

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

LEE, MASSACHUSETTS



August 2000

The Lee Planning Task Force, with support from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, has worked together on the town's updated 2000 Comprehensive Master Plan, prepared with financial assistance from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

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In addition to thoughtful participatory input from the general public, this Master Plan was developed under the guidance of the Lee Planning Task Force, an appointed committee. Members of the Task Force committee for all or part of the process included:

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The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission served as the Lead Planning Consultant for the project and produced this document with the assistance of the Steering Committee. Senior Planner Thomas Skogland provided technical assistance to the Committee while they developed this plan and the corresponding Open Space and Recreation Plan. Sheila Finn, BRPC former Planner, provided much of the research, compiled the community survey and helped set-up the Public Forum. Zoe Neaderland, BRPC Senior Transportation Planner, provided technical assistance in the development of the transportation related sections. John Schmid, GIS Coordinator, provided necessary and useful mapping assistance. Nathaniel Karns, Executive Director, and Charles Cook, Senior Transportation Planner, provided technical support and project guidance.

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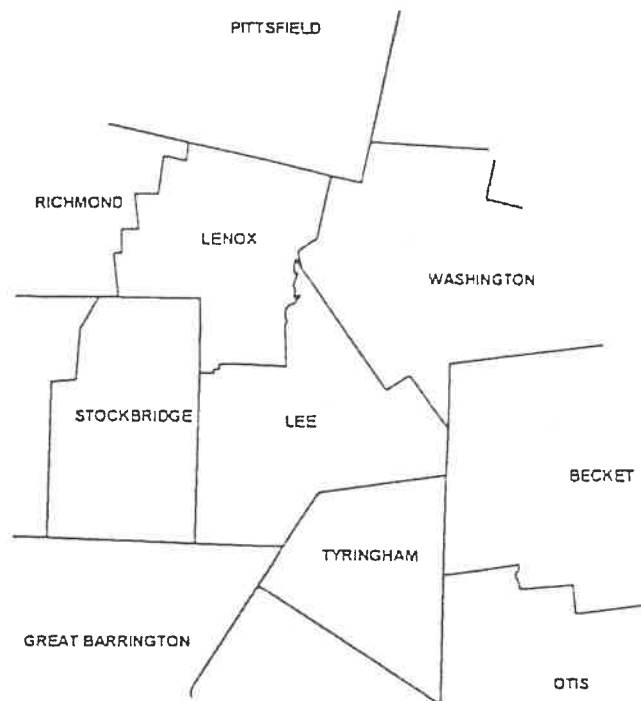
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Community Setting

Lee is a unique and special town of approximately 5,700 people nestled in the Housatonic River valley in the heart of the Berkshire mountains of western Massachusetts. It is located in Berkshire County, nine miles south of Pittsfield, 122 miles west of Boston, and 138 miles from New York City. The town has a total area of 27 square miles and includes the geographic center of Berkshire County. Lee is often referred to as the "Gateway to the Berkshires" due to its location at Exit 2 of the Massachusetts Turnpike. Lee is the first Berkshire destination of travelers and tourists from the south, east, and west.

Lee is bordered by Tyringham and Great Barrington to the South, Lenox to the north, Becket on the east, Washington to the northeast, and Stockbridge to the west.



B. Purpose, Scope and Authorization for the Master Plan

The purpose of a Master Plan is to put on paper the thoughts of the people and officials of Lee concerning its future development. A Master Plan is an important guidebook to the future that brings together information to enable wise decisions concerning public improvements and facilities such as roads, schools or parks. It also establishes the pattern for the future usage of land. The Master Plan consists of the full documentation of maps, charts, and tables, as well as descriptive text. These show existing conditions and trends. The Master Plan also contains the Planning Board's recommendations for future development. For an active and multi-faceted community such as Lee, this comprehensive approach helps to best serve the entire community.

Preparation and amendment of a Master Plan is one of the primary functions of a planning board as defined in Section 81, Chapter 41 of the General Laws of Massachusetts. Under Section 81-C of the Planning Enabling Legislation, all Planning Boards are required "from time to time to make careful studies and when necessary prepare plans of the resources, possibilities, and needs of the city or town, and upon the completion of any such study, shall submit to the Board of Selectmen a report thereon, with its recommendations."

In Section 81-D it is stipulated that "Such plan shall show, among other things, existing and desirable proposed public ways, public places, parks, playgrounds, sites for public buildings and structures, building and zoning districts, locations of sewers, and other public utilities. Such plan shall be made and may be added to or changed from time to time by a majority vote of such planning board and shall be a public record."

