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LEE AREA TRAFFIC STUDY

PUBLIC MEETING – NOVEMBER 1, 2007

Break Out Group Conclusions

Group 1:

Problems:

- 300 acre family farm in Lee
- Quiet community changed forever in Becket due to anticipated population growth
- Proximity of houses to road on Laurel Street in Lee
 - Biggest concern is widening
 - Existing traffic
- West Road in Lee: A close-knit community; used a shortcut to Pike
- Need for communities to join forces
- Concern for one way streets
- Business community
- Truck traffic in Becket
 - Bigger and more frequent
 - Route 8
- Truck traffic in Lee
 - 1998: 78 trucks in 50 minutes on Main Street in Lee
- West Park and Main Street in Lee
 - Long wait – no clear RoW
 - Out of state drivers don't have a clue how to maneuver
 - Stop on Main Street
- Parking lot of 70 cars exit on High Street/Town trying to encourage development
 - North at Center Street intersection
 - South/west Housatonic Street
- Need to develop downtown Lee but traffic congestion imposes restrictions
- Is it regional or is it local?
- Within sound zone of I-90
- Trolleys down center of road in Lee, Becket, Stockbridge and Pittsfield
- Parking within 200 feet of building in Lee
- Love of personal car
- Effects of congestion on side roads/shortcuts
- Loss of 300 jobs/mills closing

Solutions:

- Stockbridge interchange on Route 7
- Revisit the West Park Street on the west side of the river, however, such a project would have inordinate impacts on businesses and residences

Group 2:

Problems:

- Housatonic Street: Businesses suffer from high traffic
- Trucks: Pollution, noise 24 hours a day/6 days a week
- Need to get people out of their cars
- Need to make the Town more “attractive” for people to get out of their cars
- Need more parking
- When mills close will truck traffic decline?
- Shouldn't take traffic off Main Street- if reduce the traffic, what impacts will there be on the businesses?
- Trucks won't use any alternative routes that are offered
- Lee roads are not built for trucks: 90 degree turns, etc.
- Banks on Park Street present new problems

Solutions:

- Make trucks get off somewhere else besides Exit 2
- Route 7 Bypass
- Move Exit 2 to Route 7 (not Lee)
- Get trucks off Main Street but preserve car traffic (tourism)
 - Opposition from Stockbridge? Especially because of Kamposoa Bog
- Becket – Route 8 – will need a lot of money for new road construction
 - Becket has concerns about trucks going past summer camps. Becket will get all the truck traffic and none of the car traffic (tourism)
- West Road MassPike interchange with 1 mile widened West Road north to Route 7 for through traffic and trucks (this option had a majority consensus)
- Exit on West Road – Route 7 and add a rotary
- Signalization will be a hard sell
- One-Way Pair Concerns:
 - Canal Street is not a through street
 - Railroad Street is too congested
 - The one-way pair options had been tied with the Bypass on the west side of the River option
 - High Street is a densely residential street with 90 degree turns – bad for trucks
- Why not East Street?
- Why not Route 9? – Not an option because cannot go through Northampton?
- Why not Route 2 or Route 116 for trucks and traffic coming into Berkshire County? But there are too many bad turns on Route 2 and bridges on Route 116 with weight limits
- Route 41 in Stockbridge?
- Support reintroduction of railroad system
- Did not agree with the option for a bypass on west side of river from Park street to Laurel Street – would like to have this option taken off the table completely
- Becket/Otis/Blandford MassPike interchange – Route 20; Algeria Road; or Chester Road or up Route 8

Group 3:

Problems:

- Speeds coming off of turnpike
- Speeds around curve at High Street
- Access to High Street and Rite Aid Plaza
- Truck noise/motorcycle noise

Solutions:

