

Appendix C

E-Mails to Mill Plaza Study Committee

Beyond excellent feedback from members of the public at our meetings and workshops, the Mill Plaza Study Committee/ AIA team benefitted greatly from the suggestions in writing sent to our address on the Town Website. Below are dozens of e-mails – some of them with extensive feedback – sent to our address between March of 2007 and early April 2008. This section does not include responses from the Chair and Vice Chair, who endeavored to respond and answer questions. Note that e-mail and residential addresses and phone numbers have been removed. E-mails begin below with the most recent received.

Date: Sun, 13 Apr 2008 22:13:47 -0400 [04/13/2008 10:13:47 PM EDT]

From: Tom Merrick

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: Re: Comments

Headers: Show All Headers

Dave, Julian, Committee,

You may recall my comments at the last public Mill Plaza meeting.

I'll add and repeat a bit.

First, I was a bit surprised to see myself on DCAT. I think such meetings should start with an announcement saying there is a recording being made and the possible uses of it. This is common courtesy and quite appropriate.

Also, there are two old firms being closed in downtown Durham. This puts the question of whether or not any new development is warranted for the area, a very serious question.

In addition, The TIF district on 108 has become questionable in the same way. The new Hannaford's up the street seems to fill all the local needs for such retail business. I have heard an earlier supporter of the TIF district has become a detractor in the face of the current economic down-turn.

As for my earlier comments, I still think the MP plan is pie-in-the-sky no matter the effort put into it. Too many very basic needs were glossed over and not addressed. Fire protection being a very important one!

The access and egress were in my mind very poorly arranged. It seems the pleas of the owner of the Durham Market Place business were ignored since there was little or no way for dozens of trailer trucks to maneuver their loads to the stores.

I do not care for the added entrance to/from Main street. I envision great difficulty in finding a good plan for such and negotiating it will be forever difficult. Again, a basic error in the plan.

Snow removal seems nearly impossible and/or extraordinarily expensive, hence my comment it is a snow plow drivers heaven or hell.

A parking garage needing public financing is another large error in my mind.

I'll agree that there was lots of effort expended, but I'm afraid it was not in a good direction. Perhaps the basic idea of increasing the retail area was and is impossible to solve, at least on the scale presented.

I believe a plan to gradually replace and enlarge the existing buildings with a second story could be appropriate given that basic needs were addressed first.

The University has provided a great deal of retail business in town. This precludes such large development as the plan presented at the last meeting at the Middle School multi-purpose room.

Good luck with your next - and I believe final meeting.

Tom Merrick

Date: Tue, 1 Apr 2008 13:53:45 -0400 [04/01/2008 01:53:45 PM EDT]
From: Brooke E Hallinan
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Mill Plaza Meeting
Headers: Show All Headers

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to know when the next meeting is that discusses this project. I need to attend a town meeting for my class here at UNH and I thought this would be perfect.

Thank you,
Brooke Hallinan

Date: Wed, 5 Mar 2008 04:45:22 -0600 [03/05/2008 05:45:22 AM EDT]
From: doug greene
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: the latest plan versus one previous
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

good morning plaza committee,

i attended the last meeting at the high school and i thought the latest plan had a lot of attractive features, however, chuck cressy's comments about truck traffic and snow removal (practicalities of function and climate), the observation about the canyon created by the parking garage and the grocery store, and the cost and complexity of the scheme created doubts and questions for me.

originally, i had actually thought an earlier plan was the final synthesis. it was attractive in its simplicity and the fact that it created a central meeting area around a fountain or garden area with the library, town hall and commercial spaces congregated together and the grocery store and pharmacy more or less in their current location. it had good pedestrian accessways. it did not loop through and out onto main street, which i think is a better idea because of the snarls i think it would contribute to. it allowed for the potential hotel and parking garage capabilities and the possible incorporation of the kyreages property. and very importantly, it allowed for a very attractive site and building layout relative to the sun. i think it is the most feasible for reasons of cost and reduced complexity, ease of transition to it, and its maintenance. i think having the town hall incorporated into the whole scheme creates the appropriate synergies with the library and commercial functions as well.

i would actually prefer to see this used as the base plan with ideas from the latest plan reincorporated.

Date: Mon, 03 Mar 2008 23:09:00 -0500 [03/03/2008 11:09:00 PM EDT]
From: Michael Behrendt
To: Mill Plaza Committee <PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us>
Subject: Selection of a developer
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

As you know, selection of the right developer for the Mill Plaza Project is critical. Most developers have no experience with this type of project and may not even understand the guiding theme of this project. If that type of developer is chosen it could completely undermine the project.

There are many developers across the country who understand exactly what Durham is trying to accomplish and who have experience with complex, mixed use, pedestrian oriented, downtown type projects. But they are not typical. You must look for them and entice them to undertake your project. The first step is to get a list of these developers.

With my contacts in the planning and design fields (from several list serves that I am a member of that discuss exactly these types of projects) I could put together a list of potential developers from across the country who would be worth investigating. Would you like for me to compile a list like this?

Michael Behrendt, Rochester City Planner
Durham resident

Date: Mon, 03 Mar 2008 17:32:55 -0500 [03/03/2008 05:32:55 PM EDT]
From: Joy Winston

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Question
Headers: Show All Headers

I understand there were grants involved in the design studies of the proposed plaza redevelopment, but who is going to pick up the tab for the redevelopment? Is this something that the taxpayers of Durham are going to have to shoulder. I am especially concerned about the library building.

Joy Winston

Date: Thu, 21 Feb 2008 12:45:10 -0500 [02/21/2008 12:45:10 PM EDT]
From: "Kirby, Kenneth"
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Plan View
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Alternative parts for this section:
unnamed [text/html] 4.19 KB

Hi.

Now that the meeting has taken place will the view of the new plans be available on-line? I would love to see them!

Regards,

Ken Kirby

Date: Thu, 21 Feb 2008 10:07:25 -0500 [02/21/2008 10:07:25 AM EDT]
From: "h.heilbronner"
To: plazacommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: mill plaza plans
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Dear Dave, et. al., Congrats on so much work and also getting out so many interested people on another cold, winter night. I guess we're hardy. I was sorry to have to leave, but we're on a schedule for the last couple of weeks following Hans's cataract surgery.

Since I didn't stay for the discussion, my thoughts may be redundant and others may have thought of some of the same issues. The circular rd. is an obvious one, as even if something could be worked out, my guess is students and others coming to the far side of campus would use it as a shortcut and increase traffic on Main St and Mill Rd. to

what passes for a real traffic jam at certain times of the day in small town terms. Also I have reservations about an inn at the proposed spot, as an inn by any name (I came up with The Three Firs or Furs after this cold winter) would not in my opinion be a desirable concept. I also am not enthused, based on past experience of adding more students living in the plaza. I can foresee open windows, blaring music and all the things that make living with students less attractive for our multi-age citizenry. Maybe we could go back to the old concept of people who work in the Plaza living "above the store". It would save gas. I know we might have to give up our wonderful Kaleidascoop and the open space for town events (like the winter bonfire at Christmas and the summer concerts), but the purpose is to generate income and open space doesn't do that. You have to give something up to get something, so I know the committee will weigh the pros and cons and come up with what will fly in this economy and work for the good of all.

Everyone who has worked so hard on this project deserves a huge vote of thanks. It will all work out, as there are many good things in the works and they will at some point come to fruition. Hang in there, thanks for listening and for all your effort. One more thing, is my and Hans's addiction to the Bagelry. We assume that will remain and we hope in a good location. I also hope we don't lose those glorious trees where their picnic tables now sit. I'm not a certified tree hugger, but they are an inspiration every spring and I think that access to the plaza is already working well. Fondly, Phyllis Heilbronner

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2008 21:08:23 -0500 [02/15/2008 09:08:23 PM EDT]
From: Tom Merrick
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Review Materials?
Headers: Show All Headers

I have reviewed the materials available on the Plaza Study Committee web site as updated on 2/1/2008.

Will any new materials be made available prior to the meeting planned for Feb. 20, 2008?

Thanks Very Much,

Tom Merrick

Date: Mon, 4 Feb 2008 13:47:24 -0500 [02/04/2008 01:47:24 PM EDT]
From: Maggie Moore
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: [No Subject]
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Great work!! I continue to follow with interest.

Maggie Moore

Date: Fri, 01 Feb 2008 22:19:43 -0500 [02/01/2008 10:19:43 PM EDT]
From: Tom Merrick

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us, julian Smith
Subject: Comments
Headers: Show All Headers

In looking at the layout picture on the web I have the following comments for your consideration. I refer to:

http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/GOVERNMENT/boards/mill_plaza/pdfs/Durham/VillageStreetConceptElevations.pdf

- 1) How is handicap access intended to be provided. It looks as though the parking spaces are a long ways from the buildings, much further than presently.
- 2) I have no way to compare the number of parking spaces now present, but the layout seems to show much less area devoted to parking. With new business there would be expected to be a need for at least as much parking as presently available.
- 3) It appears there will be a difficult process to use and retrieve shopping carts across the long walkways and serpentine parking lanes. I may not be able to find my car.
- 4) Siting buildings right adjacent to College Brook would seem to not protect the stream from pollution.
- 5) The serpentine parking and access roads appear to be a snow plow nightmare! I can only presume the design intends to have all snow trucked away for every storm.
- 6) Nice, but excessive area given to brick walks and trees. The existing trees seem to not do well. Who will maintain and provide for the new trees? How will they receive moisture?
- 7) What, if any, environmental (green) considerations have been used in this plan?
- 8) The new 120 degree left turn leaving the area would be more difficulty for drivers and perhaps more hazardous to pedestrians.

I am very disappointed in this layout. It strikes me as a layout the planners have talked themselves into without any semblance of practicality. I hope I am mistaken.

At least I looked at it.

