

10 February 2016  
To the Durham Planning Board:

Below are some of my questions with respect to Colonial Durham's Mill Plaza plan.

1. Now that we have added "X" hundred new student beds do we know the occupancy/vacancy rates of current supply?
  2. Do we know if there is satisfaction with these housing units with respect to location, size, maintenance, transportation and cost?
  3. Is there really a market for more beds, or will there be an oversupply and therefore vacancies?
  4. Who provides the documentation for this?
  5. What happens to the tax rate when we're asked to lower the assessment because of loss of income?
6. Could we instead consider housing for some of our older citizens who would appreciate being close to stores and professional businesses? This is an increasing segment of the population, and one that is likely to grow in the future. This housing might not bring in the same high rental income, but it might be more reliable.
7. We need a vibrant business district. We need businesses that serve a complex community of students AND townspeople. Townspeople depend on the grocery store, the primary business in the present plaza. They trade at the pharmacy, dry cleaners and banks. Having medical and dental facilities close by as well as other professional services would bring in residents from the outlying areas of Durham. Will these kinds of businesses be included?
8. The current Mill Plaza contains the potentially lovely natural area associated with College Brook which has been neglected and disrespected. What guarantee do we have of care and follow through in the current plan?
9. Will it be enough?
10. Who decides the standards and whether or not they are met?
11. Is this a case of past town oversight on our part?
12. "Who speaks for the trees?" [Lorax ] Snow piles bend the trees and shrubs; salt, debris and runoff clog and contaminate the brook. What was designed to serve as a buffer and possible place of rest and retreat is compromised now; what will be the future?

Having been in your shoes at an earlier time I appreciate the task you face. This is now a 50+ year interval. Please look beyond tomorrow and next year to how this project could benefit not just Colonial Durham but the vibrancy and growth of the Town of Durham for the next half century. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,  
Suzy Loder  
38 Oyster River Road