

**BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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Executive Director

**Lee Area Traffic Study**  
**Summary of First Working Group meeting**  
Tuesday, April 24, 2007, 4:00 PM.  
Lee Library Gallery, 100 Main Street, Lee, MA

**Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Bryan Emmett	Berkshire Natural Resources Council
Peter Frieri	MassHighway District 1
Nat Karns	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Alison Church	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Anuja Koirala	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Linda Messana	Lenox Select Board
Chris Pompi	Lee Highway Department
George Shippey	Stockbridge Select Board
Michael Supranowicz	Berkshire Chamber of Commerce

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Karns welcomed all to the meeting.  
Each attendee introduced themselves.

**2. Study purpose and need; problems identified; any others?**

Mr. Karns opened with a discussion about the 2003 Regional Transportation Plan which is intended to take a broad look at regional transportation. He mentioned that there had been a lot of public comment regarding individual communities and that concerns were raised about traffic problems in the Pittsfield, Stockbridge, Becket, and Lee areas. Mr. Karns also mentioned that this had been recognized by the MPO, which agreed that the Lee traffic study must be done.

Ms. Koirala discussed the list of Lee area problems, noting that the most obvious is traffic congestion in the study area. She also described and defined average daily traffic (ADT) and noted the importance of applying seasonal factors. She mentioned that there is an estimated high percentage of through traffic along with high percentages of trucks.

Mr. Karns noted that Downtown Lee gets a high percentage of through traffic and there is congestion at key intersections, however that the town is usually opposed to traffic signaling. He also mentioned that there are no bike accommodations, and that much of the traffic going through Lee does so because there is no apparent alternate route.

Mr. Supranowicz pointed out the relationship between economic growth and traffic issues. He mentioned that with the growth of retail around the County and in surrounding areas, Lee will only experience an increase in truck traffic and congestion.

A discussion followed regarding sacrifices and impacts on environmental issues and housing. Questions regarding open space were raised.

### **3. Work Completed**

Ms. Koirala stated that ADT data had been collected last summer. She mentioned that with the ADT data, peak traffic periods on Route 20 in Downtown Lee were identified and turning movement counts were performed at key intersections for the AM and PM peak periods. A road safety audit was also performed. She also discussed a speed and delay survey.

Mr. Karns mentioned that accident data still needed to be collected.

### **4. Scope of work; proposed schedule; Working Group composition**

Mr. Karns discussed the scope of work for the study. He outlined two primary objectives for the project including 1) improving regional mobility and/or access to I-90 for motorists currently funneled through the Town of Lee with destinations elsewhere 2) To improve mobility and safety for motorists and pedestrians alike within Lee.

Ms. Church asked for any other comments or suggestions.

A question was raised about connecting northern Berkshire bike trails with bike access in Lee.

Mr. Karns explained that the bike path is more of a local issue, and that the study will use data from other studies and then began discussion on public involvement and the idea of the Working Group.

Ms. Church asked members what they desired to take away from the meetings.

Mr. Karns emphasized the importance of having a Working Group that can be knowledgeable about the process and understand decisions made.

A discussion followed regarding truck traffic, economic decline, and other traffic impacts.

Mr. Karns stated that there will be five Working Group meetings, this one being the first. Next meeting will be conducted at midpoint of the existing conditions analysis. Third and fourth meetings will be conducted at the conclusion of existing and 2030 No-Build analysis, and at the midpoint of evaluation of alternatives respectively. The final meeting will be conducted at the conclusion of the evaluation of alternatives to review findings and recommendations.

Ms. Church mentioned that an environmental impact analysis will be performed as part of this traffic study. This analysis will be different from an EIS due to the fact that it is a preliminary analysis and GIS data layers will be used for analysis instead of field level data.

Mr. Karns stressed the importance of understanding the needs of all users, and the impacts on the environment and surrounding communities.

Ms. Church stated that the Working Group will meet to review the findings before the public meetings.

Mr. Karns presented the schedule for the Lee Area Traffic Study and a discussion of dates followed. He adjusted the schedule according to group consensus.

Mr. Karns explained the MPO's role in the study. At the final WG meeting, a final report will be discussed and sent to the MPO which has the option to approve or reject the study recommendations. He made suggestions for possible short term improvements, along with a discussion on long term options.

### **5. Next meeting date**

There was consensus that the next meeting date will be July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 4pm.

Mr. Karns thanked all for coming.