

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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LEE AREA TRAFFIC STUDY

PUBLIC MEETING – NOVEMBER 1, 2007
COMMENT FORM RESPONSES

What are your thoughts on specific problems? Please tell us which problems you feel are the most important and why.

Answers submitted at the meeting:

- “Trucks – bigger and more of them
- Volume of all traffic
- Need for development of downtown Lee
- Proposed new parking lot”
- “I think the traffic problems should be addressed using existing roadways by improving or widening or interchanges. The Berkshires are not big enough to support more highways.”
- “All existing problems are identified.”

Answers submitted through the mail after the meeting:

- “The most important problem is the threat to our Berkshire way of life. All of us are wedded to the Berkshires as they are or we wouldn’t have come here or remained here. If we change (improve) things too much the Berkshires will become like Hackensack and our life blood – tourist and culture industry will die and we will become Hackensack. There is a lot we can learn from our European cousins. For the most part, or from older society, they had faced these problems before us. With older cities and towns and narrow and widening streets they have learned to fix what can be fixed and the rest you just have to live with.”
- “High percentage of trucks through downtown Lee: Trucks traveling north and south need a direct route to the Mass Pike. Please look at the possibility of routing trucks and cars alike along the west side of the Housatonic River. This will have an impact on residences but little or no impact on businesses. By doing this, Lee will solve their problems within Lee’s boundaries without effecting surrounding towns, however, they will have less truck traffic also.”
- “I really believe that putting an on and off ramp on Route 7 will alleviate quite a bit of the truck and car traffic in Lee. Cars could go to Lenox for Tanglewood and traveling north trucks could take Route 7 south. I do not believe that there would be any more traffic going through Stockbridge than at the present time. We should all work together as towns to solve problems of traffic and not bury our heads in the sand. At our [group] session #1 we had 6 of the eight people favor this concept.”
- “I see a fundamental conflict between the interests of the people of Lee and those of the D.O.T. Locally, we want slow traffic, safe conditions, plenty of cars stopping for business and a town that is both pleasant to walk around and nice to live in. Mass Highway presumably wants smooth flowing traffic under safe conditions. Alternatives such as one-way pairs, some bypasses and perhaps additional traffic lights would probably move traffic more smoothly, but they also might detract from the quality of living in Lee. Additional turnpike exits might relieve Lee of some traffic, but they also might take away business. From the local point-of-view, an additional turnpike exit east of Lee that would take Pittsfield and North County traffic off I-90 and move it north via either Route 8 or an October Mountain bypass road seemingly would make sense. People in Becket and Washington may not like these suggestions very much. People in Pittsfield and North County may find the suggestions

to their liking. Lee businesses would probably not lose much under this plan because traffic going to the attractions throughout South County would still come through Lee. Some of the present problems in downtown Lee – speed of some traffic, noise from trucks and hazards from bad driving – could be eased simply by better enforcement, but traffic control does not seem to be a high priority for police these days. The worst thing that could happen to Lee, in my opinion, would be one way pairs that would put excessive traffic on High Street, Canal Street, Center Street, and/or Park Street. These alternatives would quickly turn downtown into a low rent district. The second worst thing would be a bypass that would bring more noise and traffic to the east side of town. Thanks for the chance to be heard.”

Identified Problems

- Traffic congestion due to high traffic volume 1
- High percentage of through traffic 1
- High percentage of trucks through downtown Lee 2
- Long delays for side street traffic at key intersections 1
- Pedestrian safety 1
- No bike lanes

What are your thoughts on any potential solutions?

Answers submitted at the meeting:

- “Must be regional.”
- “Route 7/20 through Stockbridge; make longer to Pittsfield.”
- “Possible solutions all seem to be controversial. Lee’s downtown is not the answer.”

Answers submitted through the mail after the meeting:

- “Traffic lights anywhere on Main Street will only make congestion worse, most residents know how to avoid the congestion in the summer months but choose to complain instead. One-way pairs have no impact unless they exit onto Main Street itself. Every other option will never get done because of opposition from other towns.”
- “I do not believe any of the suggestions [below] would work for Lee. I think that you would destroy the downtown business district. I believe that if we put the on and off ramp in Stockbridge that would be great. We in Lee should keep an open mind after this is done to see if there is anything we can do to help the situation.

Some Alternatives Identified in Previous Plans & Studies

- Install traffic lights at Park/Main and at Center/Main; possibly eliminate or configure parking on Main Street; intersection modifications (Transportation Systems Management)
- One-way pairs – High Street/Main Street or Main Street/Canal & Railroad Streets
- Bypass on west side of River – from Park Street to Laurel Street 1
- West Road MassPike interchange, with widened West Road north to Rte. 7
- Rte. 7 MassPike interchange 3
- Bypass east side of Lee, along powerline right-of-way, to Lenoxdale or to Rte. 7/20 1
- Becket/Otis/Blandford MassPike interchange – Rte.20; Algeria Road; or Chester Road 1

4 Comment forms were handed in at the end of the meeting.

3 Comment forms have been submitted through the mail as of Monday, Nov. 5th

1 more additional comment form was received through the mail on Friday, December 28th.