Tom Merrick

Date: Fri, 18 Jan 2008 11:50:19 -0500 [01/18/2008 11:50:19 AM EDT]
From: Steve Malan

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Mill Plaza Project
Headers: Show All Headers

Dear Members of the Plaza Committee,

I wish to offer my services concerning the proposed Mill Plaza project. Our business is located in neighboring Greenland. Unlike most sign companies we offer everything from design to manufacturing and installation with all our own crews and equipment. If I can be of any assistance be it for general ideas, specifications, estimates, etc., please feel free to contact me anytime. The Mill Plaza is an exciting project and it would be my pleasure to assist in any way possible. My contact information is below. Thank you best of luck with the project!

Sincerely,
Steve Malan

Date: Mon, 14 Jan 2008 17:55:11 -0500 [01/14/2008 05:55:11 PM EDT]
From: Jerry Olson
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Question...
Headers: Show All Headers

Plaza Committee,

I see that the Town Hall and Library are included in these proposals. It is my understanding that this is private property and that any space use will require a lease payment to the plaza owner of some sort. (Meanwhile, I don't necessarily like taxpayer money paying for the current library space in the plaza and have been patiently waiting for the library to move somewhere into Town property.) Am I mistaken that, if Town functions occupy any buildings in this private plaza, rental or lease dollars will be required from the town budget?

If so, I oppose the Town's participation no matter what special circumstances would arise. We shouldn't be paying for space on property we don't own. If we're paying any taxpayer money it should be towards the increasing the value of our equity and not private equity. If I'm mistaken in this assumption, please let me know.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jerry Olson
Durham

Date: Fri, 04 Jan 2008 15:23:45 +0000 [01/04/2008 10:23:45 AM EDT]
From: Howard Quimby

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Mill Plaza Round 3
Headers: Show All Headers

Team -

I'm late to the input process, but wanted to send my feedback on the plans I have reviewed today. I was struck by some of the bold thinking and ideas in the original designs -- I love them and I hope you will continue to pursue a greater vision during the redevelopment. Please don't water down the round 3 design into the same old "it's always been a huge parking lot with a grocery and drug store, so it needs to remain a big parking lot with grocery and drug store." That kind of thinking keeps us in the box and does little to attract new businesses and tenants.

I know I'm late to the game, but something along the lines of JSA Round 2, with a parking garage to serve ALL of downtown with a Staples retail store and a 99 Restaurant starts to make the Plaza a multi-purpose destination, a reason to stay in town, with services that students, residents and hotel guests alike will use. Give folks a reason to drive downtown and spend our dollars rather than going to Dover or Portsmouth to spend them.

Durham seems to be a place with fierce opposition to new ideas and change, but I really believe that we have a wonderful opportunity to make a positive impact by building something truly bold and new in the Mill Plaza space. I hope that a bold vision and true change will result from your efforts.

Howard Quimby

Date: Wed, 05 Dec 2007 19:09:19 -0500 [12/05/2007 07:09:19 PM EDT]
From: Brent Bell
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Bike and Walking pathways
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Dear Plaza Committee,

In looking at the two plans I was disappointed to not see more pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to the design. I understand that motor vehicles are an important part of the design, but many of the intended and hope for community outcomes are significantly related to how much people are actually using the space OUTSIDE of their motor vehicles. These bicycle and pedestrian lanes need to be central to the design to encourage user to walk and bike in a manner that facilitates human interaction. I hope the design is focussed around the pedestrian, not the SUV. I think we can all agree that part of the purpose of all this hard work is to help to facilitate a town that develops the social capital of the residents Durham. When people are outside of their cars they then have the opportunity for saying hello to neighbors and having the serendipitous experiences that come from face to face human interaction.

Given the difficulties with parking in town and the number of users within 2 mile radius of the Mill Pond Plaza, any encouragement and purposeful planning with the intension of

increasing bicycle commuters and walkers will make a difference.

This plaza also could be a route for children from the Faculty Neighborhood to the Oyster River Schools.

Thank you for all the hard work going into this project.

If these designs do reflect the values I have mentioned above, it was not obvious to me from viewing the pictures on the website, so feel free to straighten me out.

Brent
Brent Bell, Ph.D.
Asst. Professor of Outdoor Education
NH Hall
University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH. 03824

Date: Tue, 04 Dec 2007 23:26:52 -0500 [12/04/2007 11:26:52 PM EDT]
From: Michael Behrendt
To: Mill Plaza Committee <PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us>
Subject: Mill Plaza project
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

To the Mill Plaza Committee,

I cannot attend the meeting tomorrow evening but here are some preliminary comments on the second round of schemes.

*** Pick the best of the three designs and work off of that. Do not try to assuage egos and create some sort of camel/amalgam of the three. That does not work. Do right for the town and pick the best design. They are very different. You cannot combine them.

The best of the three is still the design by the Schoonmaker group. I am not sure at this point, with just my quick review of the schemes, whether their second scheme is better or worse than their first. But it is still the best of the three.

Regarding the JSA scheme, the right half is quite good. The space around the plaza is very nicely framed on three sides, the building masses are well articulated, and the parking lot is located at the rear where it should be. However, the left half of the scheme is regrettable. It is merely a big box with a big parking lot. It is not worth undertaking this project to simply recreate an inappropriate suburban style big box. Plus, the nice plaza completely falls apart on this fourth side, with the parking lot inexplicably colliding with the plaza.

Regarding the Lavallee Brensinger scheme, the best part is the narrow winding street shaped by buildings on both sides. But then the plan falls apart with several open spaces which are poorly framed, poorly shaped, and poorly defined. For example, the pedestrian plaza behind Main Street is an odd, constricted, leftover triangle at the rear of Main Street buildings. It is framed by small, quirky existing wood frame buildings on one side and a large

unarticulated box on the other side. The "street" doesn't know whether it wants to be a real downtown type street or a traffic artery with inappropriate perpendicular parking and substantial frontage on a large parking lot. The footpath along the brook is quite nice but it doesn't connect at all with the rest of the site.

Regarding the Schoonmaker scheme I am disappointed that some of the best features of the first scheme (i.e. the cranky old European type street/passage) are not retained, improved upon, and elaborated. The parking lot is the most prominent and central part of the plan! But the scheme is clearly superior to the other two schemes because it frames space well (even the parking lot is nicely framed by buildings and landscaped though, it remains a parking lot), provides what could be a very pleasant pedestrian passage, and displays a knowledge of urban design through devices such as liner buildings on the parking garage and a well placed town hall which becomes the focal point of the entry plaza. Contrast the charming placement of the town hall here with the poor placement of it in the Lavallee Brensinger scheme where it fails to provide an attractive connection to the rest of the site.

Michael Behrendt
Durham resident
Rochester City Planner

Date: Tue, 4 Dec 2007 09:31:23 -0500 [12/04/2007 09:31:23 AM EDT]
From: Rita Freuder
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: library-grocery
Headers: Show All Headers

Hello Dave and Mill Plaza Design colleagues ,

I have been remiss in never attending an open meeting yet to see what the general layout might be. I am a weekly user of the library and help deliver my 93 year old neighbor there to choose her books also. I cannot believe that you have made the library so inaccessible to handicapped / elderly folks and even people dealing with young children who may be carrying an infant. This is no better than when the library was in the University building with no easy access. I think the library needs to be in a place where the distance from car parking to door is minimal, not as you have designed it - part of a Gateway where as long as you are able to deal with walking a distance, you can go to the Town offices and library - and it is the same lot used by the grocery shoppers. One lot (parking garage) with one exit from the stores will create all kinds of car jams. Grocery and Library both involve carrying heavy items. I also don't understand the residential buildings at all, and right next to College Brook? Put them over where the town offices will move from - why should they be close to services? Is this for elderly housing and low income residents or a money making scheme? It would seem to me quite expensive to crunch everything together to make a parking garage. Will it pollute the College Brook less to have parking a garage? It will involve elevators, I would think, and that is expensive to maintain as well as inconvenient for grocery shopping. If you are only thinking of providing stairways, you have not noticed the changing demographics - baby boomers with bad knees.

Rita Freuder
30 year resident

Date: Mon, 3 Dec 2007 09:30:33 -0500 [12/03/2007 09:30:33 AM EDT]
From: Maggie Moore
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: third round
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Congratulations on bringing together so many interested stakeholders and community "idea makers" into the process of designing our downtown project. I follow the development with interest.

The last public forum was on November 29th. Will there be any more public forums before the final recommendation in the early part of 2008?

Thank you,
Maggie Moore

Date: Sun, 25 Nov 2007 10:52:04 -0500 [11/25/2007 10:52:04 AM EDT]
From: "h.heilbronner"
To: plazacommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: plaza plans
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

To the committee re the latest meeting. My e-mail after the last meeting at the h.s. didn't get sent, because of a computer glitch, but here is a shortened version of my thoughts, in addition to thanking all of the committee members for their time, efforts and insights into the attempt to build a town center that builds on the good things we now have and makes it even better.

You probably have heard enough negative comments about a hotel and I do want to tell you that the bookstore at the MUB is a Barnes and Noble, you can get gift certificates there, there are many nice items, children's books and it is also handicapped accessible, with limited parking, but not out of walking range. Also Holloway Commons is attracting adults to their dining options, which I'm sure some of you already know. In none of the presentations have I heard any compelling reasons for moving the Town Hall, although crossing 108 at certain times of the day does need to be addressed and I do see the need for more space, but there seems to be adequate space for enlarging the present town hall with ample parking. The library in the plaza could act as a meeting place and multi-purpose building and that still seems like a good idea.

I see the Bagelry and the lovely green area around it as an "anchor" and too perfect as is to tamper with. I'd hate to see those glorious trees cut down, when green space is one of the architectural themes common to all the architects' plans. I don't see mixed housing with students and an older population as a winning situation. It is hard enough to get one particular landlord with property abutting the walkway from Main St. to the plaza and next to the 2 Main St. churches keeping his property clean and from dereliction by neglect. You know, as well as walkers do that a certain spot accessing the plaza is so horrendous and has been for so long with no end in sight as it gets more unsightly all the time, that making the plaza a pleasant place to walk to is increasingly unpleasant. It seems a contradiction to have all these glorified plans with what looks like a slum right as some of us neighborhood walkers

have to pass by. I'd like to know why that is o.k. while we forge ahead to beautify our town center.

