

Greetings, Michael --

Late but pointed and short. Please forward this email to the Planning Board. I will not be speaking at the public hearing tonight.

Presumably like many others, I have only taken a cursory look at the draft chapter. I believe it can serve as one of many important documents to guide Town policy. Even as it overlaps with other chapters of the Master Plan adopted in 2015, it provides an opportunity to incorporate information not yet available in the 2015 documents and should be evaluated through that lens.

As you know, the chapter (somewhat frustratingly for readers) consists primarily of background material, leaving the last seven of the sixty-one pages to goals and recommendations, some of which appear to be boilerplate for any, or any near-coastal, community -- which in many cases may be appropriate.

My overall queries and points:

1. At the risk of diverging from the structure of earlier chapters, would it make sense to bring the Goals and Recommendations to the front, or at least after a SHORT summary, to better engage readers?

2: Have the Energy Committee and Conservation Commission been provided an opportunity to comment?

3: I am concerned about overreach for REGIONAL goals and recommendations vs an understanding of Durham's needs and constraints -- including the size of Town staff. I therefore caution against codifying in THIS document some of these goals that have yet to be honed and supported by the Housing Task Force and then by the Planning Board or Town Council, for example. I also perceive the last section to be the input of the Agricultural Commission. It will be the role of the Planning Board and/or Administrator to sift through these recommendations for their appropriateness for Durham, specifically.

4. The recommendations do not clearly recognize a distinction between Municipal, i.e., government, vs. community, i.e., residents and business-owner authority and resources.

5: The chapter should also be updated for what may have been perceived to be the low-probability event of politics/human behavior on future sustainability. Please note the current challenging situation vis a vis the Town of Epping and the Lamprey River, a major drinking water resource for Durham residents and businesses.

6. As with earlier Master Plan chapters, what about including a \*Connections to other chapters\* section at the end?

Regards,

-- Robin

Robin Mower

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## NOTES ON THE APRIL 12, 2023 DRAFT OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION MASTER PLAN

### PAGE CAC-52

#### \*Affordable Housing and Density

A crucial element of infrastructure to fortify for incoming climate migrants and a growing population is the town's housing stock. Many residents have expressed dismay with the Town's housing options in terms of affordability. Comments regarding the lack of workforce housing, housing for young adults and new families, and a desire for intergenerational developments have surfaced in community forums. Planning for Smart Growth in Durham will require affordability and use considerations, as well as an understanding of which demographics are being pushed out of the housing market.\*

My comments:

1) MANY residents may wish housing were more affordable, but MANY have NOT expressed their dismay with the status quo. As long as Durham remains desirable for MANY features, not least, including the quality of its K-12 schools, access to UNH, recreational amenities including natural facilities, and small-town NE character, it will remain unaffordable for many. Period. Pulling levers will change affordability, but it will also change attractiveness. Is that a goal?

2) It cannot be said often enough: By incorporating 2,000-ish student beds since 2008, Durham has made hundreds of apartments regionally available for other renters.

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Goal: Lower total amount of greenhouse gas emissions (BI)

Please note the omission of:

a) a review of our site plan regulations vis a vis parking MAXIMUMS vs MINIMUMS. Across the country such changes are increasingly common.

b) clear distinction between municipal and non-municipal authority and goals, as well as UNH authority, e.g.,

\*2. Identify ways to begin shifting from natural gas to electric energy powered by renewable sources\*

Transportation Alternatives

\*2. Increase the frequency, dependability, and use of public transit particularly for year-round residents\* << DURHAM DOES NOT HAVE PUBLIC TRANSIT; IT CAN ONLY WORK WITH UNH

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Regulation/Policy

2. Provide information and resources for green infrastructure developments that may encourage developers to go beyond minimum design requirements. Provide information and resources for residents to implement green infrastructure on their properties.

My comments: I concur with the above and **recommend that prior to overhauling subdivision regulations, the Planning Board revisit sections of the site plan regulations that are key to climate change adaptation.**

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\*Goal: Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Town's working lands (NWL)\*

My comment: Aren't all these ALREADY either underway or incorporated into other Master Plan chapters?

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\*2. Support local businesses to assess supply chain impacts and vulnerabilities and identify strategies to improve resilience\*

My comment: Is this really the role of Town government, particularly one with a small staff?

\*Outreach and Engagement

Consider adding upcoming local, state, and federal legislation on climate action that needs support to weekly Durham Friday updates.\*

My comment: Laudable, but who would do that? It would be time-consuming. The Administrator is already overly taxed. Plus, it would be valuable only if it led to higher civic engagement. Call me skeptical, but I know many people who receive FRIDAY UPDATES and do not even read it.

Goal: Ensure the Town's local economy and social capital is resilient to a changing future (C)  
Regulation/Policy

1. Expand compact, mixed-use, low-impact developments in the downtown to extend walkability and areas for unplanned social interaction.

My comment: Limited geography to begin with, and very limited municipal ownership.

Goal: Improve existing food, public health and safety, and housing conditions (C)  
Regulation/Policy

2. Explore creative ways to promote and secure affordable housing options to make available to a diverse demographic of students, young professionals, and seniors (i.e., requiring that for new developments of a certain size, a percentage of the rental units must remain at the HUD rental rate, allowing multiple accessory dwelling units on a single lot in some zoning districts, etc.)

My comment: Please see my comments on CAC-52, above.

**PAGE CAC-61**

Goal: Increase local food production (C)  
Planning

2. Improve equitable access to healthy, fresh, locally sourced and produced, culturally appropriate foods

My comment on this specific recommendation: Perhaps I am unaware of the lack of access by Durham residents, but it seems to me that this does not fall under the aegis of Town government.

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