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A Town’s Single Largest Taxpayer Is Also Its Biggest Headache.

An empty shell for years, the mall in Lanesborough, Mass., shows how difficult it is to redevelop malls in smaller towns.

In its heyday, the Berkshire Mall was the place to go in Lanesborough, Mass., drawing huge crowds of enthusiastic shoppers and producing plenty of tax dollars for the small town.

“There were times you could not find a parking place in this mall — inside, it was packed,” said Timothy Sorrell, a town selectman and former police chief in rural Lanesborough, which has a population of about 3,000. For teenagers in particular, it was the place to hang out.

“It was to the point where if we had to throw a kid out of the mall, it was like we were taking away Christmas,” Mr. Sorrell said. “They would actually cry. It was almost the end of the world for them.”

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The New York Times

By Jim Zarroli

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