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## Chapel Hill leases UNC land

by Jim Roberts  
 News Editor

In a joint press conference with UNC officials last Monday, Chapel Hill Mayor Howard N. Lee announced the town will lease 34 acres near the Horace Williams Airport from the University.

The property, to be used for a proposed bus garage and public works building, was leased to the town for \$1 a year for 30 years. Lee said the town had been prepared to pay up to \$250,000 for a smaller site.

Lee called the agreement with the University a highlight of his term as mayor, saying it would "strengthen the cooperative relation spirit between the University and the city."

The bus garage was originally to be built on the town's Plant Road property, where a temporary garage will be constructed. Assistant Transportation Director John Bartosiewicz said the temporary facility, to

be built with town funds, should be completed by late October.

Alderman Alice Welsh, whose committee recommended the airport site, said the Plant Road location would not have allowed the proposed facility room for expansion should Carrboro decide to enter the bus system.

The agreement "saves the town an enormous amount of money," Welsh said. "Now the Plant Road site can become 11.5 acres of recreational land."

Located in the northeast corner of the University's airport property, the site is bounded on the north by the Glen Heights district, on the east by N.C. highway 86, on the south by an unpaved road and on the west by a diagonal line that marks off the 34 acres.

Lee said a natural tree and shrub buffer zone to the north and east will obscure the facility from the sight of motorists on N.C. 86 and residents of Glen Heights.

Claiborne S. Jones, UNC vice-chancellor

for business and finance, said the lease agreement with the town prohibits uses of the land which could result in environmental pollution such as waste disposal.

The agreement, approved two weeks by the North Carolina Council of State, must now go to the Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA) for site approval. Funds from UMTA's original capital grant for the town bus system will be used in the garage construction.

Bartosiewicz said federal funds will account for approximately 80 per cent of the construction cost.

University Chancellor N. Ferebee Taylor called the agreement a "milestone in demonstrative ability of the town and University to work together in the interest of the community. The University is proud to give up the land."

Lee credited much of the background work in the negotiations to Jones and Town Attorney Emery B. Denny.

## Carrboro considers bus system

by Helen Ross  
 Staff Writer

With Chapel Hill's year-old bus system getting rave reviews in the mass transportation business, Carrboro is considering getting into the act, too.

The Law and Finance Committee of the Carrboro Board of Aldermen is studying the possibility of establishing a bus system in that community.

If Carrboro does decide to develop a transit system, its operation would almost certainly be linked to the system in Chapel Hill.

"I don't think there's anyone who is talking about a separate system with a separate organization in Carrboro," Carrboro resident Doug Sharer said Friday. "That's just out of the question."

Chapel Hill Transportation Director John Pappas said he supports Sharer's contention. "I think that all parties agree that it's not in anyone's best interests to have a separate system in Carrboro."

Pappas said he presented the Carrboro aldermen with information on transit systems in order to start communications between the two communities. This material

was basically meant for discussion purposes, Pappas said.

Another Carrboro resident, Sarah Carter, said the information was presented informally, in the form of an in-house memo from Pappas to former Chapel Hill Town Manager Chet Kendzior.

Since the bus system is a Carrboro issue, Pappas said Chapel Hill will take a passive role while Carrboro decides whether to form its own system. He added that the Chapel Hill Department of Transportation will be available for assistance.

"If the town of Carrboro wants a bus system, they have to make that wish known," Pappas said.

Sharer said he feels that political negotiations must take place to decide what type of agreement the two towns could arrange to start the Carrboro service.

Neither Sharer nor Chapel Hill Alderman Gerry Cohen are optimistic that negotiations between the two towns can begin in the near future.

"The present composition of the Carrboro Board of Aldermen is not concerned with the transportation question," Sharer said. He estimated that, of the six aldermen, "only two and a half members" would support the bus system.

Since a referendum on public transportation was defeated in Carrboro several years ago, Carter said she believes community citizens must let the aldermen know their opinions on the proposed system.

"In my opinion, lots of interest must be generated from the population and brought before the board," Carter said. Aside from the overall population, the students and the elderly stand to gain from a public transportation system linked with Chapel Hill, she said.

