

April 26 Meeting

At the meeting on April 26, the university and Ayers Saint Gross presented the three possible designs for Carolina North - Grid, Centers, and Interwoven - with a series of overlays on each. The overlays illustrated ways each design might function in relation to open space, pedestrian circulation, greenways and bikes, transportation, land use, and utilities. Two university programs that may use Carolina North, the Innovation Center and the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, also presented information about their work and how it could benefit from the new campus.

Below are comments responding to information presented at the April 26 meeting, arranged by topic. Comment cards were provided with checkboxes for the appropriate presentation. Email carolinanorth@unc.edu if you'd like to add a comment.

Centers

- Most attractive scheme - separates cars/parking and transit route. Easiest to navigate by foot and bicycle (shortest distances). Need to connect pedestrian paths between perimeters of each hub. Like distributed playing fields. Greenway needs to be north of Bolin Creek on OWASA right of way. May be insufficient service access roads. Appears most conducive to a sense of community, spontaneous interactions, centers of activity, interdisciplinary research which is Carolina's strength. Doesn't appear to have any interaction/interface with Estes and MLK.
- Perimeter parking better than integrated. Consider the traffic congestion on South Rd. at Fetzer/Student Union, or on Cameron. Please don't duplicate this. Ped/bike connections to perimeter neighborhoods are great. They'll develop anyway. Design research/commercial buildings so as not to impact the residences with light, noise, height. The town's HWCC suggested that industrial uses (e.g. Polser Plant) require an SUP from the Town. I think this is a good idea.
- Of the three presentations/schemes, I much prefer the Centers scheme. It has the most order and hierarchy to the site and also seems to work with existing facilities. I also like the concept of putting parking facilities on the edges - good built-in physical activity.
- There needs to be parking for visitors to Carolina North - day and night.
- No parking structures adjacent to MLK Dr. - not consistent with an entranceway to campus or town.
- North/South Rd. to Homestead should be abandoned.
- Like the density of this plan in that it leaves significant acreage undeveloped. Would these undeveloped areas be preserved (in their current natural state) in perpetuity? Proposed greenways (e.g. on the west side) should remain natural (not paved, and perhaps not graded) to preserve their current beauty.
- (Not specific to this plan only) Where are pedestrian pathways connected to other recreational trails on Carolina North? Does not clearly show buffers to existing neighborhoods and MLK Blvd. Like the housing next to transit corridor. Why only one bike center?
- (Also in reference to Grid) What are street design speeds? Or how fast are vehicles intended to travel? You need to get to this level of detail - it affects the choice of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Create walkability and bikeability from neighborhoods.

- First School located near existing schools. Are there synergies there that outweigh its distance from rest of CN? How much transit will loop up there and what are the costs of that? Why not put 1st school nearer rest of CN campus?
- Parking @ perimeter is preferred. I'd like to see "working" landscapes bigger - and infiltrate toward center more than shown. Great idea to use working landscape as transition landscape to surrounding neighborhoods. Location of housing seems well thought out at perimeter and @ centers. I like the transit at the perimeter. Density and heights of buildings are of interest - some tall (>3-story) buildings could be nicely integrated with 3-story and less. Tall at center and low at neighborhood edges. Tall at Estes and MLK perimeters. Gradation seems to make sense - I prefer the sports fields on perimeter, this may permit easier access from the perimeter roads and keep more intense traffic out of the center. I'd like to know more about how housing will be integrated, and for whom - university employees, faculty, etc?
- This scheme seems to be the most logical. I like the E/W orientation along the old airport runway.
- The north/south road (in all options near Crow Branch) is of concern. The sketches have no scale so it is difficult to tell if it's 2-lane/3-lane/4-lane. Estimated traffic flow?
- In the modified plan, it appears that the rec fields have been spread out. That design is not conducive to conducting tournaments or large-scale programs. Please try to group fields as much as possible - at least three fields adjacent to each other is much more functional.
- I like Centers design best. It also provides more opportunity for open space and pedestrian connections. It reminds me of main campus.
- Main parking shouldn't be MLK frontage - not the desirable face of campus. Better to have a major transit center there. Weaver Dairy Rd. extension connection road - using that for transit corridor misses western stops. Mixed streets with cars and transit is more transit-friendly - cars provide "eyes on the street" - better feeling of security, activity, as long as the speeds are not too high.
- Good to have parking at perimeter. Have transit stops at major parking facilities. Mistake not to use existing rail line.
- Parks shown - I suggest much bigger, real parks. Need a scale on maps you present.
- No identifiable edge to the "centers." No break to the urban fabric for 5,000 feet; only break is north/south, which would be oversized roadways. Horribly insufficient connectivity. Must provide north-south connectivity BOTH within and around the project.
- Addition of extension of the Homestead Rd. seems to emphasize this road. It would be nice if the Homestead Rd. could be a small road (to reduce damage to northern undeveloped area) or non-existent.
- "Allowing FPG staff to be in one place," living and working with same folks day-in, day-out. Do you think the residential aspect of this project will be fulfilled? Most people, it would seem, would already have housing needs met, unless, of course, you're looking at a much more transient community.
- For the Centers approach and the other east-west approach, the proposed North-South road seems to be unnecessarily disruptive of the open forest space. Can't it be re-routed or perhaps another solution found?

