

Group considers move to RDU Group offers alternate Carolina North plans

BY JOSEPH R. SCHWARTZ
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

Some Medical Air Operations users say driving to Raleigh-Durham International Airport would be a potentially crippling roadblock for the service.

MedAir, based at Horace Williams Airport and a part of N.C. Area Health Education Centers, allows doctors to travel across the state to treat patients, perform outreach and teach medical students.

But despite hard numbers that aim to quantify the impact of the move, it will be impossible to determine the scale of a change until it happens, said Tom Bacon, AHEC program director.

"It's kind of a hypothetical question until we say ... your flights are now going to leave from here instead of here," he said.

A comprehensive analysis by Talbert & Bright, an aviation planning consulting firm contracted by the University to study relocating the program, showed there were a total of 693 MedAir users from March 2003 to February 2004.

The number of flights per year for those users varies from 441 users who took only one flight to one user who flew 48 times.

Those users would experience an increase of travel time by 15 to 25 minutes if they drove from UNC Hospitals to RDU.

The study concluded that the 54 frequent MedAir users — those who travel at least seven times per year — would experience a total 654 hour increase in travel time resulting in \$46,400 per hour more in hourly wages.

Following a formal presentation of the data at the UNC Board of



Passengers walk towards their plane on the morning of June 1 at the Horace Williams Airport. Area Health Education Centers is planning to move to RDU if the airport closes to make way for Carolina North.

Trustees meeting May 26, several trustees remarked at the relatively small number of users.

"It's been enlightening to see how few people would be inconvenienced by relocation," Trustee Tim Burnett said at the meeting.

But some members of the flying minority said moving the program would be more than an inconvenience.

"It would be a devastating effect," said Bill Henry, chief of the Division of Pediatric Cardiology.

"I think the people that lose are the people of North Carolina."

He said his department logs 6,000 MedAir flights per year, mostly to Wilmington and Fayetteville.

Henry said MedAir provides an invaluable service and a move would compromise its effectiveness.

Bacon also is worried that doctors won't be able to offer their clinics.

AHEC officials will work to alleviate these concerns.

"We're going to work closely with the faculty to find out how

we can make sure they can still participate," he said.

He suggested providing a van service to RDU or offering financial incentives to departments.

"What we have committed to is to put in place whatever is necessary to make sure we continue to provide the services across the state."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

BY KATHY CHO
STAFF WRITER

Seventeen thousand versus 5,845. That's the number of parking spaces in Carolina North proposed by the University compared to that of a local nonprofit group.

The Village Project, a group that promotes ecologically sustainable communities, presented in July its alternate concept plan to the University's design for its proposed satellite campus.

James Carnahan, the organization's chairman, said the University should envision Carolina North "not just as a technology transfer campus but also as a great sustainable land-use plan."

A major difference between the group's proposal and the University's current plan is the use of electricity-powered light-rail transit. The group suggests installing transit lines that would thread through campus, connecting at either end with bus routes on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and the existing railroad along Seawell School Road.

The current UNC plan does not include light-rail transit. The rail system could be built between 2018 and 2030 with funding and commitment, Village Project board member Patrick McDonough said.

Rail transit is only one way of lessening dependency on cars. "There's no silver bullet here," McDonough said, adding that a number of ini-

tiatives such as van pooling, creating new park-and-ride lots, restricting on-campus parking and increasing housing would be required to create a synergy effect.

The 8,000 on-campus residences proposed by the group are another of its more visible departures from the UNC plan, which calls for 1,800.

Another feature of The Village Project's proposal is the Horace Williams Rainbank, a rainwater reservoir filled with water harvested from rooftops that would double as a recreational area.

Group members said they have worked on this plan since last July and have sought to reflect the concerns raised by nearby existing neighborhoods.

The group presented its suggestions to University officials in July. Tony Waldrop, UNC's vice chancellor for research and economic development, said in an interview on June 27 that the suggestions on light-rail transit were especially interesting. "We will look at the ideas they presented and see which are viable."

Waldrop had reservations about some other proposals, such as the possibility of cutting parking spaces to fewer than 6,000 while increasing housing units to 8,000.

"That's less than one parking space per household."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

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Welcome to Carolina

The UNC General Alumni Association has many activities planned for your first few weeks on campus. Stop by and see us at any or all of these GAA activities.

Friday, August 26	Beach Bash (with Orientation) 8:30 - 10:30 p.m., Ehringhaus Field Lawn Free Jimmy John's, music and beach-inspired fun.
Sunday, August 28	Fall Fest Look for us under the "Old Well". Become a student member and pick up a glow necklace.
Tuesday, August 30	Breezeway Breakfast 7 - 10 a.m., Alumni Center Breezeway Make sure you head to campus via the brick walkway that goes by the Alumni Center. Breakfast will be set up at the base of the stairs. Don't go to class on an empty stomach — we'll have fruit, bagels, doughnuts and juice.
Wednesday, September 14	Back to School BBQ 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., Polk Place **GAA Student Member Exclusive** GAA student members are invited to join us for a BBQ dinner with all the fixins'. Not a member yet? Sign up at the door, and join us for dinner.

Student Membership benefits package distribution
Tues.-Thurs., Sept. 13-15
Union Breezeway (by the Pit)
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 14
Back to School BBQ
Polk Place
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

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