

DATE: December 20, 2020

FROM: Dennis Meadows
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TO: Durham Planning Board

RE: Questions for Stephen Pernaw

I have carefully studied Stephen Pernaw's memorandum to Michael Sievert. It does **not** give any information about the impact of the proposed parking lot on traffic flows in Durham. It concludes only that "all applicable turning movements will operate well below capacity through 2031..." As a resident of Durham for over 30 years, I am less concerned about the wait time of those exiting the lot than I am about congestion on Main Street. As a professor who taught courses on policy analysis for 40 years at MIT, Dartmouth, and UNH, I would want to know the answers to the following questions, before I made any decision about the proposed parking lot.

#1 The pandemic has drastically increased the demand for residences in Durham. It has also altered commuting patterns. Why do you assume that historical patterns of traffic growth on Main Street will continue into the future with only minor growth?

#2 Alternately, you assume 1%/year growth in traffic, an increase by only 12% through 2031. What is your basis for that assumption?

#2 Your entire analysis is driven by two observations. The first is historical data from the state of New Hampshire on 3 cloudy, drizzly days in February 2020. The second is your observation of students exiting the parking lot during a total of 10 hours on three days. Why do you assume those limited data give us useful information about the next 20 or more years that this parking lot will affect Durham's overall traffic patterns?

#3 Major policy decisions are normally based on a best case/worst case scenario. You did not provide them. Why not?

#4 Why do you assume that the behavior of current students indicates the behavior of all people who will ever use the parking lot over the next

several decades, given that the number of parking spaces will be increased by more than a factor of four?

#5 You do not provide any estimate of the parking lot's impact on the Main Street traffic flow. Why not?

#6 Specifically, you indicate that most cars exiting the parking lot will turn left. Why do you ignore the effect this will have on the Main Street traffic flow during rush hour? Do you assume every one using the parking lot will wait patiently until they can exit without slowing any of the on-coming cars?

#7 Your analysis is based on the assumption that the lot will be used only by students. UNH is currently hemorrhaging cash. It was losing \$10 million/year before the pandemic, and now one estimate of the annual loss is \$40 million/year. UNH is a great university, and it will certainly find a way to continue. But the days of growth in residential students is gone. Why do you ignore the possibility that non students will use the lot?

#8 How would your results be changed, if you assumed that non-students were parking in the lot?

Mr. Pernaw is an experienced traffic analyst. He has provided a competent answer to the question, "How long will an average student user of the parking lot have to wait to exit onto Main Street?" The Planning Board needs the answer to a different question. "How much more will the average Durham driver be delayed while in driving in Durham, if the parking lot is permitted?" To answer that question, a very different kind of study is required. It will be necessary to conduct some scenario studies on a traffic model that has been constructed specifically for Durham.