UNM Master Plan presentation to University Heights Association (UHA) Board of Directors - July 7, 2009

Present: Michael Polikoff, Will Gleason, and Maia Mullen.
UHA Board members: Ben Roberts (President), Sherry Smith (Vice President), Don Hancock (Secretary/Treasurer), Joseph Aguirre, and Greg Gould.

Maps of the Master Plan were presented, and UNM representatives said that they were interested in meeting with neighborhood representatives.

One big idea in the Master Plan is connectivity – unifying north, central, and south campus with bike, mass transit, and pedestrian connections. UNM bus passes have generated 1 million rides and 1,000 less cars. To continue to reduce vehicle impacts on the Central campus, they want forward and creative solutions. Another big idea is the Central Campus should be a place to live, work, play, learn, which includes bringing more beds on central and south campuses. More campus nightlife is also needed. More housing is needed especially for first year students. Increased on-campus activity is also part of a reason for the new Recreation Center, which is probably 6 months to a year before more detailed drawings, with construction in 3 to 5 years. Another possible idea for student housing is a public-private partnership.

Issues raised by UHA included:

- The need for better pedestrian space, which the new Pearl Hall didn’t provide, and new buildings not being barriers to the neighborhood. The Master Planners are aware of the problem and would expect that the New Rec Center would be more setback from Central.

- The need to close the automobile entrance at Stanford and for cars to enter at Yale. The master Plan is considering closing Redondo between Yale and Stanford. An alternative might be a new entrance east of Stanford (entrance only and not aligned with north-south residential streets) and right turn exit only at Stanford. Entrances and exits should not encourage traffic through the north/south neighborhood streets.

- Whether the sustainability goals, which UHA supports, will actually be realized since with Pearl Hall some of the budget cutting undermined those goals.

- The need for on-going communications with neighborhoods regarding the Master Plan and decisions, including by the Regents, that affect neighborhoods. The Community Development Advisory Committee could a venue for more information sharing with the neighborhood. There may be a quarterly open house for neighborhoods or quarterly meetings with the Federation of University Neighborhoods. Rep. Gail Chasey has recommended that UNM have one contact person for neighborhoods.

- The need to have discussions now with off-campus business people, before any decisions are made to include commercial spaces on the north side of Central. Such new businesses could undercut off-campus businesses.

- The need to include CNM in connectivity (including joint CNM/UNM shuttles), since there are many student, staff, and faculty that are at both CNM and UNM and CNM campus is between the central and south campuses. To address that issue MRGCOG now has data from Health Sciences Center, UNM, and CNM to try to look at origin/destination to provide better transit options.