In closing, my husband and I strongly support efforts to forge ahead with the plaza redevelopment plans on a scale that makes sense in terms of what is being proposed, that the owner of the property would agree to and that is in line with the kind of addition the Durham Market did with the Kaleidascoop. That has become a mini-center, beautifully done and a model for what can be done in a modest and very attractive way. I hope plans keep in mind the main points we've all raised about connecting the plaza to the business areas on Main St., the increased traffic issues, and building on what has worked so well in the past. I know a parking garage is going to be inevitable, but I also hope that is kept to scale, keeping winter access in mind for the elderly and not making it the kind of intimidating place some urban parking garages can be for single people at night.

Thanks for listening. Phyllis Heilbronner

Date: Wed, 21 Nov 2007 14:18:59 -0500 [11/21/2007 02:18:59 PM EDT]
From: Joan Weinstock
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Hotel
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

In view of the Hotel New Hampshire being sold to a lower level chain, I believe it is important for the committee to look carefully at the plan for another hotel, which might suffer the same fate. There are many more "community friendly" uses for that part of the plaza.

Joan Weinstock

Date: Tue, 13 Nov 2007 10:40:07 -0500 [11/13/2007 10:40:07 AM EDT]
From: Stephanie Higgs
To: plazacommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Feedback on Plaza Plan
Headers: Show All Headers

Hi,
I'm coming in late and uninformed..
I just looked at the Round 2 drawings and was distressed to see that the Town Hall is going to be in the Plaza. A waste of potential retail space.
What's wrong with keeping the Town Hall where it is?
I'm sure this has been discussed....
Thank you-
Stephanie Higgs
18 Oyster River Rd.

Date: Tue, 13 Nov 2007 09:42:01 -0500 [11/13/2007 09:42:01 AM EDT]
From: John Carroll
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: [No Subject]

Headers: Show All Headers

TO: Plaza Committee

As you may be aware, there has been a sharp drop in the availability of borrowing for commercial development (a drop of 85% since March, as I understand), and availability for such borrowing continues to drop. This may affect Mill Plaza plans, and argues even more strongly for the residential component (particularly because this is both mixed residential/commercial and because the location is in the central business district where funding for such development is favorable).

John E. Carroll
Durham

Date: Fri, 09 Nov 2007 11:40:55 -0500 [11/09/2007 11:40:55 AM EDT]

From: John Carroll

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: [No Subject]

Headers: Show All Headers

TO: Mill Plaza Committee

From: John E. Carroll

We must plan for the future, not the past. Too much of the latest iteration of Mill Plaza plans is what has worked in the past, not what will work in the future.

1. Reduction or de-emphasis on the residential component of the Mill Plaza Project is, I believe, a serious mistake. Residences on the 3rd and 4th floors will bring in good tax revenue and will provide very good business to the retail establishments below and elsewhere in the Plaza, particularly Durham Marketplace (not to mention additional business to all the downtown businesses, all walking and without needs for parking). Ideally, this should be a mix of workforce housing and age-restricted housing, but some student housing could conceivably be a component. There is sufficient space on this site for the residential component, as long as it's upper floors. About three-fourths of the residences should be assigned one parking space (not more), and one-fourth should be available at lower cost without parking. This site is within walking distance of most all services and has plenty of public transportation (including at least two bus routes - Wildcat Transit and Campus Connector - stopping on site, plus AMTRAK and C&J in walking distance at the station, and the possibility of Coast and other regional bus service in the future). There is thus no need for excessive residential parking. And therefore no need for excessive space.

2. I am very skeptical of a hotel at this site. This is planning for the past, not the future. (And I do not agree that the New England Center is "obsolete". The NEC remains a truly unique experience which continues to get rave reviews from visitors to the

university and conferees.) As a Professor who teaches a graduate seminar on peak oil, I know that we will be living, of necessity, on reduced quantities of gasoline and oil. Travel will be reduced and hotels will have less business. It is far wiser to allocate this space, and the revenue it will bring in, to residential purpose.

3. Keeping Durham Marketplace at its present location is likely a good idea, especially given the wonderful quietness and relative invisibility of the somewhat hidden loading area. The granite wall (for sound absorption as well as invisibility) and the general obscure location of the loading process are a benefit we should not surrender.

4. When we think of energy, too often we think of electricity, of heating, insulation and architectural design. We need to think more of oil and gasoline and effects on transportation, which will affect this project far more substantially.

The main message here is that what has worked in the past, and in other places, will not necessarily work here in the future. The message is thus to plan for the future and not the past. One of the best ways of doing that is to insure the residential/commercial mix and a balance between the two.

Date: Mon, 5 Nov 2007 15:44:43 -0500 [11/05/2007 03:44:43 PM EDT]

From: Bob Morrison

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: A comment and a question re Mill Plaza project

Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)

Headers: Show All Headers

Please make sure there is a working PA system at every large public meeting for this. Even if it means you must bring and set up your own equipment. Not all presenters can talk loud enough to make themselves heard in a room such as the high school cafetorium. Without a working PA system, you are in effect excluding all hearing-impaired townspeople from this process.

This is my question. All of the designs show the former grange hall gone and not moved to anywhere else on the site. Does this mean the town is planning to tear it down?

Date: Mon, 5 Nov 2007 15:23:55 -0500 [11/05/2007 03:23:55 PM EDT]

From: David Arthur

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: Thursday Meeting

Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)

Headers: Show All Headers

Is the meeting on Thursday open to the public? If not, can we still attend?

David T. Arthur

Date: Mon, 5 Nov 2007 07:30:46 -0500 [11/05/2007 07:30:46 AM EDT]

From: John Lowy

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: Re-Envisioning the Mill Plaza

Headers: Show All Headers

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for arranging yesterday's workshop on the progress made by the architecture firms in the second round of redesigning the Mill Plaza property. I am also very appreciative of your individual and collective efforts on behalf of the larger community, in helping to conceptualize this important proposal for revitalizing downtown Durham.

Yesterday was my first opportunity to see and hear the important aspects of the project; therefore, my perceptions are colored by first impressions, and an accumulated sense of what's important to me as a resident of 33+ years in the Faculty Development Neighborhood. Given where I am coming from, I am troubled by the apparent need to move the Durham Town Hall from its current location along Rte 108, to what will most likely be an intensely commercialized setting, with mixed uses. To have one more hotel in the neighborhood, bothers me, and to have it wed to the town's place of business, is equally troubling.

Over the past several years, we have had several bed and breakfasts fold, a Holiday Inn Express morphed from an independent, stand-alone New Hampshire Hotel franchise on the fringes of the center of town, already have Three Chimneys, the New England Center Complex apparently in financial difficulty, yet we push for one more hotel, because it seems right to have one in the middle of a very limited piece of prime property, downtown Durham. That we have Libby's with its three story apartment structure overshadowing the Mill Road Plaza, should be a reminder of what could become of a redesigned Plaza, should commercial interests overtake community needs other than the almighty tax base. Transiency is more the price I believe Durham will pay with one more hotel smack dab in the middle of what is now a relatively tight line of properties dotting Main Street.

Siting of the library in the new Mill Road Plaza does make sense, as well as a community center, both focussed on community needs and aesthetics. A greater sense of community is gained from these latter additions than a hotel. I think of the hotels on the outskirts of Rochester and Portsmouth. Those situated in the center of town have a different purpose than a hotel that might be added to the roster of a university town. I've stayed at the Holiday Inn Express during last year's power outage, and was grateful for its existence, but where it is located, not in my backyard (!)

The redesigned Mill Road Plaza should reflect the values of the immediate community as well as the community at large. The potential for transiency should be avoided wherever and whenever possible. Added value should have several dimensions, like the community library which is long overdue, a community center which is also long overdue.

Professional suites as suggested during yesterday's workshop, are also long overdue. My concern is that there will be a push to site too many commercial venues, and not enough community-based or oriented venues as a balance. I'm aware that financial considerations in the end, will dictate what will eventually come out of this whole process. But, the drive to push build a broader tax base has the potential for compromising a splendid opportunity to create a true town center. I'm reminded of the town greens that still exist in New England, and how they have been left behind by commercial growth along the corridors leading to or past the towns these greens once served. There is a danger of investing too much in commercial infrastructure, then to find other commercial forces causing a powerful shift, as we have with the big box stores on the outskirts of surrounding, larger towns and cities.

As an academic community, we need to keep our eye on what enhances the worth of our community as a university community while improving services and resources for the residential community who support the university's existence. As UNH becomes more self-sufficient, the challenge will always be to identify resources and services that add value to the community's quality of life, as well as tax base. Another hotel, for example, is not necessarily what I would have in mind as an entity that would add value in either case. Hotel chains are historically known for going begging for occupants. The vision of a half filled hotel in a university/college community, does not encourage my support for one located in the middle of Durham, on the edge of a revitalized Mill Road Plaza.

One more thought. As a pragmatist who gains for looking at a 3-D version of any architectural rendering, how crazy is it to consider a team or group of interested citizens creating a diorama of each of the architecture teams' visions. I think it would help the public in general in identifying more fully with the efforts of all who have brought us this far in the redesign process. I think I am driven in part by my career in working with elementary school children. I don't think it's too far off the mark, and I would think some of us would like to give it a shot, as they say.

Thank you for reading this rather long response, I apologize for being so wordy:-(

All the best in your continuing efforts on behalf of the Town of Durham.

John J. Lowy

Date: Sun, 4 Nov 2007 17:08:28 -0500 [11/04/2007 05:08:28 PM EDT]

From: Nancy Lambert

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: comments from second public meeting

Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)

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Hi Mill Plaza Development Committee,

Thank you all for your considerable efforts on behalf of the town. I have found both the public forums to be very interesting and worthwhile, and Patrick Field is an excellent facilitator.

