

Lee Area Traffic Study
Summary of Seventh Working Group Meeting
Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 3:30 PM.
Lee Library Gallery, 100 Main Street, Lee, MA

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Bryan Emmett	Berkshire Natural Resources Council
George Shippey	Stockbridge Selectboard Chair
Jorja-Ann Marsden	Stockbridge Town Administrator
Steven LaBelle	Becket Representative
Mark Moore	MassHighway District 1
Peter Frieri	MassHighway District 1
Nat Karns	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Alison Church	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Anuja Koirala	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Christine Neumann	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

1. Introductions

Mr. Karns welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Summary of 3-11-08 Working Group Meeting

The group reviewed the summary of the March 11th meeting. Mr. Emmett clarified that he had suggested evaluating using High Street and Canal Street as a “one way pair” to get traffic from both directions off Main Street rather than have Main Street be a one way street as indicated in the previous meeting minutes.

3. Working Group feedback/discussion of BRPC preliminary screening and analysis of alternatives

The goal of today’s meeting was to come to a consensus about eliminating some of the identified alternatives from further analysis. Mr. Karns asked that the group refer to 11” x 17” sheet which summarized the environmental and residential impacts as well as the reduction in VMT, VHT and diversion of traffic for each alternative. Each alternative was given a score based on each of these criteria. The ranking system is based on a 10 point scale with 1 being the best and 10 being the worst. The scoring sheet grouped the different alternatives together based on location – far east, near east, central Lee, near west and far west. There were a total of 26 alternatives. BRPC staff provided recommendations to eliminate some alternatives in each category but have at least one alternative in each category carried forward for more thorough analysis.

Far East: The alternatives in this group have a small impact on houses and do very well at reducing VMT and VHT. However, these alternatives don’t do particularly well at diverting traffic out of downtown Lee. The reduction in VMT shown on the summary sheet is for the entire region. The VMT and VHT reductions shown were calculated by deducting the existing traffic from the projected traffic. Out of the three options, Alternative 8B shows the best diversion of traffic for the primary north-east movement through Lee. BRPC has not yet assessed the impacts along the existing highways that would be part of these alternatives. BRPC staff recommended that 8A and 8C be dropped and that alternative 8B (Bonnie Rigg Rd. interchange) be considered for more thorough analysis; the Working Group agreed.

Near East: The alternatives in this group have a comparatively high impact on habitat, water resources and houses. None of the alternatives in this category do much to reduce VMT; and, all of them increase VHT. However, these alternatives do the best at diverting traffic from Lee. 6A does the best at diverting traffic, but it also has the highest impact on the environment. It is important to note that the analysis of these alternatives does not assume a new interchange. The greatest benefit of this series of alternatives is that there is no need

for an interchange; any of these alternatives could be a fall back alternative if the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA) is not amenable to a new interchange. If MTA is willing to consider feasibility of an interchange, BRPC staff will evaluate at least one of these alternatives with an interchange. After some discussion among the Working Group, it was determined that 6A, 6B, 6D and 7A be considered for more thorough analysis.

Central Lee: The alternatives in this category involve Main Street TSM (Traffic Systems Management) improvements, one-way pairs, and another alternative for a new bypass on the west side of the river from Park Street to Laurel Street. These alternatives have the least environmental impacts, but several have fairly substantive residential impacts. BRPC staff recommended having all of the alternatives in this category be considered for more thorough analysis. The Working Group agreed with this recommendation.

Near West: After some discussion with the Working Group, it was decided to keep alternative 4B rather than 4D since 4B has less environmental impact than 4D (alternative 4D had been the one that was designated on the summary sheet as having been selected to be considered for more thorough analysis due to its proximity to the turnpike) There was some discussion about what alternative 5 or alternative 10 would look like. These two alternatives involve constructing a new interchange on Route 7 or on West Road. After discussion, the Working Group opted to have alternatives 4B, 5 and 10 be considered for more thorough analysis. At this point, Mr. Labelle suggested a bypass from Route 102 north to Laurel Street. This alternative was added as a variation (3A) to alternative 3.

Far West: It was recommended to drop the alternative in this category. The Working Group agreed with this recommendation.

The next step is to have a discussion with EOT and the MTA to determine if interchange improvements or construction of a new interchange would be considered.

4. Next meeting date

It was decided that the date of the next Working Group meeting would be determined at a later date so BRPC staff can have enough time to complete further analysis. It is anticipated that the next meeting will be held in a few months.