

From: [Susan Richman](#)
To: [Karen Edwards](#)
Subject: Comments on Mill Plaza
Date: Thursday, August 19, 2021 10:10:27 PM

Dear Members of the Durham Planning Board,

I am relieved at improvements to the required wetland buffer in the latest version of the Mill Plaza plan. I hope the final plan will fully meet the required wetland buffer. The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change makes clear the imperative to fully respect current regulations protecting our threatened environment. Is it possible that some of the proposed buildings remain within the larger protected wetland area?

I further wonder that the Planning Board can consider the removal of 1.1 acre of “urban forest.” Colonial Durham previously removed hillside without permission. Why permit this now? Every green area helps reduce carbon emissions. Protecting urban green spaces is a clearly stated goal in the Master Plan.

Also a concern in eliminating this hillside: Durham has been working to build our “resilience” in the face of increasing flood threat. The Chesley area has been subject to flood damage. The trees established on this hillside play a role in flood control. Eliminating this hillside is not safe for the surrounding property.

Other factors that would cause the current Mill Plaza plan to violate Conditional Use provisions: the proposed 258-bed student housing is of a much greater scale than the surrounding buildings, the density of occupancy and activity exceeds the current intensity of use, there would be addition of noise, litter, light and traffic that would impinge on the bordering family neighborhood, and that noise and light pollution would have greatest impact between 9 pm and 2 am, which are active times for students but times when families expect quiet.

Citizens of Durham are grateful for the dedication and service of its Planning Board members, but this faith is violated when we perceive that you do not adhere to our well-crafted ordinances. Please observe these ordinances and protect the neighboring properties and our environmental imperatives.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan Richman

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