

As a critic of the Storrs downtown Partnership and Storrs Center, I have made it clear that it is my belief that the downtown was created for UConn students not for the residents of Mansfield.

According to today's editorial in the Daily Campus the students that it was built for aren't happy with it either, at least for the moment. They describe the layout as dangerous, confusing and a misguided mess.

The editorial goes on to say that the winter weather has made matters even worse.

They also claim that it unfairly spills over into academic and living areas of campus. What!?! Mansfield is encroaching on UConn!

I am providing a copy of the editorial.

AT the last council meeting I asked out Town Manager if the town was planning on entering into anymore business partnerships with UConn or private sector businesses. I would like to ask that same question today. Well are we?

Brian Coleman  
Mansfield Center

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# Editorial: Traffic and design problems plague Storrs Center development

By [Editorial Board](#)

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Though still in the midst of construction, Storrs Center has remained an illogical arena of confusing signage, misleading roads, and disastrous layout. As a result, frustration is common among UConn students in regards to navigation of its roads which have become especially dangerous due to the winter weather conditions.

While Storrs Center has not officially called it a day in terms of its overall completion, it is now arriving on its fourth year of construction. Storrs Center has generated traffic issues as a result of poor planning and numerous complications.

There almost seems to be an overcompensation for parking in the area. Unfortunately, not all of it is as well designed, with a fair amount of the open parking shoehorned into the space behind Buckley residence hall. Having shoved it there, the Storrs Center is almost unfairly spilling into the academic and living areas of campus.

It hides the Daily Campus building behind a wall of apartments and creates a dark roadway between the two. In essence, the parking situation has rather unfairly absorbed a great deal of the property.

Currently, the Storrs Center layout has remained an illogical decision because it has been so long in development. With multiple contractors working on the project, the feel is that of too many cooks in the kitchen, resulting in one large unfinished dish.

Looking at the layout provided by the Storrs Center website, about half of the area has yet to be completed. This has resulted in a very problematic layout of roads. Some seem to lead nowhere and others wind needlessly around a large undeveloped area next to the shopping area, named "Town Square." It can only be assumed that this area is merely the future "Town Square."

Of its delays, one of the most primary is its transportation center. Perhaps it is a good thing that it has yet to be opened, considering it can barely hold its current traffic.

A project that is, as of this writing, quite unfinished, needs to reconsider its overall design before adding on. Without more oversight into this matter, Storrs Center remains a misguided mess for many who visit there and are still puzzled as to its eventual completion.

Hopefully, one day, the students of this university will find more logic involved in the pavement of its roads and the construction of one of its greatest assets.

January 13, 2014

Town Council  
Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building  
Mansfield, CT

#### Comments

I had the opportunity to attend the December 9, 2013 Town Council meeting when the language of the Definitive Agreement for Water Supply Services between the Town and the Connecticut Water Company (CWC) was introduced to this body and the public. Such little advance notice was provided to the Town Council, Council person Paul Shapiro felt it prudent to express on the record that he could not comment until he had the time to give consideration to the document. Public comments at the time focused on the need for this Council to take more time to obtain more information and given more considered review of the language of this binding contract, that we are told would be in place in perpetuity.

On December 18, 2013, I had the opportunity to attend the Info session provided by CWC in which the public could pose questions to the CEO of CWC, Eric Thornberg, to the Town Manager and to Mr. Thomas Callahan, of the University of Connecticut.

There we learned that the CWC provides at least three types of water delivery services: (1) manages water delivery from sources not its own, (2) delivers water from sources from a distance and (3) provides water by pumping from local aquifers on property of which it has control.

We learned that its service to UCONN is considered one integrated system, in that it will meet contract obligations to UCONN by using both local aquifers and transported water. The language of the Mansfield contract with the CWC does not address the limits to be placed on the CWC, if any, on its use of local aquifers to meet its contractual obligations in its agreement with the Town. Why is this?

The CWC contract with the Town in section 9.7 has an Exclusive Service Area designated, the Town Attorney, Tobey Bruce, could not explain how the Town of Mansfield had the authority to enter into such a contractual term. How could this not be known to him, or the Town Management?

The term "Reasonable Efforts" are defined within the agreement as those which are "commercially reasonable" and that term is not defined. Why not?

Too much too fast too soon. You can have it fast and you can have it cheap but you can't also have it right. We need to slow down to get it right. Town Committees have voiced their concerns, but they have not been listened to, the public has spoken and they have not been listened to, consider what those knowledgeable about contracts have voiced, it takes time to study a contract as Paul Shapiro said. We can not continue to blame the messenger for the news. Those efforts are fruitless and have failed, it is time to do the hard work of determining the need and then the solution. The need for Water for the Town of Mansfield has been ill defined. The CWC told us that the Town Agreement is needed because that is where their revenue sources will come from. This Agreement should meet Town needs not just UCONN.

Sincerely,

Arthur A. Smith