I had a couple of thoughts that resulted from the second meeting that I would like to contribute. First, and most importantly, I think it is potentially a mistake for the town to shy away from significant density at the core. If we look at the town as a whole, I think it is essential that the downtown be developed with significant density. As you know, the commercial space is more likely to be viable if there is a significant residential population mixed in to support it. Also, the center of town is one of the few places in the region where people can live without being dependent on automobiles. Most importantly, if we are to protect open space we have to allow high density housing and what better place than in the core of the town? If we don't provide housing opportunities in the center of town, they'll be more development pressure on our fields, forests and other open spaces. I think many areas of Europe provide a good model of high density housing surrounded by natural, open spaces. In contrast, our typical American development pattern has houses scattered across the landscape, eating up open space and fragmenting habitat, while our downtowns are struggling to be viable.

I understand and appreciate that some of the concern regarding high density in the core is its potential impact on adjacent neighborhoods. First, these neighborhoods are already impacted by the Mill Plaza and also by the development of Brookside Commons, which destroyed part of what would have been the natural buffer between Faculty Road and the Mill Plaza. I think the proposed designs would improve the visual impact of the plaza, since the current buildings are less than architecturally inspiring. I believe also that the designs could include a plan for how a College Brook buffer could be used more effectively to help buffer the Faculty Rd. neighborhood from some of the negative impacts of the increased density at the core. Finally, I think we who live in the adjacent neighborhoods rely heavily on the downtown and would benefit from a more viable and vibrant downtown.

My second, more minor, comment is simply that I really liked the plaza idea put forth by the JSA team. Having the town hall, library and another building in a U-shape around a central plaza seemed like an attractive way to create a center around the library. (It is unfortunate that once has to

look through a large parking lot to see it from the street, but I accept that this may be an unavoidable problem.) While they put the town hall in the center of the U, I would probably put the library in the center as I think it is more of a social hub for the community. I don't think it is necessary to emphasize town administration by giving it the focal point. I also liked their walkway from Main St. to the plaza and their idea of putting the garage in the roadway so that people would be less likely to use the road through the new development as a throughway.

Thanks for this opportunity to comment. Good luck in your deliberations.

Best wishes,

Nancy Lambert

Date: Sun, 04 Nov 2007 09:24:55 -0500 [11/04/2007 09:24:55 AM EDT]
From: Lucha Burns
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Thoughts on designs
Headers: Show All Headers

We are sorry we will be out of town through the fifteenth of November so wanted to give some feedback.

1. What is the rationale for moving town hall into an area where there is a stronger potential for income producing? Town hall seems to be in a good location and has enough parking. If there are meetings at a town hall that sits in the mill pond plaza the people wishing to shop at the retail stores will not have any place to park and parking problems cause a financial strain on the town. Would the library have ever left UNH (at an annual cost of \$45,000) if there had not been a parking problem? If would be a far more cost effective plan to enhance the proposed library space by having one or two screening rooms (movie theatres is another name) for daily and nightly run classic and foreign movies or special lectures and cultural events.

2. Durham needs more restaurants that are not Pizza parlors or that close at 3:00 in the afternoon. People tend to like to shop on the first floors because they browse and shop but we would go to the second floors of buildings for quality food, friendly ambience, food variety and family pricing. Again-please check the Stonybrook campus Wang arts center for their innovative food court.

3. Schoonmaker plan is the prettiest and most visually appealing- but do not believe that the great "cities" noted by Rochester's city planner i.e. Portsmouth, Savannah, Charleston and st augustine have great streets that are two way. They are more often one way streets. Over the years these

cities have discovered that two way streets need to be wider if they have parking on both sides and they require too much driver awareness checking students, children and others rushing between parked cars. They became one way to keep traffic flowing.

4. A four story design is a good idea because it plans for the future and brings a vitality to the area that will probably lead the stores on Main Street to re-think their own spaces. If we end up with a smaller plan the retail stores (necessary to the financial needs of the town) won't invest and we will be meeting again on the redevelopment of the Mill Plaza in fifteen years. Let's do it right the second time so there isn't a third time.

Date: Fri, 2 Nov 2007 22:55:36 -0400 [11/02/2007 10:55:36 PM EDT]
From: Kevin Shenefiel
To: plazacommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Plaza Comments and Suggestios
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

- 1 - Take advantage of solar energy for domestic water heating and passive room heating; by facing most buildings within 15 degrees of south and leaving about 200 ft to the south free of tall trees and buildings. A building with grocery on the first parking on the second and residential 3rd -5th could sit in the NE corner of the site similar to scheme 1. And a second building, with restaurants and shops 1st floor and offices and residents upper floors, could angle from the footpath past the old schoolhouse to the Mill Rd entrance.
- 2 - A stand alone library/ municipal building would look more appropriate if it was built in a classic greek revival or federal style and faced the Mill Rd. triangle.
- 3 - The historical integrity of the old schoolhouse would be best preserved left on its current site.
- 4 - Laying a road from the existing Mill rd. entrance to a new entrance on Main St. east of the post office is a good idea. Consider a three way stop rather than turning lanes. There should also be an alley way from the drive on Main st. just east of Mill Rd. behind the main st buildings to the new road; providing second floor access to plaza buildings and delivery truck access to Main St buildings.
- 5 - The site is commonly known as Durham or Mill Road Plaza or Shopping Center, not Mill Plaza as there has never been a mill on or adjacent to the site.
- 6 - Along College brook establish a lawn area for snow disposal, and and dryland catch basin for stormwater that could both used for park and recreational space for residents in fair weather.
- 7 - To be wheelchair, bicycle, and shopping cart friendly eliminate the use of curbs. Use bollards(in front of stores) or stone walls (in the center of medians) where vehicle barriers are necessary.
- 8 - Give large trees a decent 16 ft circle of topsoil. Don't plant trees under street lights. and don't plant shrubs that obscure visibility at intersections once they grow to maturity.

Kevin Shenefiel

Date: Sat, 27 Oct 2007 18:39:25 -0400 [10/27/2007 06:39:25 PM EDT]
From: Scott Hovey
To: plazacommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Cc: Todd Selig
Subject: Postcard mailing "Round 2"
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
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Plaza Committee,

How was this mailing paid . Was any taxpayer's money used?

Scott Hovey
41 Canney Road

Date: Fri, 26 Oct 2007 16:08:00 -0400 [10/26/2007 04:08:00 PM EDT]
From: Tom Merrick
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Puzzlement
Headers: Show All Headers

It is rather late to ask why the Town of Durham is so involved with the Mill Plaza. The community is certainly interested in having a convenient facility, but it seems the Town of Durham is officially pushing for a total revision of the property, much more so than the business owners.

Perhaps publishing some information about my puzzlement would be appropriate.

Thanks for Reading,

Tom Merrick

Date: Wed, 24 Oct 2007 08:44:42 -0400 [10/24/2007 08:44:42 AM EDT]
From: Richard W England
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: RKG report
Headers: Show All Headers

Dear David,

Thanks for letting me take a look at the very useful RKG report on plaza redevelopment options. Here are some thoughts and questions about the report:

1. How do the grocery and pharmacy square footages (25K and 12.5K) compare to the existing stores? Durham Marketplace clearly needs more space than the present store. RiteAid could probably stay the same. How does 12.5K square feet for the library compare with the existing storefront?

2. The RKG analysis pins a lot on a successful hotel anchor. Does this recommendation assume closure of the NEC and no other hotel developments? The table entitled "Mill Plaza Design Criteria" seems to assume 125 rooms. On page 3 of the letter, one hundred rooms are assumed. In either event, this would be a very large hotel in downtown Durham. Can UNH and the town generate so much patronage, especially when UNH is not in session? If a large hotel is viable, won't there be a substantial impact on downtown traffic (customers, employees, vendors)? How many stories would 100 rooms require? Would the zoning regs need to be amended?

3. RKG proposes eliminating a new town hall from the project. Table 3 estimates the construction cost for a new town hall and then asks whether the additional property taxes levied on the taxable portion of the project can pay off the bond required to finance a new town hall. But what assumption does this argument make about the disposal of the existing town hall site on Route 108? Can't the town enjoy a one-time infusion of cash from selling the 108 site to a private developer and then collect annual property taxes from the owner of a redeveloped site on 108?

4. I agree completely that student apts. will generate fewer tax dollars per square foot and make the office portion of the project less desirable to potential tenants. I agree completely that a growing population of affluent and aging residents should increase the demand for office space by lawyers, doctors, investment advisors, insurance agents, physical therapists, etc.

5. It is pure speculation to suggest that UNH would move its bookstore off campus. The University has to worry about the financial viability of the MUB. Why would they give up a rent-paying tenant on campus? If a hotel is part of the plaza redevelopment, the WSBE Dept. of Hospitality Management should be approached as a potential partner. Hospitality Management, for example, could provide undergraduate interns to the hotel, market research, etc.

6. The fiscal impact analysis in Table 2 is a bit confusing. The numbers seem to pertain to assessed building values per square foot for different uses. What about the impact of redevelopment on the assessed land value for the ten acres of the site? I assume that those values would increase as well. In calculating Net Tax, is RKG subtracting the existing town tax on both building and land values from the estimated assessed building values after redevelopment? If so, the estimated fiscal impacts of redevelopment are too low.

7. In Table 3, the incremental tax revenues from redevelopment over two decades are capitalized at six percent per year and then compared to the original construction costs. Isn't the municipal bond rate currently under 5 percent per year on twenty-year bonds? If so, the NPV estimate for incremental tax revenues is too low.

Hope this helps.

