

# Officials Work to Limit Gridlock During Construction

By BRIAN HUDSON  
Staff Writer

Students are being hampered by construction around campus, resulting in added traffic on an already-gridlocked campus.

In coordination with the Ramshead project, construction has expanded onto Ridge Road to accommodate the new parking deck planned for South Campus.

The Ramshead parking deck, which is scheduled to be completed in 2005, will be a three-level parking complex with 700 parking spaces and proposed shopping and recreation facilities.

"We are doing utility work required to be done for the site," said Tim Saunders, assistant director for transportation with the Department of Public Safety. "Services on Ridge Road have to be upgraded and, in some cases, relocated."

*"Most complaints have been from pedestrian students who have had to be shifted or moved to an alternate path."*

**TIM SAUNDERS**  
UNC Department of Public Safety

Jon Watson of Rifenberg Construction, which is working on the construction of the parking deck with Midatlantic Construction, also said Stadium Drive should be back to its original state by Winter Break.

"(There will be) work on Ridge Road off and on until mid-January," he said. "The area (of road) right in front of the construction site will be clamped down until the end of the construction."

Because the construction ultimately limits access to two major roads on campus, contractors planned their construction to minimize inconvenience.

"We looked at how the building project will be handled as far as traffic," Saunders said. "We tried to confine work hours to times when they'll have

least impact."

Jeff McCracken, deputy director of DPS, said that officials try to reduce lane closures but that if they have to close a lane, they try to start later and end early to avoid the morning and afternoon rush hour.

But heavy traffic has not been the only problem caused by the construction on campus.

"Most complaints have been from pedestrian students who have had to be shifted or moved to an alternate path," Saunders said.

Because of construction, the pedestrian path from Morrison Residence Hall to Stadium Drive has been fenced in, resulting in limited access for students.

"There is going to be significant pedestrian accesses behind bars," Saunders said. "Major utilities will unfortunately limit pedestrian activity around Morrison."

"We are making sure we have adequate detours and pedestrian routes,"

Many students who walk along these routes on their way to and from classes have complained about the lack of maneuverability space.

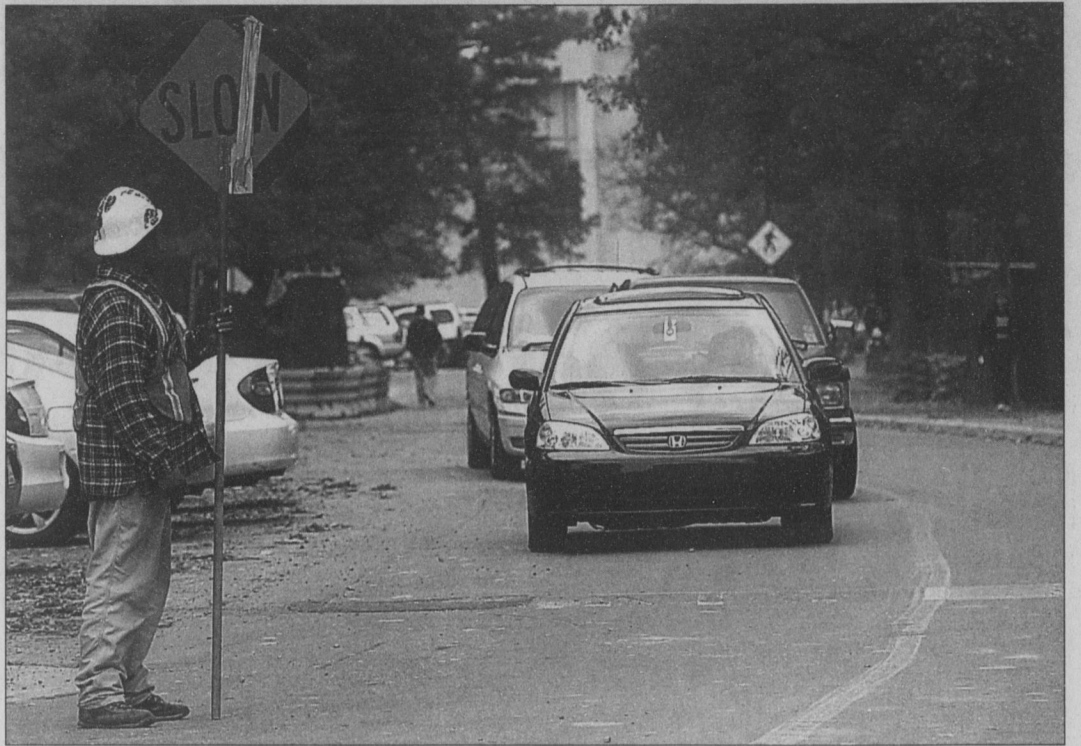
"It's created a bottleneck," said freshman Liz Mihalik.

"Transportation is complicated when bikes and pedestrians are in the same area."

But Sanders explained that the construction will actually help pedestrians in the future.

"There are interruptions, but a lot of pedestrian paths will be restored, and some will be improved."

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DITH/JONATHAN SAAS

A construction worker stops traffic Thursday afternoon on Stadium Drive. Construction work on campus, including that for the Ramshead project, has caused increased traffic problems across campus. Officials are trying to limit gridlock at peak traffic times.

## Work to Begin on Affordable Homes

By KATHRYN GRIM  
Staff Writer

The Orange Community Housing and Land Trust will hold its groundbreaking ceremony today for the construction of Rosemary Place, a new affordable housing complex in Chapel Hill's Meadowmont community.