No plan can rigidly fix all future growth of the community, since no one can foretell what unforeseen circumstances may arise to change the pattern of development. Therefore the Master Plan must also be flexible and subject to frequent review.

The original Lee Master Plan was prepared in 1958 by Technical Planning Associates, Incorporated, of New Haven, Connecticut. Since then other studies and plans have been produced for or by various town organizations, boards and commissions. Information from these prior efforts has been utilized in this new Master Plan.

In 1997, the Town of Lee felt the need to more fully develop and synthesize the various planning activities in town, and to reach out to determine what could be accomplished in a cooperative manner. As part of a joint Master and Open Space planning project, citizen task forces were formed in the fall of 1997 to lead the planning process for the Town of Lee and the adjoining town of Lenox.

C. Master Plan Process and Vision

The Lee Planning Board has taken advantage of available state assistance to prepare this Master Plan. Funds have been made available on a matching basis from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). Technical assistance has been provided to the Planning Board by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) located in Pittsfield.

In November 1997, BRPC and the Lee Task Force held a joint kick-off meeting with Lenox to spark interest in the project and invite members of the community to participate as active members. This meeting, as well as subsequent Task Force meetings, was open to the public. At the initial meetings, members shared and discussed their broad goals for the town.

These discussions gave BRPC sufficient information and guidance to develop a community survey that covered a wide range of topics pertinent to both the *Open Space & Recreation Plan* and the Master Plan. This survey (Appendix 1) was mailed to each household in Lee in January 1998, and the results were used to guide the formulation of goals and further areas of study for

both plans. This survey achieved a response rate of over 30% of households in town, and supplemented the results of a previous smaller scale Open Space and Recreation survey done in May 1996.

The Lee Task Force, comprised of members of various governmental boards and organizations asked to serve by the Planning Board, immediately began meeting monthly to develop the Master Plan. In addition, they simultaneously commenced work on a corresponding updated town *Open Space & Recreation Plan*. Another product, a sub-regional issues report, shared with nearby Lenox, was also initiated. Throughout the process, staff members of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) have coordinated the development of the new Master Plan.

A Community Visioning Workshop, led by Dr. John Mullin of UMass-Amherst's Urban and Regional Planning Program in early June, 1998, helped flesh out the results of the survey, and pointed Task Force members toward a course of action.

During this time, Task Force members continued to meet in order to revise goals, discuss the community inventory, and begin to give the emerging plan concrete form. Meetings were open to the public. In addition, a number of focus groups were held to discuss specific Open Space and Recreation needs with Task Force members and/or town officials.

Lee residents' responses to the community-wide survey and at a public visioning meeting give a great deal of insight into the character of the community. Residents are genuinely concerned about the future for their children and grandchildren, about change via development within the town, about finding a balance between social and economic requirements, as well as environmental and aesthetic protection. Good employment opportunities remain a community priority. Nevertheless, survey results indicate most residents want to keep the current population stable or only have moderate growth. Residents also indicate that development should minimize impacts to the environment and balance all community needs and potential impacts.

In short Lee residents' vision for the future is that the community should work together to:

Carefully guide and manage change to ensure Lee preserves its present combination of outstanding natural assets, traditional New England atmosphere, and small town community spirit that makes it a special place. Residents, leaders and organizations should continue to promote social diversity and economic prosperity while protecting and preserving important historic, cultural, and environmental features. The community must also take any steps necessary to continue to provide high quality services, facilities and opportunities to meet the social and economic needs of present and future residents.

To help achieve the goals and objectives stated throughout this plan, the community needs to:

Maintain a high level of public & private participation and cooperation to sustain community betterment efforts.

Continue to foster planning by advancing and implementing the goals and strategies of the Master and Open Space & Recreation Plans through organizational efforts.

Continue on-going planning by monitoring the progress being made on recommended actions and by updating action plans to account for new development conditions and trends.

Support and participate in cooperative regional and sub-regional efforts.

II. HISTORY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. History

Lee has a long and rich heritage. The community began its existence as a rural agricultural settlement in the early 1700's when several families from Cape Cod settled in the hills of East Lee. The town was incorporated in 1777, named after a high-ranking officer in the Continental Army, General Charles Lee. It recorded a population of 1,170 inhabitants in the first federal census of 1790.

The waterpower of the Housatonic River was exploited for saw and grist mills early in the town's history. Samuel Church built the first paper mill, only the second in the County, in 1806 in South Lee. Throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, the town grew and became well known for its paper mills and white marble quarries that have been extensively utilized both locally and throughout the U.S.