Richard England
Professor of Economics
UNH

Date: Mon, 22 Oct 2007 06:48:27 -0400 [10/22/2007 06:48:27 AM EDT]
From: Tom Sawyer
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Mill Plaza comments
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Perhaps it should be geared more toward the students and their pedestrian use, as the traffic congestion in downtown Durham seems an issue. To get around Durham all traffic primarily occurs only on two roads, Newmarket road and Main Street, with several bottlenecks. For us on the West of town it is the Railroad bridge by the field House as the only reasonable access to downtown. In the long run it would be nice to break this gridlock. I understand the University may be building a connector road behind the sports fields someday. This should help, although I hate to see college woods compromised, but there may be little choice. In fact I believe part of your plan for the plaza is to connect to "Mill Pond Road", this in itself should be a improvement even if nothing else is done.

-Tom Sawyer

Date: Fri, 19 Oct 2007 15:45:57 -0400 [10/19/2007 03:45:57 PM EDT]
From: Jerry Gottsacker
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Economic analysis
Headers: Show All Headers

Is a copy of the RKG economic analysis available on line? I couldn't find it on the website.

Thanks!

Jerry Gottsacker

Date: Fri, 05 Oct 2007 11:51:31 -0400 [10/05/2007 11:51:31 AM EDT]
From: Seth Fiermonti
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: I vote for the Durham Team!

Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)

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It looks like the best option here is the Durham Team's

I really like the community/plaza concept.

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2007 09:01:14 -0400 [09/17/2007 09:01:14 AM EDT]

From: Naomi Kornhauser

To: Michael Behrendt, Mill Plaza Committee <PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us>

Cc: Jim Campbell, Debra Hirsch Mayer, Dave Howland

Subject: Re: Mill Plaza Comments

Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)

Headers: Show All Headers

Good revision, good job!

Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2007 23:35:44 -0400 [09/16/2007 11:35:44 PM EDT]

From: Michael Behrendt

To: Mill Plaza Committee <PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us>

Cc: Jim Campbell, Debra Hirsch Mayer, Dave Howland

Subject: Mill Plaza Comments

Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)

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***I recommend that the committee endorse the scheme submitted by the local designers - Bill Schoonmaker, Walter Rous, Nick Isaak, and Robbie Woodburn subject to appropriate modifications and additional fine tuning. Call it the "Schoonmaker Plan" for simplicity.

I was speaking with Nick Isaak after the presentations last Saturday about architecture and urban design and Nick mentioned a teacher he had had who emphasized (to paraphrase) that "it is all about the space". That teacher was absolutely correct. In my professional opinion, the way to develop the proper space for this site is to create a proper street with proper buildings framing the street. We must transform this highly inappropriate suburban type shopping plaza and parking lot into a street rendered in the tradition of the fine downtown or village center streets that we see in wonderful towns across the country. Consider Portsmouth, Exeter, Kennebunkport, York, Ogunquit, Marblehead, Gloucester, Newburyport, Cape Cod, Nantucket, Newport, Charleston, Savannah, St. Augustine and countless others. These are the models that we should look to. Let us examine the fundamental design principles that make these places special. A great street has several characteristics:

- a) traffic is two way
- b) there is one traffic lane in each direction
- c) there is on street parallel (or sometimes diagonal) parking on each side; if parking is perpendicular to the street then the street takes
on the feeling of a parking lot and repels pedestrians
- d) there are wide sidewalks, generally placed right up to retail buildings

- e) buildings are at least two stories to create a sense of enclosure
- f) buildings are fairly simple in form and are placed parallel to the street
- f) retail is situated on the first floor with offices and/or residences on the upper floors
- g) in appropriate, limited places, buildings may be set back further to create a plaza effect
- h) there are some other fine spaces (such as plazas, footpaths, and riverwalks) linked to the main street
- i) parking lots do not front the street as that creates unattractive, dead space along the corridor
- j) of course, more is needed to create a great street - outstanding architecture, engaging shops and other draws, interesting characters, attractive landscaping and other unexpected magic but for now let us simply strive for an attractive, well ordered, pedestrian oriented thoroughfare

We disregard these principles at our peril. If we depart from them we should only do so with careful consideration and for very good reasons. Unfortunately, in my opinion, the designs submitted by the two architectural firms violate the principles of urban design and therefore fail to address the needs for this site. Only the Schoonmaker Plan proposes a real street. As a city planner with significant experience in critiquing urban design ("urban" refers to city, town, village, or neighborhood; call it "downtown design" or "civic design" if you prefer) I urge the committee to simply eliminate these other plans and focus on the Schoonmaker Plan.

We must ask: What will the quality of the space be like? How will this feel for a pedestrian walking through it? Will it be beautiful, interesting, and delightful? If parking is prominent in the plan then we have failed. There are four effective ways to handle parking in a downtown setting: with on street parking, in rear lots screened from the main street, in satellite lots on secondary/less important streets, and in parking garages (provided the garages are lined with real retail where they front a main street).

This is the order that I would rate the four schemes (in descending order of quality):

1) Schoonmaker Plan. The centerpiece of the plan is a good street and therefore this is the plan that we should work from. I welcome the opportunity to study it in detail and offer more suggestions prior to the next iteration.

2) JSA Plan - Scheme 1. There are some interesting elements here: the Civic Building and the retail building adjacent to it, the relocation of the Grange, the brick walkway, the space created in between the two yellow mixed use buildings which sit opposite each other, the tower element, and the green space along Mill Road. However, overall the design does not work. The main roadway is pushed to the edge and separated from the pedestrian passages creating an outside pedestrian mall of sorts. Pedestrian malls fail in most downtown situations; it is not an approach that we need risk here. The segregated roadway, pushed to the side with high design speed curves would likely become a speedway for traffic. The pedestrian circulation is confused; presumably the tan, red, and gray areas are pedestrian oriented. What is the relationship of each to the other? The parking lot at the right is too prominent and inadequately screened. The rectangular building at the right had the potential to terminate the vista nicely along the brick path so why does it fail to offer any delight for people walking along the path? Mainly, though, there is not a real street here so the plan should not be pursued further.

3) JSA Plan - Scheme 2. The plan shows two buildings serving as a gateway at Mill Road. This is a nice element and it is worth thinking about this in the context of the Schoonmaker Plan. They might be a little too formal for Mill Road but on the other hand, they echo the formal and excellent UNH buildings on the opposite side. But then what are they a gateway to? A traffic artery with the entire left side framed by parking! The disposition of the Town Hall and Library does not work. What and where is the space being created? The buildings are confused - which is the front and which is the side and which is the rear? When you see a square building be wary! That

likely signifies that it is an object in space rather than a building framing space (violating the wise professor's counsel). The townhouse type buildings on the bottom of the plan are highly inappropriate. If these are to be commercial we would end up with small, touristy type shops which would likely draw few customers. And why are there jogs in the buildings? Traditional rowhouses never incorporated jogs like these because most traditional rowhouses have a simple dignity. It is only in suburban type townhouses that are poorly designed that we think we need to add these superfluous jogs to add interest. This is certainly inappropriate in a downtown.

4) Lavallee Brensinger Plan. The plan has three components none of which function properly. There is a suburban style townhouse pod with "garage unders". This typology is completely inappropriate in a town center let alone in such an important redevelopment site. The area shown in purple is a little more interesting but like the Town Hall and Library in Scheme 2 it is confusing in terms of front, side, and rear; i.e. it fails to create a distinct space. Finally, there are two big boxes surrounded by parking. This is what we have now!

P.S. In that same conversation with Nick Isaak, he referred to some particular buildings and spaces in Sienna, Bologna, and Milan. A person who uses such places as his touchstones for design is somebody that we should all listen to.

Michael Behrendt
Durham

Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2007 11:08:15 -0400 [09/12/2007 11:08:15 AM EDT]
From: "Weathers, Chad D."
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Cc: "Choquette, Paul III"
Subject: Comments From the 9-8-07 Community Presentation
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
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To all who made this happen I applaud your efforts. It was apparent that all those involved have invested a considerable amount of time and effort. Great Job to all!

As the teams were being bombarded with questions and comments Saturday I decided to follow up after the fact.

1. I enjoyed the Schoonmaker design, including all the angles. I thought their design did a great job of "hiding" the two story face of the parking garage. This also allows direct access to those businesses attached to the garage.
2. Giving direct access from the parking garage to City Hall and the Library should be a consideration, a consideration that some of the designs incorporated. There are many movements to re-incorporate town libraries into the "fold" of the community and in order to do this I think it needs to be as convenient as possible.
3. Will there be a bus stop incorporated? Currently there is one located across Mill Rd and in front of the dorms on Main Street. In keeping with the project objectives and to limit the amount of foot traffic that needs to cross main arteries of the campus, I think a bus stop should be incorporated into the design.

4. At first I thought LBPA's design was "simple" but I actually liked the entire commercial area being elevated above the parking garage. I thought it would bring people from Main Street more than the other designs, giving it that "market feel" and depth. From a maintenance standpoint it may be nice to have as much covered parking possible.
5. Delivery traffic. The Schoonmaker design required that tractor trailer trucks swing through the parking area and then back through the parking area to the loading dock. That may create an unsafe condition, especially where the backup lane would be impacting almost ½ of the most convenient parking to the Market Place. Can the loading dock be relocated to the Main Street side of the Durham Market Place in this design? Safety during delivery times should be a consideration on what now becomes a tight site.
6. Paying for the parking garage. Currently the Mill Plaza employs someone to monitor parking. A portion of the garage could be used for paid parking, yearly pass, card access, daily fee, etc? There are so many options when it comes to recovering / offsetting the cost of the garage. In a location where parking is at a premium, charging for UNH commuter parking is a no-brainer.
7. Protecting college brook. Would love to see a small trail/park setting made available to all along College Brook. It could easily be connected to the setting created behind the MUB and act as a natural barrier for the neighborhood.

As far as the parking garage is concerned I think a blend between the covered parking in the LBPA scheme and the masked 2-story face of the Schoonmaker design would be an excellent choice. In addition, I think the group may want to consider removing the building that currently houses Hair Excitement, Poly's Pockets, etc. This would help "open" this space and draw people from Main Street.

Before finalizing the location and type of "housing" units, careful consideration needs to be given to who will be allowed to occupy these units. It sounds like the community has some strong opinions about "who" should be allowed to occupy those units and the "who" will then dictate where they should be located on the site.

