

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEE AREA TRAFFIC STUDY

BRPC has been working since 2006 to develop a model for traffic movement off of I-90 into the Berkshires. The study identified and evaluated options for alleviating traffic impacts in the downtown Lee associated with I-90 Exit 2.

A final meeting of the Lee Area Traffic Study Working Group, a 10-member group of representatives from Becket, Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge, and Mass Highway, was held on December 9th meeting. At the meeting, the working group recommended four of the 27 alternatives to move forward into an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The four recommended alternatives include (note: alternative numbers are those used in the initial analysis and do not reflect any order of preference):

- **Transportation Systems Management Practices.** (Alternative 1) This alternative would focus on making functional improvements to the existing roadway such as additional traffic signals, intersection modifications, line striping, or reconfiguring parking to help better manage traffic in Downtown Lee.
- **Main Street Bypass.** (Alternative 3A) This alternative would install a 1.48-mile bypass west of the Housatonic River. The bypass would start near the Summer Street/ Laurel Street intersection and extend south to Route 102 near Old Pleasant Street. This alternative will act as a fall back measure if the Turnpike Authority is not amenable to a new interchange (Alternatives 5 and 10).
- **Additional Interchange.** (Alternatives 5 and 10) These two alternatives call for the addition of another I-90 interchange, but vary in their proposed locations. Alternative 5 would place the interchange onto Route 7 in the vicinity of the Lee/Stockbridge Town Line. Alternative 10 would place the new interchange on West Road north to Route 7 and would require upgrades to West Road. These two alternate

locations will be further evaluated based on their 1) engineering feasibility and 2) relative potential community and environmental impacts.

Next Steps

BRPC staff will present its final recommendations at a Public Meeting on Wednesday, January 21st at 6:30pm at the Lee Elementary School Cafeteria. BRPC's recommendations will then be taken to the Berkshire MPO, which will make the final decision of which will move forward. *BRPC Contact: Anuja Koirala*



Sally Bell Receives the 2008 Charles Kusik Award

Thank You Sally for all of your years of service to the Berkshires!

2008 ANNUAL DINNER

The 2008 Annual Meeting of the BRPC was held December 4th, at Berkshire Hills Country Club in Pittsfield. Delegates, alternates, local board members, local officials, and other community members gathered to reflect on the Commission's accomplishments over the past year, and consider priorities for the future. Guest speaker Daniel O'Connell, Secretary of the state's Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development provided a glimpse into some of his daily responsibilities and priorities, as well as some of the Patrick administration's goals over the next few years.

The Charles Kusik award, presented yearly to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to planning in Berkshire County, was awarded to Sarah "Sally" Bell Esq., in recognition of her years of support of local and regional planning. Sally was involved in the Berkshire Intergovernmental Study in 1975, and later received her law degree. As an attorney at Hannon, Lerner, and Bell, Sally has and continues to serve as town counsel for several municipalities, provided countless invaluable legal opinions to BRPC staff, and created a series of land use memoranda to guide local boards.

MEETING AND EVENTS CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 8 BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
4:00 pm at the BRPC office
- 15 Commission Meeting
7:00 pm at the BRPC office
- 21 APA Audio/Web Conference: Infrastructure, CIP and Alternative Transportation
4:00 – 5:30 pm at the BRPC office
- 21 Lee Area Traffic Study Public Meeting
6:30 pm at Lee Elementary School Cafeteria
- 29 5th Thursday Dinner
6:00 pm at the Country Club of Pittsfield

FEBRUARY

- 5 BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
4:00 pm at the BRPC office
- 18 APA Audio/Web Conference: Informed Decisions: A Guide to Gathering Facts and Evidence
4:00 – 5:00 pm at the BRPC office

CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEWS

The following reviews have been completed and are available on the BRPC website:

- North Hoosic River Restoration (Clarksburg)
- The Center at Lenox Retail Expansion Project (Lenox)
- Proposed Parking Facilities & Future Medical Space, BMC (Pittsfield)



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WORKSHOP AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

CDBG ADMINISTRATION PEER-TO-PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Division of Community Services (DCS) in the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development still has funds for the FY2008 Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance Program. These small grants are for short-term problem solving or technical assistance projects. Municipalities (non-entitlement) may apply for grants of up to \$1000 to pay for up to 30 hours (\$900) of technical assistance and up to \$100 for reimbursement of travel, photocopying and/or the cost of incidental materials. A rolling application process is being used. Applications will be funded on a first-come, first-served basis. Assistance needs to be provided before June 30, 2008. For more information contact John Fitzgerald, 617-573-1446.

5TH THURSDAY DINNER

Fifty board members, building inspectors, and local staff from fifteen communities gathered at Aster's for October's 5th Thursday Dinner. Land use attorney Joel Russell provided an introduction to form-based zoning. Form based zoning focuses primarily on the appearance, or physical form of development, while 'traditional' zoning looks mostly at the use of a property.

The next 5th Thursday Dinner will be held January 29th, at the Country Club of Pittsfield. Emails and flyers will be sent as details are confirmed. Please contact Sarah LaValley for details.

APA AUDIO/WEB CONFERENCE SERIES

BRPC will continue to host APA audio/web conferences, many of which offer CE credits. Check the calendar (front page) for dates and topics. \$15 at the door.

ENERGY AUDIT PROGRAM

The Dept. of Energy Resources is now accepting 2nd round applications to receive free municipal energy audits and clean technology feasibility studies. The resulting report is designed to help municipalities, regional school districts and water/wastewater districts to identify capital improvements that help reduce their energy costs. **This is a first-come-first-serve offer, so we urge you to send applications in to DOER as soon as possible.** For more information, visit www.mass.gov/doer, and click on "Energy Grants for Municipalities," or contact Scott Durkee, the program coordinator at Scott.Durkee@state.ma.us or 617-626-7356.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Mass. Historical Commission is accepting grant applications to its Mass. Preservation Projects Fund. Eligible projects for this "bricks and mortar" program include pre-development (feasibility studies involving plans, specifications and historic structures reports) and construction activities (building preservation, building code compliance, barrier-free access etc.). Applicants must be a municipality or nonprofit organization. Applications are due **Feb. 20, 2009**. For more information visit www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcmppf/mppfidx.htm or call 617-727-8470.

BRPC TO HELP ADDRESS AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES RISK

BRPC recently won a grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation to develop effective tools to prevent the introduction and spread of zebra and quagga mussels in Berkshire County. These major biofouling organisms dramatically and irreversibly change the natural characteristics and use of a waterbody. While neither zebra mussels nor quagga mussels have been reported in MA, zebra mussels have been reported in waterbodies within all three states bordering Berkshire County. BRPC efforts will focus on education and outreach, reporting mechanisms, interactive tools, and legislation. *BRPC Contact: Melissa Provencher*