A survey taken last spring to gauge support for a Carrboro bus system showed that a majority of respondents would react favorably, Carter said. Questions on the survey indicated interest in the system, the degree of potential use and citizen tax support that could be expected.

Sharer outlined several ways the Carrboro system might be linked with Chapel Hill's. If Chapel Hill extended its services to include the Carrboro area, Carrboro could pay a percentage of money to Chapel Hill based on use or based on taxes.

Sharer said paying on a tax basis would result in Chapel Hill virtually subsidizing the Carrboro system, since the Carrboro tax dollar is not as strong as Chapel Hill's.

## Bus system older by 2 million

by Helen Ross  
 Staff Writer

With more than two million passengers to its credit, the Chapel Hill bus system has completed its first year of service to the community.

The bus system is attracting critical acclaim from those with knowledge about the transit business. "I do know UMTA (Urban Mass Transit Authority) is keeping a close eye on us," Transportation Director John Pappas said last week. "We are unique in the industry."

Administrators from other prospective and established transit systems such as Charlottesville, Va., have visited Chapel Hill to observe the bus system.

Ridership figures also support this optimistic picture of the fledgling bus system. For the six month period ending June 30, the Chapel Hill bus system serviced 985,000 riders. That figure includes part of the slump which is annually encountered by the town when the majority of UNC students leave for the summer.

During that same period, the Raleigh transit system was used by a total of 840,000 people.

Bus system officials expect approximately 12,000 riders per day in the fall, an increase of 2,000 over last year's daily figures. This increase is due in part to higher gasoline prices, which make the thought of riding a bus more tempting economically, John Bartosiewicz, assistant transportation director, said.

Last year the transit system spent between \$75,000 and \$100,000 more than was provided for in the budget. Most of that extra expense was for maintenance on the 16-year-old buses, which were bought from Atlanta, Ga., to start the system, Pappas said.

But, transit officials are quick to stress that the bus system is a public service organization, similar to the fire, police and sanitation departments, rather than a money making operation.

"Until 1964 transit was a money making proposition," Dick Rhode, operations supervisor, said. In the past 10 years rising labor and fuel costs, among other things,

have made it virtually impossible for a transit system to break even, Rhode said.

The transit system receives money to make its budget in several different ways. It is financed by pass sales to UNC students and townspeople, money from property taxes, fare box collections and federal revenue sharing.

In response to the realization that bus systems were not making money, Rhode said, the federal government passed the Urban Mass Transit Act of 1964. This act authorized grants for such improvements as radios and garage space.

Another UMTA act passed in 1974 authorized grants to bus systems operating in urban areas of more than 50,000 citizens. (The population of Chapel Hill is approximately 40,000, including students.) These revenue sharing grants would be used to meet operating deficits, rather than to make improvements, Rhode said.

Chapel Hill could qualify for similar funds under a bill pending in Congress which would authorize such grants to non-urbanized areas of less than 50,000 citizens, Rhode added.

While Chapel Hill awaits passage of this legislation, which could come as early as this fall, improvements continue to be made in the transit system. The engines and transmissions of the old buses have been rebuilt.

When a temporary maintenance facility is built on Plant Road, each bus will be repainted in the Chapel Hill colors, reupholstered and cleaned.

Construction bids for the temporary maintenance facility will be accepted beginning Aug. 28. If there is an acceptable bid a garage could be completed by Nov. 1, 1975, Bartosiewicz said.

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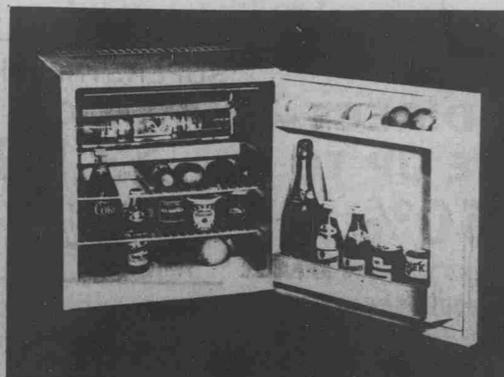
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