By 1867, Lee was home to 25 paper mills and ranked first in the country's paper making industry. When a new process for making paper solely from wood pulp was adopted, the poplar forests in the town fueled a huge leap in paper production, making Smith Paper Company of Lee the largest paper producer in the world. In the late 1800s, the growing importance of locations adjacent to the railroad and the devastating flood of 1886 forced the closing of the small mills in East Lee. The paper and sawmills moved to the center of town, rebuilding on the banks of the Housatonic River. By the 1930's, the paper business in Lee began to decline as the softwood forests, sources of wood pulp, were depleted. Three paper mills, owned by Schweitzer-Mauduit, remain near the center of town, and Mead operates two other mills in South Lee.

Quarrying became an established industry in the mid-1800s and large quantities of marble were produced in Lee until the 1930s. Lee marble, considered by many to be the best in the country, was used in the construction of many historic monuments and buildings in several U.S. cities. Among these were St. Patrick's Cathedral and Grant's Tomb in New York City and the State House annex and Public Library in Boston. Between 1852 and 1863, Lee supplied the marble for enlarging the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. The lime industry was well established by 1885, furnishing lime for building and agriculture. By the 1930's, the Lee Lime Corporation ranked as one of the largest producers of lime in New England. The marble quarries were abandoned in the 1940's but have reopened in recent years, subject to market demand. Both lime and marble quarries are still mined today.

As Lee grew as a center of industry, its population expanded rapidly, reaching 3,220 by 1850. The population was generally stable after that point, with periods of gradual increase over the next century. In 1957 a state toll road, the Massachusetts Turnpike, was built, connecting Lee to Boston in a ride of less than three hours by auto. The location, just south of downtown Lee, the primary entrance/exit for Berkshire County, became a strong factor in the life and development of town. From 1960 to 1970, the town experienced a strong growth spurt as Lee's population increased by 1,155 residents, a 22% increase. Over the last thirty plus years, commercial

development has spread from the Turnpike interchange to downtown Lee, along Route 20, the main transportation route through the town.

B. Community Identity & Strengths

Lee is the “Gateway” to the Berkshires. Residents of Lee take great pride in their town’s environmental resources and beauty, economic resourcefulness and small town social fabric. They recognize these strengths and are working to preserve and sustain them. Lee’s extensive forested areas, mountainous topography, agricultural lands and wetlands lend the town a distinctly vibrant aesthetic and natural beauty that is treasured highly by residents. Industry, from the early gristmills to the more traditionally recognized paper industry, provides a source of income for many residents of Lee and surrounding towns.

While the paper industry is still an important component of the local economy, with five mills still present near the downtown and in the village of South Lee, Lee’s economic base has become more diversified in recent decades. Lee has a thriving downtown retail center that serves town residents, as well as adjacent rural communities. The scenic downtown Lee Park and tall spire of the Congregational Church are local landmarks that typify a historic New England village. An increased retail and hospitality presence serves to stimulate Lee’s share of the County’s tourism industry.

Lower Main Street is a “genuine” historic New England downtown that has been physically revitalized and is a quality social and economic center. It features interesting architecture and public buildings such as the Town Hall and Library; social points such as prominent churches and the senior center; and various stores and offices where goods, financial, and personal services are available for residents as well as visitors. The variety of uses that serve local needs also include the Post Office, senior housing, the youth center, a supermarket, lumberyard, hardware stores, diner, five and dime and a pharmacy.

Suitable agricultural land, which is limited due to the mountainous topography and soil quality, is most abundant in the western part of Lee. Agricultural uses have dwindled, as it has become increasingly hard for them to remain viable. However, one of the region’s few remaining dairy farms, an important local and regional open space resource, is still prominently located on a hilltop overlooking Laurel Lake.

Lee is the most affordable community in its immediate area. Over generations, it has remained a place where families have lived near the places they worked; this trend continues today. Although the town has experienced a declining birthrate and increase in retirees, there is an overall balance of household types and age groups. This family-oriented nature makes Lee a neighborly place in which to live, where residents feel safe and welcomed. Community spirit generally runs quite high, and group associations and volunteerism have traditionally contributed to making the town work. Lee’s populace consists largely of persons of European heritage, including strong pockets of Irish and Italian Americans, who currently or previously supported themselves and their families through industrial employment; nevertheless, ethnic, family, and personal roots are diverse. In recent years, a small but steady influx of Hispanics, mainly Latinos from Latin America, have made Lee their home.