- Road north should not be necessary ever, given mass transit in the alternatives defined. There has to be a limit on developed land. 75% is not unreasonable. Quality of life is what draws people to this area.
- As a soccer player/field-user, I like fields grouped closer together (Interwoven does this better, I think, than Modified Centers). Grid field layout is best. Laying the fields side by side rather than end on end is a more social layout. I think that the servicing of buildings and need for delivery ease (to and from) sites is underestimated. I think traffic will still be heavy with truck traffic. People will probably try to use any service road - so this will need to be clearly and realistically thought out and planned.
- Organization of athletic fields may be best with more fields in one location (e.g., tournaments), as shown in the plan from March 27 - although it would be best if spectators or players could easily get to the fields by transit, which is better shown in the updated plan. Fields near mixed-use areas can also encourage recreation in a more integrated way by making recreation easily accessible to home, work, shopping, transit - so the modified plan is great in this way.

Grid

- Learn the definitions of bike lanes and paths and refer to them correctly. Bike lanes are on-street. Paths are separated facilities (often called greenways).
- Appears to be way too much parking within the site. Transit and utility spine look good. Connection to rail line a must.
- A preoccupation for many with vehicular traffic on the site. My assumption is that the amount of traffic on the site and parking needs will be informed by the facilities. Query whether one starts by determining limits on vehicular traffic and parking to be permitted and tailoring site usage to that - or - determining site usage and then figuring out how to accommodate traffic generated and needed parking.
- Can one determine which of the three presentations accommodates the most parking?
- Con: why would commercial be at edges of CN on Estes Drive - should be more interior. Pro: Weaver Dairy extension is necessary!
- Keep retail off Estes - integrate more into the site.
- The grid pattern is the best because it leaves more natural spaces together. The Grid leaves too much space just north of Estes.
- With multiple other road connections, would the Weaver Dairy Extension really be necessary? Its cost is a major interruption of forest...will also be isolated.
- Much more accessible and viable to retail. I like the curves added and frequent parking areas (lots/decks). In all plans, we will need to plan adequate/combined service areas for groups of buildings. Complex or multi-buildings using a larger/sized for multi-building for access and equipment efficiency, especially for taller/more dense buildings.
- Why build the incubator now? More space is always needed, why not wait and put it on the main part?
- In Modified Grid plan, try to accommodate bus transit or parking near rec fields in south. Some students don't have cars or have parking somewhere else, so to find a more efficient way to have transit reach the rec fields, if the park-and-ride lot only allows permits.

- Provide good transit access on MLK for north-south transit. Cluster retail in central areas where food and other retail are easy to walk to. Provide residential near green areas - the Interwoven plan seems good for this.
- For connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods: residents would like paved connections for pedestrians/bikers - need to coordinate with DOT/Chapel Hill Town Council/Carrboro Aldermen (Bond Funds).
- Prefer larger/separate parking areas - reinforcing pedestrian movement rather than vehicular is much preferred. Working landscape could be more integrated into the streetscape system. Yes, show more bike/ped pathways into adjacent neighborhoods (too separate now) - think "weaving."
- Will the existing park and ride off Estes be accommodated? Will it be removed? Will the existing trails and foot paths be closed? Example: dirt trail systems not affected by development?
- It seems that there are more facilities for cars than bikes. Plan is too car-oriented. I had heard from OWASA of plans to do water re-use. I see nothing in the utility plans.
- All maps need a scale - difficult to picture sizes of blocks etc.
- Manufacturing - environmental issues? e.g. nanoparticles are being studied for potential environmental/health problems they may cause.
- Regarding density: public transportation usually works better when density is higher, no? Also, higher density helps increase energy efficiency - chilled water, etc.
- Benefits: mixed uses within blocks and buildings, best duct bank orientation. Down sides: needs more "working landscape," needs to address MLK and Estes directly with mixed-use commercial and retail (as well as along transit route)
- Curvilinear layout provides more opportunity for "eye candy" and visual landmarks but cars and parking throughout are negatives of this concept.
- Concern for competition with pulling away clients from incubator space in Carrboro.
- Please address adding greenway paths within site to connect to master plans in communities.
- Why is connection to North Homestead Road? Is it necessary to cut through undeveloped portion of site?