I would be willing to expand upon any of these recommendations if further clarification is needed.

Thanks again and great job to all those involved.

Chad Dax Weathers
Gilbane
Northern New England

Date: Sat, 8 Sep 2007 19:50:50 -0400 [09/08/2007 07:50:50 PM EDT]
From: Renee Vannata
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Initial Concepts for Redevelopment of Mill Plaza
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Hello Mill Plaza committee -

I attended the public meeting this afternoon. Thank You for asking for further comments and questions via email. I have a couple of questions milling around and I just have to throw them out there...

a.. What is the true likelihood of acquiring access to Main Street by the Red Tower? Has the owner been approached and would consider this type of transaction?

b.. What is the likelihood that the Grange could be moved and or renovated? Would destruction be a more apt solution?

c.. Would/could/should the current owners of the large "rental" properties on Main Street request for a change-of-use and also put in commercial/retail outlets? What about the existing retail properties (Hair Excitement, Pauly's Pockets, Village Pizza, etc) ... would/should they consider moving to the new site and allowing these properties to become student housing properties?

d.. In one of the schemes presented, there was a clump of student housing down to the bottom right of the property? Could this also be a possible location for a daycare/playground if a business owner was interested (similar to the non-profit concept of Portsmouth Community Campus)? What would this mean economically?

e.. If the town offices and library were not included in the design (lets assume that this could be due to economic constraints) how would the design concepts change? Increase retail? Increase residential? More green less concrete?

f.. UNH and the town now have a biking corridor from one side of Main Street to the other. Why wasn't this extended to the Mill Plaza? Should it be?

g.. None of the 3 teams really discussed traffic, since this was the initial concept phase, but I have to wonder ... Would the 2 access points (one on Mill Rd and one on Main St) have a traffic light, blinking light, stop signs, or just directional signage?

Some general comments:

a.. I think everyone did a terrific job. I applaud all persons involved.

b.. I loved the concept of walking right into the community meeting room in the town hall/library from a Main Street access. This makes this building a community center which will be utilized decades from now.

c.. The brick corridor that is an extension of the paved corridor from UNH is an EXCELLENT concept.

d.. The community gathering section denoted with a different type of pavement is also an EXCELLENT concept. I could see all types of community gatherings there.

Thank You,

Renee Capicchioni Vannata

Durham

Date: Thu, 6 Sep 2007 21:36:08 -0400 [09/06/2007 09:36:08 PM EDT]

From: Sylvia Weber Russell

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: question/suggestion

Headers: Show All Headers

Hello,

Re the Mill Plaza renovation: Will/can an aesthetically pleasing fountain, with flowers and benches, be included in the plan?

It would be a refreshing spot in the summer and perhaps a place to make new acquaintances of fellow residents taking a break.

Thanks for the opportunity for community suggestions.

Sylvia Weber Russell

Date: Mon, 3 Sep 2007 12:54:24 -0400 [09/03/2007 12:54:24 PM EDT]
From: Maggie Moore
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: view plans

Hello Dave,

Is there a way to view and respond to the current designs if I can't make Saturday's meeting?

Thanks,

Maggie Moore
Durham

Date: Fri, 03 Aug 2007 20:44:54 -0400 [08/03/2007 08:44:54 PM EDT]
From: Darien Lauten
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Owner of plaza
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Dear committee members,

A good while back, a similar committee made plans for the Mill Road plaza. However, the owner of the buildings saw no reason to make the suggested changes. The whole idea culminated in useless spinning of wheels. Has the owner of the buildings been approached and is he amenable to making changes that will cost him money? Are you spending someone else's money who has no intention of spending the money?

Sincerely yours,
Darien Lauten
Durham

Date: Fri, 27 Jul 2007 15:38:17 -0700 [07/27/2007 06:38:17 PM EDT]
From: Jane & Leo Cauchon
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Town Plaza
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)

Headers: [Show All Headers](#)

Redoing the Plaza is a great idea but please keep the Durham Market Place (DUMP) as the draw there, it is the best store in Durham.

The Cauchon's
Ambler Way

Date: Thu, 26 Jul 2007 18:31:39 -0400 [07/26/2007 06:31:39 PM EDT]
From: Janice Sanborn
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: paving of parking areas in new plaza
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

During the rebroadcast of one of the public meetings concerning re-development of the Mill Road Plaza, concerns were raised about parking lot run-off into College Brook. It brought to mind the work that Tom Ballestero of the UNH Civil Engineering Department is doing with permeable pavement/asphalt. It is a newly developed product and is intended to mitigate pollutants in runoff. Such a product might be useful for the Plaza project.

I would suggest contacting Tom and his colleagues at UNH for more information about this as well as the possibility of its use at the Plaza and also at the project's website: www.unh.edu/erg/cstev. There is an extensive experimental project using this type of pavement, as well as other mitigation methods, at UNH's West Edge parking. Tapping this resource could be very useful for the Mill Plaza project.

Jan Sanborn

Date: Wed, 25 Jul 2007 16:06:39 -0400 [07/25/2007 04:06:39 PM EDT]
From: Maggie Moore
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: publicity
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

Hi David,

Just a quick note to say that Joe and I talked to two couples over for dinner last Sunday about the Mill Plaza plans, and they wanted to know how all of this was being publicized because they didn't know anything about it. I know people in the audience last Wednesday spoke also of other publicity venues, but I forget what those were. Do you have some in mind?

Also, the suggestion from the audience to include the question: "what don't you find in Durham" on the survey is a good one because sometimes what isn't there comes more quickly to mind. I know when I'm making a choice,

thinking about what I don't like or want helps me come around to what I do.

Great work!

Maggie Moore

Date: Mon, 23 Jul 2007 16:21:17 -0400 [07/23/2007 04:21:17 PM EDT]

From: Lucha Burns

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: Ideas from a resident

Headers: Show All Headers

Thanks for a great meeting on Wednesday.

Some ideas for consideration.

To: The American Institute for Architects NH, Dave Howland, Deborah

Hirsch Mayer and Tom Newkirk

Re: Resident input for "A New Hampshire Model Community"

From: Carol and John Burns, 39 Mill Pond Rd

Dated: July 15, 2007

SUCCESSFUL COMPARISON FOR IDEAS

Towns compared include:

Durham, NH CDP 2000 census	9,024 pop
Littleton, NH CDP 2000 census	4,431 pop
Hanover, NH CDP 2000 Census	8,162 pop
Port Jefferson, NY 2000 Census	7,837 pop

VISION

DEVELOP BUILDINGS TO SERVE AS A CATALYST FOR GROWTH AND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

I. A LIBRARY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AN INCOME PRODUCING "CIVIC CENTER" THAT INCLUDES INCOME PRODUCING CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, LECTURES AND PERFORMANCES FROM VISITING ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS. (This type of space is also listed below under Crafts and Arts Center)

Due to the proximity of UNH (and its wealth of research books on various areas of scholarship) the enlarged town library can focus on books and programs related to areas of interest that reflect the various ages of the taxpaying Durham population.

The ideal model of a library for a town the size of Durham is in Port Jefferson, NY. Their library is in partnership with "the village Center" which offers a variety of programs, short classes and workshops at a low cost to residents and a higher cost to non residents

The Port Jefferson library is a two-story building that is slightly larger than 22,500 square feet, a size, which allows simultaneous activities in various spaces for different ages groups.

Further information may be found online but a look at the Summer Reading Program for Young Adults Ages 12-17 shows an extremely varied program that includes the following topics: a Teen Literature Magazine, Guitar Hero on the Big Screen, Art projects the include Latin names for your new plants, Tales for Tots community service program, Macramé workshops, Character Development workshops, Board Game Bonanza, Improv@the Library, Scene It! Fridays, Movie Mondays, Dumroo Drum, Harry Potter Party, fused Glass Workshop, Auditioning Workshop, "Crochet-Warm Up America, How to be a DJ, Crochet a Cell Phone Pouch, Battle of the Bands, Fused Glass Workshop, Friday Fright Night Lock-in (with Parent's Permission)

And this is just the teen program. Check online for the Adult and children's programs.

II. A BOOK STORE (NOT TEXTBOOK OR COLLEGE ORIENTED) THAT INCLUDES AN EDUCATIONAL TOY SECTION, CD SECTION,, A CRAFT STUDIES AREA (WHICH MAY INCLUDE THE NEWEST CRAZE A COFFEE SHOP WITH A KNITTERS HELP AREA).

The Village Book Store in Littleton, NH (a town smaller than Durham) is one of the most exciting bookstores stores north of Boston. The building has an upper level on the Main Street that focuses on books, CDS, and artwork for those over the age of 16. The lower level (which may be reached from inside the store by stairs or from the outside by a separate entrance on the lower level) is well stocked with books, games, puzzles etc. for those under age 16. This remarkable store also houses the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen gallery.

The presence of this store (only 30 years old) served as the major catalyst for the various improvements to Littleton. a town of 4,431.

III. A UNIQUE AND FAMILY AFFORDABLE RESTAURANT CENTER THAT OFFERS INTERNATIONAL FOODS WITH ADDITIONAL ROOMS FOR COOKING CLASSES AND VARIOUS FUNCTIONS.

Jasmine, a NYC restaurant, has been opening successful venues from Maryland to New Jersey and Long Island that are offshoots of their NY Asian based restaurant. These restaurants serve Chinese, Japanese (including Sushi), Indian, Thai and Continental food in a delicious, reasonably priced and casual setting. This style restaurant center can be expanded by providing rental space for more ethnic groups to share their cuisine.

Picture a large food court for informal affordable International meals. The building would contain small to large function rooms (rented out for additional income to the town) for special parties, concerts, film showings and intimate theatrical events. The food court spaces would be rented to Internationally themed restaurants that had take-out as well as "eating in." This would allow the Lebanese cuisine that is served on Fridays from a Citgo station in Somersworth a permanent home. The town??? Or developer???? would own the "Restaurant Center" and space would be rented for additional income. The town (based on the needs of the taxpaying residents) would also establish hours of operation.