C. Historic and Cultural Resources

In 1976, the lower Main Street of Lee was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic Main Street district, with 18 buildings and an oval park, includes the Congregational church; Lee Library; Lee's Town Hall, Memorial Hall; and the Morgan House. The Golden Hill Bridge was recently accepted for listing, as was the Village of South Lee. These measures were taken not only to preserve Lee's rich architectural history but also to further prevent the commercialization of the main thoroughfare through town. In addition, the churches in Lee are places for spiritual gathering that are well integrated into the community's cultural fabric. Appendix Table HIST1 contains an extensive list of historic sites and structures.

Lee's historic restoration efforts have begun to restore the original facades of downtown buildings. This is primarily being led by the Historic Commission and LEAD (Lee Economic Action for the Downtown).

D. Events and Activities

The Town and its business organizations sponsor many cultural activities, including Founders Day Weekend. As Lee's own birthday party, it is an annual event, held the first weekend of October, that is full of rich history, music, good food and a lively parade. The recent influx of immigrants from Latin America has also provided the impetus for holding festivals that celebrate that culture and introduce other residents to the flavors and customs of various Latin American nations.

The park areas and other public spaces are great places to hold outdoor activities that allow people to leisurely interact and learn about or experience history, traditions and other cultures. For instance, when a Hispanic festival is held, it adds to the vibrancy and the diversity of the community, which is part of what makes Lee special.

Although Lee lacks major cultural attractions, its resorts, motels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and gas stations benefit from travelers visiting cultural attractions in neighboring communities. Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony, in Lenox, the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, and Jacob's Pillow in Becket are major attractions that are commonly accessed through Lee.

E. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

Lee's many attributes help attract newcomers, visitors and businesses. As the economy continues to change in the future, the influx of tourists and second homeowners will help to sustain the community but could also alter the character of the town. Active residents, town leaders, and organizations should continue to foster adaptation while protecting and preserving the historic, cultural and environmental features that are important components of Lee's heritage.

Each historic site can and should be considered on its own merits and programmatic attention given to each according to its needs and the desires of its owners. Federal Income Tax credits are available for owners who rehabilitate designated properties according to federal preservation

standards. The Historic Commission can continue to encourage and enable use of these tax credits and National Trust for Historic Preservation grants. Continuing to develop home tours, displaying plaques and otherwise publicizing the architectural and cultural history helps to promote preservation.

The historic areas need to be considered as a whole within their context. The efforts of concerned individuals and groups have helped revitalize the downtown and allow for its continued use as a vibrant business and community center. The results of that process prove that guided change can be positive. The continuation of current efforts is important as the historical downtown needs continual attention to maintaining its physical infrastructure and appearance.

On-going work remains. Some spaces in historic older buildings are either vacant, in disrepair, or both. Town organizations and property owners can continue to access a variety of grant programs from the Department of Housing and Community Development (such as CDBG) in conjunction with, and respecting the Town's preservation goals and activities. The recently designated South Lee Historic District will face some of the same issues as the downtown, although each area's structures are significantly different.

Lee would appear to have potential for showcasing its rich history through some type of exhibition. Lee's marble and paper mill development is historically significant and therefore could tap into several potential funding niches. Many manufacturing structures and quarries still exist and could at some point become historical sites for education and tourism activities.

Lee's strong historical and cultural assets remain an important defining characteristic for the town. Lee is also changing in many ways: economically, demographically, environmentally, and socially. Historic and cultural assets and areas are interrelated with open space considerations, tourism, and other issues such as land use and reuse. These issues are discussed throughout this Plan and in the *Open Space & Recreation Plan*.

Gateway Project

The Gateway project, scheduled for completion in 2000, to be funded mostly by MassHighway, seeks to transform Housatonic Street from the Massachusetts Turnpike to downtown into "a road that welcomes, and proudly proclaims that Lee is a good place to visit and to live". According to the Concept Plan from KDI Landscape Architects,

"Achieving a better welcome into Lee will require a man-made, instead of a natural landscape, and will come through unifying the character of the street along its length and providing improved, consistent and attractive amenities...Achieving this vision is important not only to Lee, but to the rest of the County as well, since this is an important North-South artery for the entire Berkshire region, and the Gateway provides the first impression of the region for many visitors."

A new design for an improved Gateway area will include:

- Buried overhead utilities to lessen the detrimental impacts of overhead power, telephone, and cable TV lines.
- Removal of as many extraneous signs as possible, thereby reducing visual clutter while still directing people in an efficient, direct manner.
- Highway-style lighting replaced with a modicum of pedestrian-scaled period lighting, including integrated signage as needed.
- Street tree plantings that unify the street and visually “green up” (reducing the vast visual impact of paving), creating a consistent, pleasant street perspective.
- Creation of an arrival place that provides a visual welcome, place to stop and rest and gain additional information about attractions in town and the rest of the County.

