

From: [RobinM](#)
To: [Rick Taintor](#); [Karen Edwards](#)
Subject: Mill Plaza | Landscaping: parking islands / median strips
Date: Friday, June 05, 2020 3:01:48 PM

Greetings,

(Please forward this email to the Planning Board. Thank you.)

Some of you may recall that the initial proposed draft revision of our site plan review regulations called for a 9-foot width for median strips in parking lots. Not having followed discussions about the subsequent revisions, I can only imagine that Board members thought the final language allows the Board leeway to require a wider median when appropriate, perhaps such as in an intensive-use parking lot, as opposed to a smaller, less used area.

Durham's language from Part III, 5.8.12:

*...All landscaped islands, peninsulas, and medians shall be **a minimum of six feet** in width and shall be separated from the parking area by adequate curbing or tire stops. The design and use of islands for bioretention systems shall meet Low Impact Development (LID) best management practices. Some islands shall be used to provide pedestrian walkways.*

Please note the previous sentence and ask yourself: How can a median strip only 6 feet wide allow for both two car overhangs and pedestrian passage, let alone healthy trees?

Sample requirements from other towns include:

Portsmouth -- Site Plan Review Regulations, as amended September 15, 2016

<<http://files.cityofportsmouth.com/files/planning/SitePlanReviewRegs.pdf>>

Section 6.6 Landscaped Areas

2. Within parking areas, landscaped islands shall be provided between adjacent rows of parking and between groups of parking spaces with the goal of breaking up large contiguously paved areas.
3. Landscaped islands shall be **a minimum of nine (9) feet** wide or as necessary to provide adequate room for growth and so as not to interfere with access to vehicles, lines of sight, pedestrian travel, or the long-term health of the vegetation.

Sandwich, Massachusetts -- Protective Zoning by-Law

<<https://www.sandwichmass.org/DocumentCenter/View/5157/Protective-Zoning-By-Law-November-2018>>

3500. LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING. The following shall be observed in all districts:
3520. Parking lots for six (6) or more cars shall contain, or be bordered within five (5) feet, by at least one tree per six (6) cars. Trees to be of two (2) inch caliper or larger and, if within the parking area, to be planted in curbed soil plots allowing **not less than ten feet by ten feet** (10' x 10') of unpaved soil area per tree.

I urge you to work with Colonial Durham Associates to find a way to create 9- or 10-foot median strips. There is a Conditional Use application, and you have the authority to require

what is best for the town. Surely if we seek improvement, we should upgrade from the minimum to ask for median strips at least as wide as what currently exists, rather than downgrade.

Regards,
-- Robin

Robin Mower
*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better. It's not.*
-- Theodor Seuss Geisel, author and illustrator

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