Interwoven

- Looks like long walk from parking to some areas. Sprawling residential area - no sense of community?
- Benefits: protects watersheds with modified scheme, minimizes habitat disruption. Negatives: too long from north to south, very limited interaction across the total campus, no front door on center, appears suburban, without focal points of activity, too much separation of uses.
- I prefer Interwoven - it spreads the development more, encouraging traffic in more directions, especially north/south.
- Parking and ped patterns look different than what's shown in "Centers." What is the effect of this development on Lake Ellen?
- Just too spread out. I prefer the parking largely at the perimeter, with some accommodation for housing parking, visitor, and handicapped.
- The northern residential area does not seem to be close to retail facilities. For this and other plans it seems that there are too many parking decks/reservoirs, especially assuming that many/some of the residents will be living at CN.

- Seems to be 3 dispersed developments rather than a coherent whole. Good to see a larger connected forest area. Does not use well the existing rail line. Concerned about co-gen plants in all three schemes.
- Don't use recreation fields as a central organizing feature.
- The ecological assessment could be a useful guide to choosing among plans. Develop the runway/airport areas, but leave much of the remainder for conservation and recreation - a "Horace Williams Arboretum." (Think Madison, WI's arboretum, which contributes greatly toward quality of life for faculty, students, and town residents.) Interwoven plan seems least desirable from the point of view of the natural landscape (e.g. transit corridor would be much more disruptive, utilities would be further north.)
- Maps/slides need a scale on all of them. Square footage of asphalt for each plan? Proposed housing densities/types? Real parks?
- Good breaks to create defined neighborhoods. Good connectivity, within and around. Highly desirable residential component. Good central civic and retail viability; matched to transit and roads.
- The interwoven scheme would be the most damaging to the wonderful resource this property provides as an urban woodlands. It would be very disappointing to cut down forests and leave already cleared land undeveloped.
- I feel that not only should the buildings be built to have as little disturbance as possible, I would like to see how transit could be used efficiently to get to the research buildings.
- Pros: not connecting to Seawell. Like housing next to open area. N connection to Homestead. N development could connect to Senior Center, Human Services Center. Con: Need rec field in N development area.
- Like how Homestead Rd. is windy with development. This could slow traffic and keep small town feel. The footprint of the plan seems smaller and I like how it's close to MLK and existing disturbed areas. Also, locating residential on edges of developed area can allow for close access for greenways and provide nice views out of the back window, for example.
- Spreads development unnecessarily throughout the site (density for transportation is compromised). Interferes with Crow Branch and the wildlife corridors. Forces traffic north to Homestead Rd. I think concentrating traffic in the southern portion of the site is less disruptive. The presenter was excellent.
- The "fingers" of working landscape are interesting - could be excellent living examples and models of sustainability in the community.
- Uses a lot of the nature area and leaves part of the runway area.
- Residential possible mixed above retail along "Main Street," as opposed to relegated at perimeter of developed area.
- Address extending greenways from master plans for community thru-way along appropriate areas on site.
- Seems like a development that happens slowly over time. Concentrated approaches make more sense. Walkability is key.
- Present residential proposal appears difficult and rather weird/not inviting with close proximity to "research building."