This project should be consistent with themes throughout this plan to maintain and enhance community character while supporting linkages to land use, economics, transportation, pedestrian design, etc.

Cultural Resources

More than simply places, buildings and arts, culture is tied to the people of the community. Support for and enhancement of cultural and arts events such as craft fairs and celebrations, especially in the downtown, make a great deal of sense in that it preserves the character of the community and provides livelihood for the town. The Farmers Market can be combined with art shows, poetry readings, etc. in outdoor places such as a fully developed river park area or a reconstructed Town Common, or in indoor places such as the Library, as appropriate. Special organizations also help tie Lee residents into regional cultural awareness and preservation. For instance, the Lee CDC has supported the development of a Berkshire County Latin American Council.

The fine arts are an important regional asset for which local appreciation can be cultivated and this asset can possibly be harnessed to further local goals. Since there are a tremendous number of performers in the Berkshires in the summer, it may be possible to create a performance venue that has widespread appeal to both townspeople and visitors.

Due to the presence of major cultural tourism attractions nearby, and its easy accessibility, Lee itself could be the future site of such an attraction. However, the debate several years ago over the construction of the Outlet Village illustrates that difficult choices regarding development will continue to surface. Residents want to see Lee’s qualities preserved for future generations, while still allowing for needed changes and improvements. To find and maintain a proper course, actions in the public domain should continue to account for the needs and rights of all members of the community. The community can strengthen the ties that hold it together by doing all it can to make all residents responsible, active participants in the community.

F. Goals, Objectives and Strategies to Preserve Historic & Cultural Values

Residents feel the importance of preserving Lee's community identity and connections. Historic and cultural resources ideally preserve the best aspects of the past while striving to maintain their relevance to current and future situations. Some resources can only be preserved by creating special circumstances where change, save for restoration, is generally not allowed. Other cultural and historic resources, like the downtown area, require some change to continue to play important roles in the changing life of a community of opportunity and vibrancy.

It is important to save the architectural heritage of the downtown, an important visual icon of Lee. In prior planning efforts, residents have also expressed a desire to maintain a "real" downtown that is not only a business center, but also a "community center in the truest sense... providing opportunities for recreation, socializing and gathering... composed of diverse elements that are interdependent."

Implementing the spirit of this Master Plan through continued and sustained efforts of the community can assist Lee to stay on a course that will avoid the loss of some of the town's character. Major changes and the cumulative effect of small changes require a process of review and periodic evaluation. At this point it appears that the following bold print goals, underlined objectives and italicized strategy alternatives could facilitate positive preservation and enhancement of cultural and historic resources.

Promote and protect the historic characteristics of the town.

Preserve and enhance the character of Lee's Historic Districts and its architectural heritage of historic sites, homes and buildings.

- *Continue to assist/access funds for guided restoration/reuse in Historic Districts. Pursue, publicize and assist Town organizations and property owners to access state/federal programs.*
- *Support the efforts of the Lee Historic Commission to ensure enhancement activities are consistent with the preservation of historic qualities and to protect historic places from unsuitable or inappropriate development.*
- *Develop a program to enhance preservation/restoration activities in the South Lee Historic District.*

Preserve the Downtown area's mixed-use heritage and vitality.

- *Support efforts to restore buildings and enhance park sites in the downtown area.*
- *Continue to include broad representation in downtown efforts to ensure that downtown continues to serve residents and retains its local flavor.*

Enhance the appreciation of historic and cultural resources and cultural diversity.

Promote Lee's awareness of local history and its proud traditions in a manner both educational and fun.

- *Preserve history through education, re-enactment events, and public and private historic preservation/restoration endeavors, particularly in and near historic districts.*

Respect and celebrate the town's cultural diversity, traditions and talents.

- *Sponsor more cultural events that celebrate the town's traditions and diversity and promote ethnic celebrations that support newer immigrants.*

Increase cultural offerings and their prominence in Lee.

- *Expand and coordinate cultural education and offerings through a combined school/town commission on the arts.*
- *Integrate cultural amenities in the mix of pedestrian oriented civic and community uses.*

Broaden the appeal, awareness, and links among cultural and historical resources.