The nonprofit trust sells affordable housing to a wide range of buyers, said Orange County Affordable Housing Task Force member Christine Westfall.

"Many people cannot afford housing in Chapel Hill," she said. "A typical teacher might earn around (\$30,000) to \$35,000. And they would probably start at something lower."

The ceremony will take place from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sprunt Street in Meadowmont.

According to recently released housing figures, the average new home in Chapel Hill cost \$327,000 in 2002.

In Rosemary Place, two-bedroom townhomes cost \$80,000 and three-bed-

room townhomes cost \$95,000. Each of the more than 30 homes is already sold, said Mark Chilton of EmPOWERment Inc., a local affordable housing advocacy group.

Once completed, the homes will become part of the Community Land Trust, a model that will keep them affordable permanently. This is possible because the trust sells the homes but continues to own the land.

"If we didn't keep those homes affordable in this way, they'd become unaffordable pretty quickly," Westfall said. "So the idea is that these homes are going to serve generations of people who earn less than enough to afford housing in the area."

The new owners of the townhomes cannot resell the homes for market value

but can make some profit from their appreciated values, Westfall said.

"The home usually costs \$40,000 below market value," Westfall said. "You can sell for the price you paid for it plus 25 percent of the profit."

President Roger Perry of East West Partners, which donated the land to be used, said the decision to donate was based on the need for more diversity in housing in Meadowmont.

Perry commended both past and current Chapel Hill town councils for their work toward housing diversity.

"I think there have been some wonderful measures taken, starting with the last council," he said. "The current council and (Mayor) Kevin Foy are doing an excellent job taking steps to solve the

problem."

Carrboro and Chapel Hill have the lowest amounts of affordable housing in all of Orange County, where the cost of housing is highest in the state, said Susan Levy, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Orange County.

Levy said the majority of applicants for Habitat housing in Orange County live or work in Chapel Hill. She said the shortage affects everyone from families to teachers and police officers.

"We feel the need in Chapel Hill is greatest," she said. "People want to live in the Carrboro-Chapel Hill school district."

Orange County slowly is improving on the issue of providing affordable housing, said Barry Jacobs, chairman of the Orange County Board of Commissioners.

"I think we're just starting to get up to speed," he said. "It's only been in the past half a dozen years that local public funds have been put toward it."

The City Editor can be reached at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

## Carrboro Starts Search For New Town Manager

By KATHRYN GRIM  
Staff Writer

With Carrboro Town Manager Robert Morgan leaving his post in December, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen is beginning to organize the search for a qualified replacement.

Bob Crowder of the N.C. League of Municipalities guided the aldermen through the process at Tuesday's board meeting. Hiring a town manager is one of the most important decisions a board will ever face, he said, one that none of the board members has ever had to make.

Morgan, who has accepted the position of assistant town manager in Greensboro, has served as Carrboro's manager for more than eighteen years.

The news is likely to spread rapidly that a post unavailable for so long now is open, Crowder said. "The average length of service in this state is about five years," he said. "I would guess that you're going to have close to 100 inquiries." One unidentified candidate already has approached the board concerning the position.

The board also must decide on an interim manager. Crowder said he knew of four possible candidates.

The interim manager will take on the responsibility of the town's projects and staff, including the daunting task of coordinating the 2003-04 budget. The service of the next manager most likely will begin next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Crowder said the process of hiring a new town manager will take at least six months but could take longer if the board decides to tackle it without the

help of a search firm, which would cost the town between \$10,000 and \$20,000.

The money for the search will come from the budget and Morgan's unused salary, Mayor Mike Nelson said.

Alderman Jacquelyn Gist said she thinks that the town can take on the task on its own, citing her work on a committee to search for a University APPLES director without a search firm. "I haven't found it that cumbersome," she said. "I think a search firm is a lot of money."

She said she was wary of search firms' objectivity. "People tend to hire people who are like themselves," she said. "No one is like this board."

Alderman Joal Broun had a positive experience using a search firm to hire Orange Water and Sewer Authority executive director Ed Kerwin when she served on the utility's board of directors. "We spent a lot of time picking out the criteria," she said. "After that, we used that criteria to pick out a search firm."

Nelson said he also was leaning toward using a search firm. "I share the skepticism others have expressed," he said. "The key for me would be interviewing the search firms and feeling really, really comfortable with them."

Regardless of how the board focuses its search, Crowder said, he expects that people will apply from across the nation. "Even if you concentrate on North Carolina, the grapevine is very strong in this field," he said. "Don't be surprised if you get an application from Alaska."

The City Editor can be reached at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

### Campus Calendar

Today

1:30 p.m. - The International Center is hosting a Class of '38 Summer Abroad Fellowship Information Session in Union 210, a chance for all sophomores and juniors interested in learning about this \$3,000 award to pursue a pro-

ject abroad for the summer of 2003.

3:30 p.m. - The Department of Geography is hosting "Investigating the Geography of Urban Growth with Generalized Linear and Generalized Additive Modeling" with Richard Aspinall in 212 Saunders Hall.

8 p.m. - UNC Pauper Players presents the musical "Children of Eden," today until Monday. Tickets are \$5 for students. Tickets can be purchased in the Pit or can be reserved by e-mailing [uncchpp@hotmail.com](mailto:uncchpp@hotmail.com) 24 hours in advance.

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