General

- No time for general questions. Little time for specific questions. If these sessions are being billed as community meetings with give and take, questions and feedback from the audience, that is not the case.
- All three: Transportation impact - where are users coming from - people can bike from Carrboro but not from Raleigh. Also need to concentrate on rail possibilities. At this point it seems like a train to nowhere.
- Like many, the road to the north seems too disruptive. I hope true traffic modeling will be done before construction. Greenways: a nonpaved surface would add to outdoor experience and be kind to the knees of walkers and joggers. The current trails should be evaluated by a professional mountain bike trail builder or at least consultation with a group such as Triangle Off-Road Cyclists (TORC). As a public health, environmental, and quality of life issue, the rest of the land needs to be protected for perpetuity. Sustainable is not sustainable if growth continues after the 50-year plan.
- All three: I was under the impression that this meeting was to allow for public comment on proposed modifications to initial plans. Due to "shuffle" nature of 3 sessions, time was wasted in movement. Most presentations gave an impression of a "one way," "this is how we'll do it" announcement rather than an exchange of information and concerns. I heard many "should," "may," "possibly" qualifications but little concrete information. My big question is, how much land will be developed and what will remain? Of the remaining land, is the university willing sign (in perpetuity)? Not to develop more than the approximate 250 acres mentioned in the LAC report.
- It would be helpful to have the legends at the top. We can't see them at the bottom. Consider having speakers move - not audience.
- During the presentations, there was not enough emphasis on what specifically has changed in the plans and why. For each conceptual design there were individual slides that showed the old plans for open space, pedestrian circulation, greenway, etc. Then there was one slide that showed the modified plan. It would be more informative, and thus easier to evaluate, if there were slides that showed each component of the old and modified plans side by side. Coupling this with the presenter discussing specific changes made and reasons why would provide more information, help us to understand the process, and give us more opportunity to provide constructive comment.
- In my opinion, the presentations on specific centers at CN (e.g., Innovation center) are a waste of our time. We are not here to learn about companies founded on UNC research - this feels like pure propaganda.
- We need to set a forceable number of vehicular transport in and out of the area and then plan to cope with that number of cars. I don't think we should have that much parking because in 50 years, that is not going to be our transportation model. I don't think the playing fields should be isolated up north. If you want family-oriented fields, make them accessible to the surrounding community.
- All three: Please show a visual comparison between CN and the largest corporate campus in RTP - for example, IBM. What does 250 acres represent? I'm trying to visualize the size of the footprint.
- Instead of the N/S road, let in loop to MLK.

- I like the Grid presentation a lot better the 2nd time around. It is now more aesthetically appealing. Always liked parking lots/garages being integrated, and concentrated fields make so much more sense than separating them as in Centers. Centers has lost my 1st place vote. I think the good aspects of Centers can be used in Grid. Now that I've seen Interwoven I'm conflicted. I like building residential with outlook to open space, but they certainly need their own parking - underground, possibly. Playing fields are raucous, noisy and not aesthetically pleasing due to hard use - keep them out of the mainstream and keep them together. Don't like Interwoven's northern thrust.
- Parking at the periphery seems less useful than the other 2 approaches. It suggests a fully-abled people are the only ones welcomed. Persons in wheelchairs and using canes would have significant challenges for mobility within the site. The "soft" rectilinear approach seems most useful for such mixed use. The emphasis so far seems focused on physical attributes of the site without significant attention to the issues of community. With many people living on the site, it will be a community in its own right. Much of the approach so far suggests a "bedroom" community rather than a civic community with its own identity.
- Show options in relation to environmental analysis - overlays.
- Offer electric vehicles for local transit service within the site. North connection to Homestead may be only footpath, bikeway and future may be form of public transit - does it have to be thought of as a car access point?
- There needs to be more specific info on transportation/access to and from - the shape of the development using existing rail lines or other should be in place from day one. The system envisioned for 50 years away should be what you start with. Parking spaces: depends on #1 and should be in place at the beginning. Each proposal at the next session should have parking space numbers.
- Thanks for these sessions.
- For the University to espouse sustainability it would seem the best thing to do as a steward of the community would be to protect the precious space in perpetuity. Protect the quality of life that's here for university and citizens alike already. With RTP existing and the concept already in place - use it! I do not think it's necessary to put a road through the forest. I do not like the fact that it's done in all three plans. Bring it out much sooner with less impact...or better yet, end it at the perimeter of the proposed development.
- Poor use of meeting time. Spending little time going through modifications with opportunity for questions...usually none. It was my understanding that this meeting was for community questions/input. Goal of that meeting was not met.
- Estes Rd. or some artery from Carrboro needs to be included as a transit corridor. The new northern road on the grid and open space models disturbs too much open space in contradiction to the intent of preservation. The University promised not to develop the land the current Smith Center is now built upon. A more permanent/absolute commitment to the 250 acres in 50 years would go a long way to improving community relations.
- Next time, please focus more time on plans, not example tenants, and make first session longer for introduction. Start with changes to the plans next time. For all plans, make sure rail connects to the south as well as to the north. Interwoven: consider connecting through Chapel Ridge (new development) to MLK. For all plans, make a convenient (i.e. short) connection to Bolin Creek greenway.