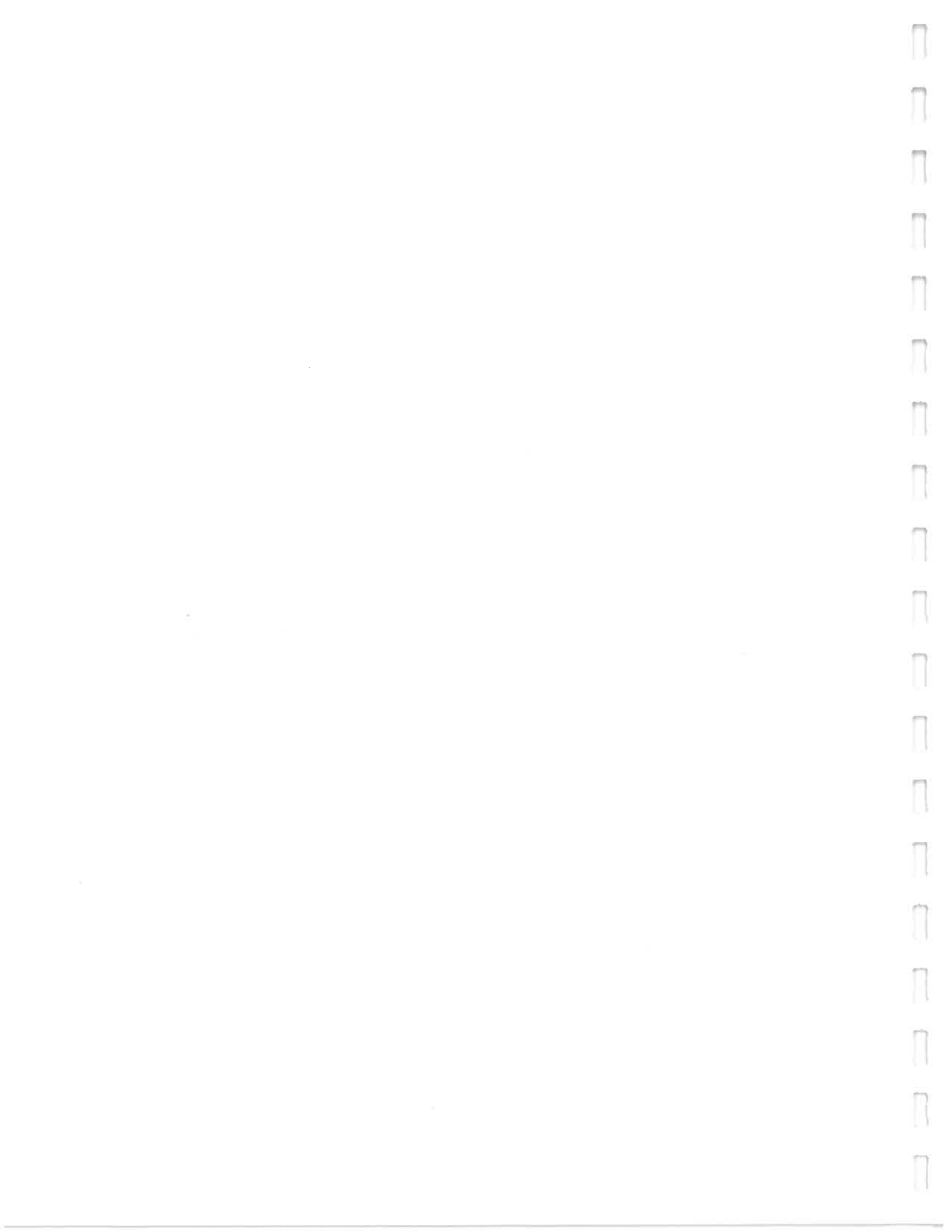
- *Link educational publicity for the Lee historic districts and Jacobs Ladder Scenic Byway to regional historic initiatives such as the Great Estates program. Also include High Lawn Farm and the aesthetic and historic appeal of agricultural fields as well as historic structures, with an economic tie-in to tourism.*

Maintain the visual character and attractiveness of gateway areas of high visibility.

Implement the Gateway project and other aesthetic and functional infrastructure improvements.

Carefully guide development/redevelopment in the gateway areas.

- *Coordinate reviews and actions of local boards and commissions to ensure aesthetic compatibility with the character of existing high quality development and protect against over-development.*



III. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Lee is a relatively small and stable community, which is seen a great strength. The population is large enough to support significant local public services and private enterprises that provide local employment and goods and services for everyday living. The scale of the community emphasizes its quality of small town friendliness.

A. Population Trends

Lee's historic population trends prior to 1970 were noted in the previous section. The highest population ever recorded in Lee in a decennial (ten year) period was 6,426 persons in 1970, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Over the last several decades, the population in Lee has been slowly decreasing. From 1980 to 1990, the population decreased by 6.4%, from 6,247 to 5,849 residents. Since then, the decline has been slower. This trend or rate of loss has been continuous, and is primarily due to economic conditions in the Berkshires.

