Spruce Park Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes
Central United Methodist Church
UNM Parking Structures Presentation
March 11, 2009

Mary Kenney, University Planning Officer, introducing Jerrod Cline DPS, Dan Kemme of DPS, project architect, Daniel Fitchett, Construction Project Manager, Miguel Hidalgo Capital Projects Officer, Rick Henard Senior Projects Manager. Bill Turner Director of Capital Projects, Michael Polikoff, University Planner.

Dan Kemme: Schematic design level developed since last June. 4 sites were evaluated; sites chosen have the least impact on the campus and adjacent neighborhoods and the most value per parking and space. Two lots under consideration: Lot C and BBER Lots. Lot C currently is a surface parking; BBER (acronym for the location of the previous occupant) is a dirt lot adjacent to Lomas to the east of Yale. Additional studies will be performed on Lot C. UNM is tight on parking space. Traffic analysis was key in making the decision for these locations. UNM is making provisions for a Lobo Care Clinic at Lot C.

Q- Enrollment has not gone up and public transportation has improved. Why does UNM need these lots? Why now?

MK- Enrollment is flat but new programs and additional research are in place, requiring expansion of parking. Employees have increased as well. A culture shift needs to occur on campus that is set forth with Master Planning. Overall main campus square footage has increased 2 million. This is an 18 per cent increase in sf of buildings. We need to improve our existing buildings and take care with developing new facilities; there is no more land for building beyond what we have. Currently, we have a total of 11.5 million sf on the ABQ campus, including Centennial Engineering and the growth with Dane Smith, etc. This has decreased the amount of parking on central campus and moved parking to the perimeter. We expect growth in some departments so parking will always need to be considered during planning.

We are a commuter campus at present. The master plan suggests that we create a live, work, learn, play environment that enlivens the student experience with improved housing stock and amenities to reduce the need to leave campus. In addition, Dr. Schmidly has strongly supported the idea that more student jobs are needed on campus to reduce the need for the car. We would also like to have consideration given to reducing or eliminating freshman cars on campus. Conceptually, the longer range plan is to cap parking at about 3,000 spaces and coordinate with MRCOG data to create regional transportation solutions. As parking lots are used for development, parking is reduced over time. The question is how can we get students, faculty and staff to campus without driving now and in the future. Several strategies have already been implemented – free bus passes for students, faculty and staff; ride share; encouragement to seek alternative transit (ie bikes) to campus, zipcars, etc. We will need additional strategies to make this shift happen. Hopeful these are last two parking structures required on the central campus.
Audience Remark- Parking permits work to control parking in neighborhoods.

Q- I’ve been a supporter of UNM over many years. Parking structure only increases danger on MLK and Las Lomas. It’s ironic that this is an expansion of a health care facility but this is unsafe and unhealthy for the neighborhood because of congestion.

A- MK- Appreciate your support over the years but the university must grow and change to succeed. Some additional parking must be provided for now. The Walker Study disclosed that the two sites in question would have the least impact on the neighborhoods.

Q- How much revenue is generated from these structures.

A- Just enough to cover the bond.

Q- How many more spaces will we have?

A- About 380 more spaces net.

Q- Parking problem contributed by TAs and other folks to support students. Ratio of faculty to students is low.

A- Will try to respond with research of those numbers.

Q- What about the Rio Rancho Campus?

A- 5000 UNM commuters have zip codes on the west side. One new building is being built in RR for about 1,200 students. We are trying to provide facilities at locations to reduce traffic. Every 3-6 months a new study of parking is performed by UNM Parking and Transportation.

Q- We walk to campus, need easy pedestrian access. Please don’t ruin our neighborhood. Why can’t the parking be done on remote lots?

A- It now costs us over 14k per space minimum in parking structures. We need the parking to meet the current demand. Students do not like to shuttle from the south campus; they would like it less if they had to pay more for parking in a garage and be shuttled! So, market is part of the decision. Another factor is that the majority of our students work off campus. They drive in for a class then leave to go to work. We are now assembling information on addresses to create traffic models so we can maximize land use and minimize parking. Connecting the information about bus routes to where our students live may help change the transit system to be more responsive and effective in transporting. UNM is now connected to Rail Runner with two bus routes from Central and North Campus. We are trying to make it easier to help students graduate in 4 years.
A- Miguel Hidalgo- 60% of the funding comes from student fees to support facilities and polls indicate that the primary demand is to be able to park on campus because they work right after class.

Q- Are you planning to eliminate parking lots and increase structures?

A- MK-Yes. We can project about another 4 million sf of facilities growth on main campus, which systematically eliminates parking lots. This ultimately will force commuters to take alternative modes of transportation.

Q- Demand is going to increase, when will you stop building parking?

A- We need to work together to mitigate overcrowding of roads and engage regional solutions.

Q- How can we improve MLK?

A- The traffic analysis is underway. Part of this presentation is to show you the impact on MLK. The Chapel, Museum, Duck Pond, and Library are public destinations that require some parking support.

Q- Regarding University and Las Lomas, what is the traffic solution to prevent traffic going straight through University into the neighborhood?

A- We will look at ways to mitigate that by possible providing an island barrier.

Dan Kemme: Let’s look at the traffic study. We will have a clinic on the west side at one level. On-grade parking will be provided solely for clinic. Garage is entered from the west with multiple egress and ingress possibilities. We are limiting traffic on Las Lomas which was important to us. Redondo goes north only adjacent to the proposed structure. We took the current traffic counts and new configurations and saw improvements in the stacking of cars on Las Lomas.

Q- Does this increase numbers of cars on MLK?

A- DK- By level of service it goes from C level at 20.3 seconds and with the new configuration it gets slightly worse to 21.2 seconds. The traffic engineer will explain this in more detail tomorrow at the CDAC meeting in Planning and Campus Development at 2 PM.

Q- We can’t take more traffic on MLK. If we tell our children to eat fruit and we set out a bowl of fruit and a bowl of candy, the kids will take the candy. 21 million is a lot of money for new parking.

A- Yes although this design will have the least impact of any other choices we studied.

Q-Does the traffic study count cars on all streets.
A- Primary intersections mostly during peak usage. The traffic engineer will explain this more tomorrow.

A- MK- We will work with you to try to mitigate traffic concerns on MLK.

Dan Kemme: We will run the traffic analysis. We upped the traffic count to show stacking on Las Lomas at 4:15 pm to 5:30 pm or so. No left turn is possible onto Las Lomas from Redondo. Permit and hourly parking are provided to prevent a flush of people all at once and to promote a staggered flow of traffic. Also there is an island to prevent traffic cutting across University to Roma. This can possibly be done at Las Lomas if the City agrees.

Q- It appears traffic to the south is shown inaccurately.

A- Traffic engineer will explain the traffic flows at the CDAC meeting.

Mary K- We performed traffic studies so we could understand the impacts on the UNM campus as well as in the neighborhoods. We want to minimize impacts on the neighborhoods.  
(Meeting adjourned for NA business.)