- Signal at Maple St. intersection
- One-way pairs are probably not the best choice
- Bypass on west side of river would warrant further study
- West Road Interchange Concerns:
 - Safety coming onto Route 7
 - Partial or full interchange?
 - Economic impacts on downtown Lee
- East Street Bypass and route 7 interchange Concerns:
 - Environmental issues
- Becket Interchange Concerns:
 - Concerned with increased truck traffic in Becket

Group 4:

Problems:

- Noise; wear and tear on roads
- Geometry of intersections
- Pollution from stopped or idling vehicles
- Speed of traffic; safety – specific issue with the athletic fields behind the Rink on Housatonic St. – which generates a lot of foot traffic
- Exiting from all of the side streets in downtown
- Speed on unofficial bypasses, i.e., High Street
- Proposed parking area between Main St. and High St. will increase traffic trying to turn onto Franklin from Main St. and from High St. onto Park St.
- Truck traffic to Pittsfield must go through downtown Lee

Solutions:

- Better signage for parking and more efficient utilization of parking lots
- Get trucks to go down Rte. 102 and have a new route to west going from Rte. 102 to Rte. 7 northbound
- Paired one-ways might be considered only if trucks are routed elsewhere
- Prohibit use of engine brakes by trucks (noise)
- Need truck bypass
- Truck route following Housatonic RR tracks, possibly all the way to Pittsfield
- East Street in Lee as bypass
- Rte 7 interchange on MassPike
- Interchange between Exit 2 & Rte. 7 leading to Rte. 7 north
- Powerline on east side of Lee

Comment Forms:

Problems:

- “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!”

Solutions:

- “Must be regional.”
- “Route 7 through Stockbridge; make longer to Pittsfield.”
- “Possible solutions all seem to be controversial. Lee’s downtown is not the answer.”
- 2 people circled the “Rte. 7 MassPike interchange” suggestion on the comment form
- 1 person circled the “Bypass east side of Lee, along powerline right-of-way, to Lenoxdale or to Rte. 7/20” suggestion on the comment form

Most Common Themes: Problems

- One-Way Pair Concerns:
 - Canal Street is not a through street
 - Railroad Street is too congested
 - The one-way pair options had been tied with the Bypass on the west side of the River option
 - High Street is a densely residential street with 90 degree turns – bad for trucks
 - Paired one-ways might be considered only if trucks are routed elsewhere
- Business Community Concerns:
 - Shouldn’t take traffic off Main Street- if reduce the traffic, what impacts will there be on the businesses?
 - Housatonic Street: Businesses suffer from high traffic
- Becket Interchange Concerns:
 - Concerned with increased truck traffic in Becket
 - Becket has concerns about trucks going passed summer camps.
 - Becket is concerned that Becket will get all the truck traffic and none of the car traffic (tourism)
 - Bigger and more frequent
 - Route 8

- Truck Traffic Concerns:
 - Trucks going to Pittsfield must go through downtown Lee
 - Trucks – bigger and more of them
 - Pollution, **noise** 24 hours a day/6 days a week
 - When mills close will truck traffic decline?
 - Loss of 300 jobs/mills closing

- Proposed new parking lot of 70 cars between Main Street and High Street will increase traffic trying to exit from Franklin Street onto Main Street and from High Street onto Park Street
 - Town trying to encourage development
 - North at Center Street intersection
 - South/west Housatonic Street
 - Town does need more parking

- West Road Interchange Concerns:
 - Safety coming onto Route 7
 - Will it be a partial or full interchange?
 - Economic impacts on downtown Lee

- West Road in Lee
 - Close community
 - Shortcut to Pike

Most Common Themes: Solutions

- Route 7 Rte 7 interchange with MassPike; 2 people circled the “Rte. 7 MassPike interchange” suggestion on the comment form
- Interchange at West Road with MassPike and widen West Road to Route 7 with a possible rotary. This option had a majority consensus in Group 2.
- Route 102 and new/widened road from Route 102 to Route 7
- Bypass east of Lee, along powerline right-of-way to Lenoxdale or to Rte. 7/20; 1 person circled this suggestion on the comment form