursday production of "Twelve Angry Men," Company Carolina will be hosting a round-table discussion on the current criminal court system with Raleigh lawyers Benji Taylor Jones and Bryan McGann, from the law firm of Smith, Anderson, Blount, Dorsett, Mitchell, & Jernigan, LLP.

The show is in 203 Bingham Hall; student price is \$5, general public is \$8.

The Daily Tar Heel  
P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515  
Katie Hunter, Editor, 962-4086  
Advertising & Business, 962-1163  
News, Features, Sports, 962-0245  
One copy per person; additional copies may be purchased at The Daily Tar Heel for \$.25 each.  
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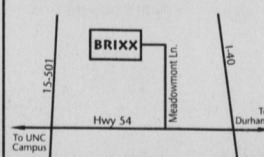
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