Table POP1 Recent Town Population Changes

Year	People	# Loss/Gain	% Avg. Annual Change
1970	6,426		
1980	6,247	-179	-0.28%
1990	5,849	-398	-0.64%
1996	5,743	-106	-0.30%
1998	(est.) 5,687	-162	-0.40%

Sources: 1970-1990 U.S. Census, 1996 U.S. Census Estimate, 1997 Annual Town Census (change from 1990)

Lee's population trends generally mirror those of Berkshire County. The County's population reached a height of nearly 150,000 persons in 1970, and has experienced a slow but steady decline since then. Each decade has seen a loss of manufacturing jobs that are not fully offset by gains in other employment sectors (more information is contained in the section on Economics). This pattern created an overall effect of out-migration of residents seeking employment elsewhere, decreasing County population. County population losses for the period from 1970 to 1997 amounted to nearly 15,000 persons, about 10% of the population.

Lee has also experienced a loss of manufacturing jobs in town. However, Lee's population trend is more directly connected to the pattern of population and employment in the commuting area surrounding it, strongly tied to Pittsfield but also including other parts of the central and southern Berkshire County. The table below shows the population losses experienced in Lee were also experienced in nearby towns from 1970-1997. Lee's percentage of the surrounding area's population has held steady over time.

Table POP2 Recent Town and Surrounding Area Population Trends

	Lee	Lee Area	Lee's % of Area
1970	6,426	91,808	7.0%
1980	6,247	87,446	7.1%
1990	5,849	83,526	7.0%
1996	5,743	(est.) 80,000	7.2%
1997	(est.) 5,687	(est.) 80,000	7.1%

Sources: 1970-1990 U.S. Census, 1996 U.S. Census Estimate, 1997 Annual Town Census

Note: The Lee Area includes adjoining towns and places with residential and employment commuting links to Lee. It is comprised of Lee, Pittsfield, Lenox, Stockbridge, Washington, Great Barrington, Tyringham, Richmond, Becket, Dalton, West Stockbridge, and Otis.

B. Demographic Characteristics and Trends

Lee's household demographics are strikingly similar to the larger area around it, in which all age groups are represented but many college age young adults leave and retirees are a substantial population group in town.

Table POP3 1990 Town, Area and State Population By Age

Age Group	Lee	% Lee Pop.	% Lee Area Pop.	% of Pop. Massachusetts
Under 5 years	363	6.2%	6.5%	6.9%
5 to 17 years	984	16.8%	16.8%	15.6%
18 to 24 years	479	8.2%	8.9%	11.8%
25 to 34 years	993	17.0%	15.7%	18.3%
35 to 44 years	876	15.0%	15.0%	15.3%
45 to 54 years	626	10.7%	10.2%	10.0%
55 to 64 years	604	10.3%	9.8%	8.6%
65 to 74 years	543	9.3%	9.4%	7.6%
75 to 84 years	273	4.7%	5.6%	4.4%
85 years and over	108	1.8%	2.1%	1.5%
	5,849	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census

Demographic trends have affected population trends through a combination of factors. One reason is a declining birth rate. At the same time, improvements to health care have extended life spans. The overall effect has been to change the age distribution of the community. In 1970, 10.3% of Lee's residents were over 65 years of age. During the next decade, the number of elderly rose 14%, accounting for 12.1% in 1980. By 1990, the elderly represented 15.8% of the population. Children under 14 comprised 19.2% of the population in 1990 with teens and adults 15-64, at 64%, representing the balance.

The median age of Lee residents was 36.1 years in 1990 versus 33.6 years for Massachusetts. This information indicates that out-migration has occurred among the younger age groups. The trend is not believed to have changed much since 1990. This is evidenced by lower birth rates since 1990, creating a pattern in which births and deaths basically balance out in Lee and the rest of Berkshire County, whereas there are more births than deaths in the State as a whole. Lee's ratio of 2.56 persons per household is similar to the national and state average, but has dropped sharply in the 1980's from 2.91 in 1980. Thus, even though the population decreased between 1980 and 1990, there was actually an increase in the number of households in town.

Another population characteristic of note is the high percentage of persons of Caucasian backgrounds. In 1990, the largest minority groups were Asian and Hispanic, comprising less than two percent of the population. There is diversity within these populations, and the individuals would sometimes prefer to have their ethnicity identified by their country or region of origin, such as Pakistanis or Latinos. The overall diversity of Lee's population has increased significantly since 1990. By 1998, there were reportedly about 100 Hispanic families in town; many who have settled in the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown. If this number is correct, the Hispanic population would now exceed five percent of the population.

