

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO CITIZENS OF CHAPEL HILL**

On May 4 at 7 p.m., Town Council members, University representatives and citizens will have an opportunity to participate in a public dialogue about pending proposals to amend the Office-Institutional (OI) 4 zoning district. This district, which resulted from joint town-gown negotiations, governs development on the University's main campus.

The University either agrees with or will accommodate the Town of Chapel Hill's recommendations for changes in the zoning district. We have already implemented some of these proposals. Compared to mitigation requirements in other zoning districts, the University follows much higher standards, which are appropriate because of the larger-scale impacts that our campus creates.

The OI-4 zoning standards that now apply to development on the main campus go beyond most reflected in the Town's Land Use Management Ordinance for other zoning districts. And the University is also proud to be a leader in the Chapel Hill community - as well as in North Carolina and the nation - because of our commitments to mitigate traffic, stormwater, noise and other environmental impacts of our capital improvement program.

In 2001, the OI-4 zoning requirements were adopted as the result of public negotiations between Town and University representatives. The negotiation sought to balance the goals, interests and values of the Chapel Hill community with the state's goals, directives and timelines for executing the University's capital improvements.

Principal concerns in 2001 centered on the University's need for a local review process that would be less open-ended with a predictable endpoint, since the University is accountable to the people of North Carolina and students to complete capital projects on time and on budget. At the same time, the Town must protect community property values and health, safety and welfare. The OI-4 zoning regulations address these community interests through the Town Council's approval of a University Development Plan that includes all planned building projects, their collective impacts on the Town and mitigation measures. This comprehensive approach allows a thorough analysis of the impact of development on our adjoining neighbors and the larger community.

Following this commentary is a list of all proposed changes to OI-4 zoning, including several refinements that the University proposes to improve the effectiveness and timeliness of reviews. Included are two University proposals to add a new expected standard that we involve neighbors in project development and to require us to present Development Plan applications to Town review boards. We propose these additional requirements to expand opportunities for dialogue with and input from the community. Citizens who want to review these proposed changes and learn more about how specific provisions of OI-4 zoning, the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Management Ordinance compare can go to [www.unc.edu/community](http://www.unc.edu/community), where all relevant regulatory provisions are laid out side-by-side.

The University is committed to balancing its mission of teaching, research and public service and its fiscal accountability to taxpayers and students with its responsibility as a member of the Chapel Hill community.

Although there can be circumstances when the two sets of obligations diverge, the good news for the state, University, students and Chapel Hill citizens is that there is no significant difference between the University's and the Town's positions on proposed changes to OI-4.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy D. Suttentfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "N".

Nancy D. Suttentfield

Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill