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Sent: Wednesday, April 26, 2023 2:40 PM

To: Michael Behrendt <mbehrendt@ci.durham.nh.us>; Richard Reine <rreine@ci.durham.nh.us>

Cc: Gift, Danielle - FS, DURHAM, NH <Danielle.Gift@usda.gov>

Subject: Comments on Draft Climate Action Master Plan - Urban Forests?

Hi Michael. Sorry to be last minute on this.

I wanted to pass on comments for the Planning Board discussion on the Draft Climate Action Master Plan. Can you please pass this on to members of the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission?

I did not read through the plan word for word, so my apologies if I missed something. There seemed to be almost no discussion on the benefits and impacts of Durham's urban forest, related to climate change. There is extensive discussion of natural forests. Some of that discussion may apply to urban forests, but they are not the same thing.

I suggest 1) have at least a short section in the plan to discuss urban forest benefits and issues related to climate change and 2) include some basic goals and recommendations to improve management of the Town's urban forest and help adapt to climate change. Some quick examples are below.

UF Issues related to climate change:

Urban forests provide benefits related to addressing climate change. Perhaps the most important is that strategically located trees can conserve energy in building and reduce carbon emissions by providing shade and windbreaks for buildings.

It is predicted that climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of storms. A well maintained urban forest can improve storm water management and create windbreaks in developed areas.

Conversely, an urban forest that receives little planning and management can have a negative effect related to climate change. A very common issue we see around Durham is the failure of trees during storms. They can cause property damage, personal injury, block roads (evacuation routes), disrupt business activities, etc. The problem is not that trees are bad and need to be removed or heavily pruned, but rather that the Town and property owners need to practice better planning, planting and maintenance, and also do periodic assessments to identify and remove declining, high risk trees.

Goals and recommendations to improve management of the urban forest related to climate change:

Conduct a sample assessment of urban trees to identify resource issues (species composition, condition, risk of failure, needed maintenance, opportunities for planting, etc.).

Create a simple plan to increase tree planting, maintenance and removal (trees identified as an unacceptable risk by a well qualified professional) with a focus on the right tree in the right place for a changing climate (on both public and private property).

Educate private property owners on these issues, and encourage their participation.

Increase the protection of existing trees and planting of new trees in new development to improve quality and extent of UF.

Revise or create new wording in ordinances and policies that enable above goals.

I have provided a couple of links below to resources that provide more detail on urban forests and climate change. Note that there are federal grant funds available in some years that can help conduct some of these management activities.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/ccrc/topics/urban-forests>
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/treesearch/62807>

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. I appreciate your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely, John Parry

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