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# **Trees & Medians**

*What are we giving away?*

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Planning Board, Durham, NH  
January 12, 2022  
by Robin Mower

# Why We Should Care

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This proposal provides parking for Hannaford and student housing for CDA.

But climate change has arrived in Durham. So, in addition to improved aesthetics, **landscaping can bring long-term benefits to the community.**

**HENCE, WE MUST FOCUS ON TREES. AFTER ALL . . .**



# . . . Isn't This What Everyone Wants?



**Trees are simply better  
for humans than asphalt.**

*The New York Times* article “**What Technology Could Reduce Heat Deaths? Trees**” prompted one reader to comment:

“Should you doubt the desirability of retaining shade producing trees just drive past any mall, which is vacant or nearly so as a result of COVID lockdown. The isolated trees scattered here and there in the parking lot will each have one or more parked cars seeking shelter underneath them to prevent the broiling the sun produces.

**So why not think about shade as a utility measured by tree canopy density and breadth.”**

[*The New York Times*, July 2, 2021]



# Even in a city, trees can thrive . . .



*["The evolution of tree soil under pavement"](#) James Urban, FASLA.*



**. . . even with lots of pavement. Expertise matters.**



*"The evolution of tree soil under pavement" James Urban, FASLA.*

## False equivalence?

# The Board Is Giving Away Options

- It green-lighted a parking plan *without further negotiation about reducing the number of parking spaces*, taking CDA's word that Hannaford will not budge
  - Waived, on August 25, *with no preceding discussion and no citation of the specific site plan section*, the “regulation for the maximum number of parking spaces between landscaped median strips or islands.”
  - Could have asked CDA to make medians at least 9 feet wide, as in current site plan regulations. (This IS a Conditional Use Permit application!)
- Some members appear to see an equivalence between *restoration plans along College Brook* within the **required** 75-foot wetland upland buffer strip and *onsite landscaping*



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**But before we even get to trees . . .**

# **Today's 9- to 10-foot Medians**



**How well are 6-foot medians going to work out?**



**Mill Plaza  
2021**



# Wider medians at nearby Hannaford

## Dover Fields Hannaford

photos taken  
January 3, 2022



**10+ feet\* medians**

*\*Dover's Hannaford has medians at least 10 feet wide, per Lorne Parnell at 6/17/20 PB meeting*





# **Wider medians at nearby Hannaford Dover Fields Hannaford, Rte. 108**

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# The Mill Plaza is not on a highway

## **Supermarkets in Small Towns**

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- **Dover:** Hannaford Fields on Rte 108; Hannaford and Shaw's on Central Avenue
- **Lee:** Market Basket on Rte 125/Traffic Circle
- **Stratham:** Market Basket, Hannaford, and Shaw's on Rte 108
- **Portsmouth:** Market Basket and Shaw's on Woodbury Avenue; another Market Basket on Lafayette Road/Rte 1

**These are NOT in the heart of small towns**



# The Mill Plaza is not on a highway

## **Supermarkets in Small Towns**

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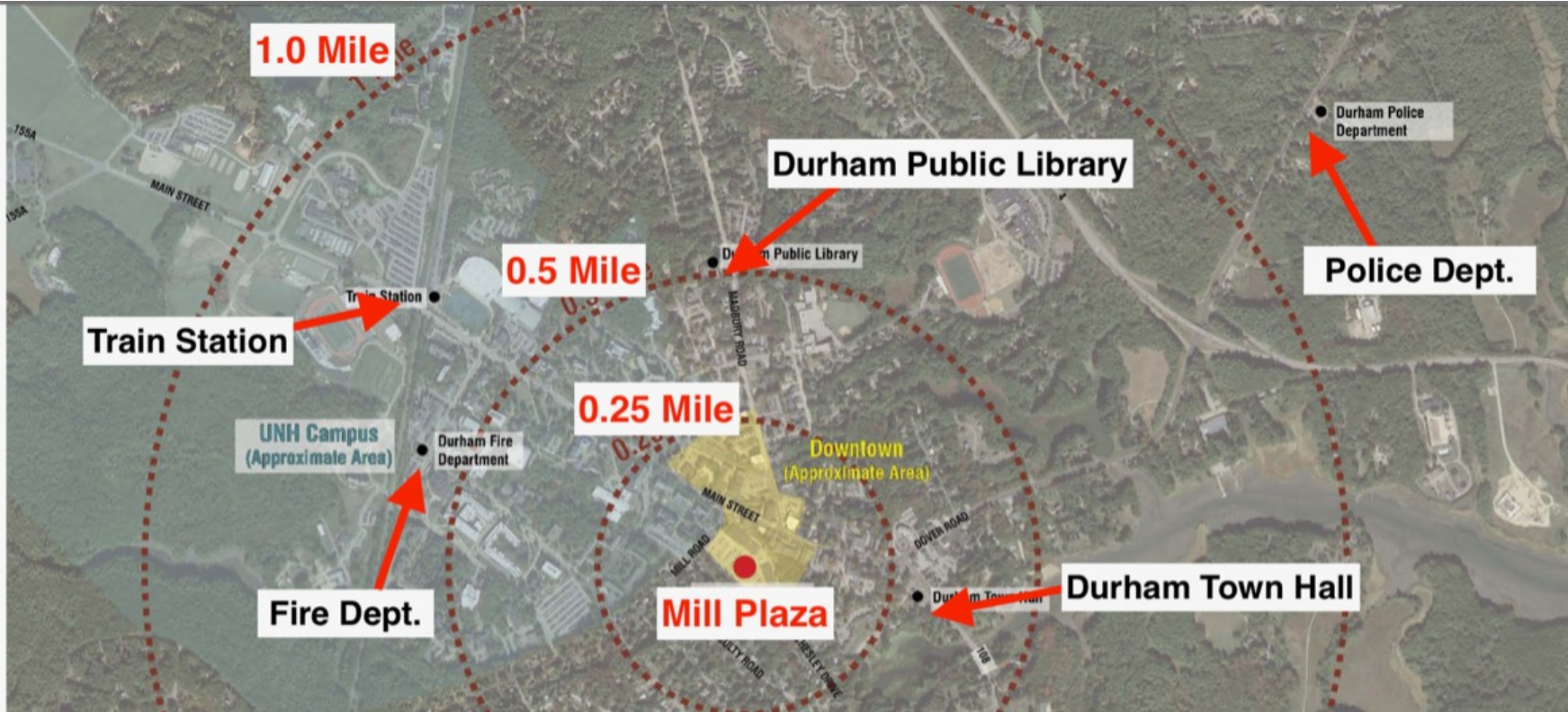
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# Thousands of shoppers can WALK to the Plaza

## 1-mile Radius for 1,000s of Shoppers

Context: Area



Student apartments + fraternities and sororities downtown ( $\pm$  2,000 residents) + UNH dorms + downtown single-family households



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# **Location Matters**

*What Hannaford or CDA wants  
is only one side of the equation*

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**What is good for Durham?**