- Don't discount use of rail corridor.
- Consider least on-site parking possible: constrain parking severely to achieve greater use of transit.
- Use existing trail system to create "greenways" or walking/rec trails throughout site, not just along Bolin Creek.
- Very important to continue to emphasize UNC need for education/research space. Well-done! Effective! I question how many folks will want to live and work in the same building. Therefore, I favor the Interwoven concept. It offers more flexibility for a 50-year development. Though, the cost of site preparation may be a bit greater with its slightly more spread pattern. If site for Interwoven proves more costly than is feasible, the Centers concept would be my second preference, again because it allows for more variation in the layout. Centers concept also does seem to allow shorter connection to the Duct Bank. Please remember that much of the public needs private vehicle access to UNC.
- Co-Gen plants are going to be met with serious resistance from neighborhoods and town citizens.
- Larry's Lake - be sure whether to keep or pull down.
- Consider density if both paved bike lanes and street parking. Recommend one or the other, not both. Poses safety risk, especially in rec area.
- There has to be a way to use the rail line corridor as a multi-modal path to the main campus. Its current use, while important, is quite infrequent and can be shared. Think of inter-coastal waterway as an example. Compromises can limit the boat traffic to specific hours in favor of car traffic.
- Although this is still in the conceptual phase, please tell us approximately how many residents are anticipated. How many workers and visitors? How many acres will be developed? What is the University doing to mitigate the impact on surrounding neighborhoods and the Town of Chapel Hill as a whole?
- I am a Chapel Hill homeowner who is concerned about "industrializing" Bolin Creek trails. Please try to retain as much nature as possible, while paving as little of the trails as you can. Thanks!
- Eliminate or severely calm the new N/S road to Weaver Dairy Extension. If a new northern exit is necessary, put it at the RR line's north end. Delighted that there will be no new overhead utility lines. Thanks!
- All schemes: I feel that there are aspects that can be integrated into the ultimate plan, but I feel that the majority of the ideas from the Interwoven plan can be implemented because most of the development will be near MLK, Jr. Blvd.
- All three plans now have some sort of north/south road. Is this really a foregone conclusion? Transit north-south will disrupt very sensitive (and beautiful) forest environments.
- Co-gen plant is a no-no. Pull power from grid!
- Layout and shape are secondary to uses and density of uses. How many houses? How many office buildings? How many cars? How many parking spaces?
- FPG guy talked much too long.
- How much has all of the planning for the last two decades around Carolina North cost?
- All the plans look like organized sprawl on steroids. Show a heart/center of community rather than taking this approach.
- The use of northern entry aligned with Weaver Dairy ought to be removed.

- A transit center is not emerging from your designs - need better definition of a transit-focused commercial heart.
- I'm concerned that the big red line going through the forest to show the plant location will adversely affect the woods. How large is the swath needed for this utility?
- Would there be any development along the road to the north edge? We show it on the Interwoven but not on the others.
- We were asked how to connect to the neighborhoods by pedestrian paths - at this and the last meeting - I think it may be time for the decision team to take a stab at it and get reactions.
- The ecological assessment should weigh the age of the trees more heavily than such elements as soil type. Is this so?
- "Working landscape" - are these underground infiltration or wetlands, forests? Working landscape brings an image of staging areas to me.
- Grid is best plan. Don't like Interwoven - it impacts trails and isn't walkable, which is very important to local residents. Don't connect neighborhoods to sites with roads - we don't want through traffic. Bike paths or greenways could be good. Need to preserve/enhance current trail structure - is not currently any plan.
- Why would we put the greenway on the west side of Bolin Creek? Couldn't we utilize the ex - OWASA easement?
- Why would we show only parking at the edges? What type of image does this present to the community?
- It's difficult to get a sense of scale here - what sizes are these facilities? Do we have anything to show as a comparison?