To add vitality to any town the services in the central area should be income producing, not close until 9:00PM at the earliest, and be a place everyone can enjoy. If the Senior citizens want to eat away from

children and teens they can go to one of the "special rooms." If a parent wanted a birthday party they could rent a private room.

IV. CRAFT AND ARTS BUILDING

Senior Citizens and others have a desire for short (5 week) classes on a variety of topics i.e. stained glass, language for travelers, lampshade making, various poker games, ballroom dancing, or various one day workshops that are often offered at High Schools in cities such as Portsmouth.

V. MOVIE AND PERFORMING ARTS THEATRE THAT SEATS 180

A space for films prior to 1980 or "art films" that may currently be seen in The Music Hall in Portsmouth. The same film would not be the only film shown that week but offer a daily variety, perhaps on a topical or festival basis. Film hours would be more in line with those at The Fox Run Mall with a start time at 11am.

VI. A KNITTING AND FABRIC STORE

SUGGESTIONS

if a current town building exists on a plot of land that is large enough for an addition then that building should **not** be a priority for the centerpiece of the town.

Apartments or Condos in the new spaces should focus on Senior Citizens who are the age group who most need the convenience of shopping downtown and walking as many will be losing or will have lost their ability to drive.

Thanks

Carol and John Burns

Date: Mon, 23 Jul 2007

From: Lucha Burns

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: Wonderful meeting

Headers: Show All Headers

It was a great and confidence building meeting at the MUB last Wednesday.

The thought that Durham can be as exciting a place to live as Hanover is exciting.

Congratulations.

Can't wait to see the prospective drawings.

Carol and John burns

Date: Fri, 20 Jul 2007

From: Maggie Moore

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: kudos
Headers: Show All Headers

Hi Dave and all on the committee,

I want to tell you how wonderful I think the presentation was on Thursday evening and how excited I am about this project!! Congratulations.

Maggie Moore

Date: Wed, 18 Jul 2007
From: Mike & Maura Slavin
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Mill Plaza Study
Headers: Show All Headers

Hello!

Sorry we couldn't make the meetings this week. We have house guests from out of state all week.

We live in the Faculty Road neighborhood (10 Burnham), and have four children ages 7 - 15. They use path through the woods between Faculty Road and Mill Plaza often (to go to and from school, the library, Zyla's, Brooks, and even the Marketplace on errands for me occassionally!).

My main concern are that the path remain safe for my children to walk to the stores at the Mill Plaza and to the Middle and High school (which includes the path that cuts between the two Mill Plaza buildings up to Main Street).

The main reason we bought in the Faculty Road neighborhood was that many places are walkable, especially for our children. All the talk of interesting new places of business sound like fun and would be wonderful; but not at the cost of losing places (due to higher leases??) that are practical. The places we're most interested in are the library (it doesn't HAVE to be in the Plaza, but walkable from town would REALLY help!), Brooks (Rite Aid), and the Marketplace. We also love having Zyla's and China Buffet a short walk away.

Thank you, and hope the meetings this week were productive!
Maura Slavin

Date: Sat, 14 Jul 2007
From: Janice Sanborn
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Plans for improving the Mill Road Plaza
Part(s): Download All Attachments (in .zip file)
Headers: Show All Headers

To the Mill Road Plaza Committee:

As I listen to and read of plans for improving the Mill Road Plaza here in Durham, my biggest concern by far is that, once again, there will be a call to open a roadway from Mill Road to Mill Pond Road via Chesley Drive. That idea has surfaced and been discarded several times in the past for good reasons...reasons that are still valid today.

Having a roadway through the Plaza creates several very undesirable/dangerous traffic situations:

- entering that roadway from the parking areas within the Plaza would become hazardous,
- the intersection at Mill Road would become even worse than it is now (it is already dicey to make a left turn out of the Plaza especially any time after 3:00 p.m.),
- the intersection of Mill Pond Road and Chesley Drive would become very dangerous due to the short sight-line from Chesley to the "bend" in Mill Pond adjacent to the Amell property.

Also, it is very likely that such a roadway would become a "Faculty Road East" where traffic from/to, 108 north/south uses it as a cut-over to get into town (and to the UNH campus) without having to travel through Town Hall Corner and around the center of town via Pettee Brook Lane, etc. Such traffic would be inclined to exceed any speed limits required in the Plaza, thus compounding the dangers.

Assuming level heads and sound reasoning will prevail and any notions that the Plaza needs a through roadway will be scrapped, I would request that a traffic light be installed at the Plaza's intersection with Mill Road. As I have already mentioned, a left turn out of the Plaza at certain times of the day is a dangerous maneuver.

Jan Sanborn

Date: Wed, 27 Jun 2007
From: John Carroll
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Ecology/Conservation Focus Group
Headers: Show All Headers

TO: Mill Plaza Ecology/Conservation Focus Group
FROM: John E. Carroll, Professor of Environmental Conservation, UNH

SUBJECT: Taking College Brook Flooding More Seriously

The Mill Plaza Ecology/Conservation Focus Group, in addition to looking at broader ecological concerns, should take up the question of coping with anticipated regular flooding of College Brook, and how to alleviate this problem ecologically through the absorption capacity of the buffer.

The recent flooding history of College Brook, and circumstances surrounding similar flooding of small brooks and streams across the Northeast, possibly a result of climate change, suggests that we must revise our thinking about so-called "one hundred year

floods" and "one hundred year weather events".

This suggests to me the need for a widening and broadening of any College Brook buffer and maintenance of a heavy and absorptive vegetative cover (including possibly of invasive species which perhaps should be viewed as a natural resource, as ecological capital performing a service).

Date: Thu, 31 May 2007 09:52:15 -0400 [09:52:15 AM EDT]

From: Robin Mower

To: Dave Howland, Julian Smith Subject: UNH Co-op Extension publication: Landscaping at Water's Edge

Would this publication be of interest to the AIA / Committee / landscape architects regarding the Mill Plaza?

Regards,

Robin Mower

<http://extension.unh.edu/PubsIPubs.htm>

Landscaping at the Water's Edge: An Ecological Approach

A Manual for NH Landowners and Landscapers Now Available

No matter where you live in New Hampshire, the actions you take in your landscape can have far reaching effects on water quality. Why? Because we are all connected to the water cycle and we all live in a watershed, the land area that drains into a surface water body such as a lake, river, or wetland.

'Landscaping at the Water's Edge: An Ecological Approach² is a new publication for New Hampshire landowners and landscapers that will explain how our landscaping choices impact surface and ground waters and demonstrates how, with simple observations, ecologically-based design and low impact maintenance practices, you can protect, and even improve, the quality of our water resources.

Authors are UNH Cooperative Extension specialists and educators with expertise in horticulture, water resources, turf grass, entomology, planting and maintaining landscapes and home lawn care. These educators partnered with a sustainable and ecological designer and other experts united to provide information and expertise to help landscapers and property owners living along New Hampshire's lakes, ponds, rivers and streams make decisions about landscape design and maintenance that will reduce pollution and environmental degradation.

'Landscaping at the Water's Edge: An Ecological Approach² is a fully illustrated book. Photos and sketches on almost every page provide clear examples of the concepts presented. The appendices carry extensive information pertinent to state regulations, along with recommended plant lists and other resources.

Cost is \$20.

From: Todd Campbell

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durharn.nh.us

Subject: Site Walk - Todd Campbell, 9 Faculty

E.B. CAPITAL Stationery

Hi Dave,

It was a pleasure meeting you last night at the site walk.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to attend the Gregg Hall meeting.

However, I want to share some of my feelings on the subject given my home is possibly the most visually affected on our street (we have very little tree "protection" between our property, the condo and the asphalt jungle).

My concerns:

a .. The stress on Mill Pond and Faculty Road continues to rise every year alongside growth in the University population.

b .. The light and noise pollution from the Plaza is high to residents of Faculty Road.

c .. Living wage housing doesn't exist in our town for UNH faculty/staff families.

d .. Fixed income residents of our neighborhood may find a smaller pool of available boarders to help supplement the costs of living in our neighborhood.

The project is a bold one! Reinvigorating the downtown area and increasing comm'l development could reduce the rate of increase in our property taxes and boost property values.

Faculty Road is not a safe road for those of us with children. As the university population has risen, so has the cut-through traffic on our road from those coming from 108 and wishing to avoid downtown. Despite the stop sign at the end of the path on Faculty, cars regularly speed down the road past our house. Unfortunately, many cars view this stop sign as a 'suggestion' rather than a requirement (I often joke we could reduce our property taxes by half if we just permanently stationed a cruiser there to nab those failing to stop). As those of you on Chesley know, and have successfully lobbied, the rise in traffic on your road can be very stressful to parents with kids - especially when they wish to play out front or in the driveway. (There is a part of me that wants a couple speed bumps installed by the stop signs but that is a thought for another day).

I fear any lights up by the grange would specifically increase traffic on our "cut-through" road- especially during the high traffic hours during the school year. This is a very important concern as Mill to Faculty to Mill Pond to 108 is the only other alternative way to 108 from downtown. If the traffic increased as a result, it would further stress our neighborhood and put our kids at risk. I do understand the need to expand entrances/exits and would favor expanding the entrance on Mill Pond road and then an exit onto Main Street from the Grange (right turn only).

The plaza is quite a source of night-time light to those of us on Faculty especially during winter. The current location of loading docks is perfect for Faculty Road residents. I spent a decade in retail grocery in various over 25k sq. ft stores and I guarantee you the trucks (and timing of those deliveries) gets more frequent and later in the evening with every expansion. Loading docks are a fact of life for large stores - however, loading doors would be better on the Faculty neighborhood side (assuming we installed a TALL set of evergreens in between). The other option would be to locate office buildings on the neighborhood side of the land -which would eliminate the back doors.

While there are a lot of apartment options in town (and growing residence facilities on campus) there are few choices for "living wage" or affordable housing. This forces a lot of individuals and couples who work on campus, and would do a considerable amount of spending in downtown, to locate in Newmarket and Dover. Frankly, the property tax burden alongside housing costs means most earning living wages wouldn't be able to afford living in town and supporting our community business folks. I recommend the focus for residential to be on condo's geared toward UNH employees, etc - and less focused on serving the college students. I think this would add a lot of vibrancy to our community.

Finally, we can't forget that a great number of fixed income residents in our community are able to keep their homes here because of the ability to provide boarding options for college students. Given the housing cost crisis in the community, we need to remember many of the long time and those middle class residents, often are able to keep their homes and live in our community because of the ability to provide boarders with safe accessible living options. We should not seek to enrich large property managers at the expense of individual members of our community.

Thanks again for your time and for your effort.

Sincerely

Todd. Alix, Geoff & Emerson Campbell

From: Scott Hovey

Sent: Monday, April 09, 2007 11:05 AM

To: plazacommittee@ci.nh.org

Cc: Todd Selig

Subject: Mill Plaza Vision Statement

You have encouraged comments:

I believe the whole Plaza project is a farce. I do not like using taxpayer's money on private property.

The vision statement is full of flowers and sunshine. Let those who want it pay for it.

The Friday Updates state that there is consensus. I ask by whom? UNH is mentioned a number of times, is UNH going to participate in the cost of any development?

I believe that the town should be looking at ways of saving money rather than spending money on a gamble! Having the highest tax rate in the state is bad enough without adding more debt to the town, which this project would do.

In my opinion the entire concept is ill conceived.

Scott Hovey

To Dave Howland and members of the Mill Plaza Study Committee,
(I tried to send this to the PlazaCommittee email address but it did not go through.)

I attended the March meeting of the committee. I am the City Planner in Rochester and have a strong interest in this project. I also have a fair amount of professional background in urban design.

I would like to recommend some modifications to the Draft Vision Statement. Please see the attached document.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Behrendt, AICP

Recommendations for Modifications to the Draft Vision Statement for Mill Plaza

1. "Process. Results from a substantive conversation with Durham residents and other stakeholders, taking their concerns to heart. The committee intends to engage the property owner in the process and to develop a plan which will be profitable and worthwhile for the owner to pursue in partnership with the town. We seek to work effectively through the design, financial, legal, and other significant complexities of the project in order that it may be brought to fruition in a timely manner."

2. "Community destination. Provides an indoor and outdoor destination where people linger to meet and talk with their friends and neighbors, shop, and enjoy all of the seasons."

3. "Uses. Provides an expanded grocery store, a variety of other attractive shops, offices, and housing opportunities for families and individuals, including students, faculty, and staff from UNH."

4. "Linkages. Links visually and spatially with Main Street, Mill Road, and the UNH campus, in order to encourage active pedestrian connections among the downtown, campus, and adjoining neighborhoods."

5. "Access. Strikes a balance among automobile, bicycle, transit, and pedestrian access into and through the site in order to ensure the viability of businesses on the property, protect the integrity of the adjacent Faculty Road neighborhood, and integrate the site into the local street network effectively."

6. "Quality of design. Stands out as a uniquely attractive design that embraces the principles of sustainability and complements its surroundings. We hope to establish an outstanding sense of space, akin to "an outdoor room", which would be defined and framed by high quality architecture."

Draft One 8/1/07 Criteria for Design Teams of the Durham/ AIAI 50 Community Partnership A Blueprint for 53 America initiative & part of the 150th anniversary of the American Institute of Architects

7. "College Brook. Restores, protects, and enhances College Brook to benefit the ecology, add natural beauty to the property, and strengthen the buffer between the downtown and the bordering neighborhood. We seek to also make the brook an amenity to the development possibly through the creation of a river walk."

8. "Civic buildings. Includes space for a new permanent town library and, possibly, a town hall."

9. "Fiscal enhancement. Enlarges the town's tax base through more intensive use of the property and enhancement of value."

10. "Parking. Provides public parking" possibly a garage - for short term parking for visitors and shoppers to the downtown. Any surface parking lots should be located and shielded so as not to impair the pedestrian character."

Date: Wed, 4 Apr 2007 16:49:02 -0400 [04/04/2007 04:49:02 PM EDT]

From: David Burdick

To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

Subject: coment for meeting 4/4/07

Mill Plaza Study Committee

April 4, 2007

Dear Committee,

I am thrilled to hear from your press release that the redevelopment of Mill Plaza will follow from an open dialogue and planning sessions. Involving all stakeholders and experts from many disciplines will help provide input for a 21st century space to serve the Durham Community. I have over 20 years of experience in wetland and coastal ecology and teach Wetlands Ecology and Management, Freshwater Resources, and Wetlands Restoration and Mitigation at the UNH

Durham campus.

As the main drainage through the center of campus and then Mill Plaza, College Brook has suffered a long history of abuse. While impervious surfaces in the upper watershed of the Brook increase with Campus expansion, water flow through the Brook will increase and become more variable. Unfortunately, efforts to preserve and expand the functions of the Brook to support the Durham Community have historically fallen to uncaring choices that serve expediency and short term gains. The drainage ditch created for the Brook as it travels alongside of the Plaza is choked with invasive plants and trash. It looks more like an open sewer rather than a watercourse. There appears to be no healthy floodplain and most of the buffer is paved. Here is a great opportunity to design with nature to benefit both the Brook and the Durham Community. For example, surface runoff and storm drains that rapidly shunt water into the Brook will increase variability. Designs that force runoff water from impervious surfaces into the ground water will make stream flow more consistent.

Any plan for the Plaza that does not recognize the important functions of the Brook and incorporate them into a thoughtful redesign of the 9 acre property will fail to gain acceptance from the local community as well as the regulatory community. Best wishes for your work to achieve an aesthetic and functional design that Durham can be proud of!

Sincerely,

David M. Burdick
Department of Natural Resources

Date: Tue, 3 Apr 2007 16:50:23 -0400 [04/03/2007 04:50:23 PM EDT]
From: Water Rat
To: Robin Mower "Roseen, Robert"
Cc: Nancy Lambert, Dave Howland

Subject: Re: Public hearing April 4 / Durham Mill Plaza redevelopment
You might also consider some stream restoration for College Brook there.

Date: Tue, 3 Apr 2007 05:00:35 EDT [04/03/2007 05:00:35 AM EDT]
From: Doherty
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Don't forget ...

Don't forget that you have elderly people living right next to the parking lot. Don't do anything to block their light or to impede their movement to the grocery store.

Date: Sun, 1 Apr 2007 22:38:43 +0200 [04/01/2007 04:38:43 PM EDT]
From: Nancy Lambert

Dear Plaza Committee Members,

T

Thank you for volunteering your time to consider improvements to Durham's Mill Plaza. We support the efforts to improve the plaza and the downtown Durham commercial area. We make it a priority to support local merchants and would be happy to see greater commercial opportunities in Durham's downtown.

We hope, however, that in your deliberations you will put a high priority on maintaining and even enhancing the current green space adjacent to College Brook. This green space is an important buffer between the residential Faculty neighborhood and the commercial district. Also, it serves critical ecological functions in protecting the water quality of College Brook, which has already been severely degraded by development.

T

The impaired water quality in College Brook has been of concern to the NH Department of Environmental Services and others interested in protecting the water quality of Great Bay. We believe you will find that the publication entitled *Buffers for Wetlands and Surface Waters: A Guidebook for NH Municipalities* very helpful in your considerations regarding the protection of College Brook. This publication is available at

<http://extension.unh.edu/CommDev/Buffers.pdf> or by calling Sharon Hughes at UNH Cooperative Extension at (603)862-1029.

It provides very specific and helpful information about the ecological functions that are provided by different buffer sizes along surface waters. The guidebook recommends, as a minimum, a 100 foot buffer to provide a minimal level of water quality protection (p. 23). Of course larger buffers are more effective at removing greater amounts of pollution. In addition, buffers provide other important functions including hydrological stabilization, protection of wildlife and aquatic habitat and aesthetic enhancement.

While your options may be limited in protecting the northern side of College Brook, where the plaza parking lot is, we particularly hope that you recognize the value of protecting the current green space on the southern side of College Brook, opposite from the plaza. Development of this green space would compromise the current buffer and the significant water quality protection it offers College Brook. This green space also provides wildlife habitat and is used by our local deer population, among other species. Frankly, as residents of Faculty Road, development of this space would greatly impact us personally and significantly diminish the quality of the neighborhood for us by destroying the current visual buffer between the Faculty neighborhood and the commercial district. Likewise, light and noise impacts on the Faculty neighborhood from the shopping center would increase significantly.

To further protect the buffer between the residential and commercial areas

of Durham, we also hope that you recommend against creating an entrance to the plaza through Chesley Drive. Again, this would greatly diminish the quality of the neighborhoods adjacent to the plaza. As Faculty Road residents, we may benefit from decreased traffic, but we don't feel that this benefit would in any way make up for the damage to the residential buffer around the plaza that a Chesley Drive entrance would create. This access would also greatly increase the risk of development of the greenway south of College Brook.

Unfortunately, we are unable to attend your public meeting because we are . away on sabbatical and will not be back in Durham until August. We trust, however, that you will make considerable efforts to protect College Brook and the Faculty and Chesley neighborhoods from negative impacts of any proposed redevelopment. We wish you well in your deliberations and hope that an exciting, more appealing new plaza that more efficiently uses space will result.

Sincerely,
Nancy Lambert & Martin Lee
Durham

Date: Sat, 31 Mar 2007 16:50:03 -0400 [03/31/2007 04:50:03 PM EDT]
From: Dots and Clint Batson
To: PlazaCommittee@ci.durham.nh.us
Subject: Mill Plaza

We would most like to see a new library. We also would enjoy a Mexican restaurant. All ages could enjoy both of those facilities. Thank you from 35 year residents of Durham.