Although overall population shifts have not been remarkable over the last twenty years, residential development trends have changed the population density and distribution. Newer homes were built further away from the town center or on former agricultural land on the outskirts of town.

Lee, because of its location near several Berkshire tourist attractions, such as Tanglewood, is also home to many seasonal residents who hail from New York City, Hartford, and Boston. Many of the estimated 500+ part-time residents own homes or cottages near the lakes, some live in newer townhouses. In addition, the daytime population swells, particularly during the summer season, due to vacationing tourists. The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority reports that 19,000 cars get off the Masspike in Lee on a peak day in summer, many of them tourists. The demographic characteristics of Lee residents are different than the demographic characteristics of visitors to Lee and the Berkshires.

C. Population Projections

Population projections are most reliable when they incorporate local historical trend data. Using recent historical population change rates for Lee we can formulate various projections. In Lee, the recent trend data generally projects slightly *decreasing* population, due to decreasing population between 1970 and 1990.

However, the Regional Economic Model forecasts indicate that Lee's population will grow slightly for the next 10 years, then pick up considerably in the following ten years. It is likely that Lee will continue to experience periods of population gains and losses due to changing local and regional conditions, but also impacted by state and national conditions. A practical view of Lee's future population change, taking into consideration land, market, and infrastructure factors, indicates the population will grow slowly, a desired pattern as expressed in the community survey.

Table POP4 Town Population Projections

Year	Projection 1	Projection 2	Projection 3	Projection 4	Projection 5
2000	5,790	5,790	5,790	5,612	5,586
2010	6,257	5,860	5,673	5,367	5,324
2020	6,889	6,470	6,056	5,133	5,061

Source Notes:

Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) Amherst, MA, forecasts use economic and U.S. Census population data from 1960 to 1990. The three REMI projections are based upon an overall declining County population from 1990 to 2010, with a significant gain in overall County population from 2010 to 2020.

- Projection 1: REMI Dispersal Scenario is based upon an increasing share of County population outside Central Cities (Pittsfield)
- Projection 2: REMI Middle Scenario is based upon a continuation of County population distribution patterns
- Projection 3: REMI Concentrated Scenario is based on a halt in the County population distribution pattern of declining Central Cities (Pittsfield)
- Projection 4: Recent Historical Trend (Modified - U.S. Census: 1970-1990, 1997 Town Census)
- Projection 5: U.S. Census Trend (Straight Line - U.S. Census: 1970-1990)

The national and state trends are toward an aging populace and lower household sizes, and these trends are likely to continue in Lee into the future.

The potential for growth exists due to demand generated by Lee's location and as a result of economic development. This should lead the community to question whether it should actively work to influence population levels and development patterns in a variety of ways. Although there is still a good mix of age groups in Lee, many younger families have been leaving due to limited job opportunities in the area. However, many localities in Western Massachusetts have recently experienced an upturn in their economies, consistent with state and national trends. The rate of persons leaving area towns and counties has apparently decreased. Those who do leave are now being replaced through increased numbers of persons returning to the area or by newcomers.

Retaining or attracting more persons has led to an increase in the demand for housing. Local officials and Realtors report that housing unit vacancies have decreased significantly since 1990. In 1990, 10% of housing units were seasonal; however, anecdotal evidence suggests that the town's retirement and seasonal populations, like those of the County overall, are growing.

Population is tied to housing. Lee will likely continue to be an advantageous location for families. The existing housing stock, and a slow rate of new housing, should maintain a

sufficient supply of housing that is varied enough to allow a diversity of new residents who will help to keep the town vibrant. A continued vibrant employment base will serve those with roots in Lee, helping to ensure community cohesiveness.

The resident population trends suggest little change in the number to be served but significant variability in needs. Based on Lee's age distribution and measures of wealth, public services and activities will need to be diverse while development opportunities may be limited.

The town will need to focus more on the increasing needs of its elderly citizens in the future. With the growing elderly trend expected to continue, community facilities, and means of getting to them, will need to be designed to accommodate those with disabilities.

D. Goals, Objectives and Strategies to Maintain Lee's Sense of Community

The results of the Lee Community Survey, administered in January/February 1998 to all residences in town, emphasize a desire to keep the town's population fairly stable, with 88.4% of respondents saying Lee's population should either increase modestly or stay roughly the same. The existing sense of community is really a large extended web of people and families. The more they interact positively and inclusively, the greater the sense of community. Goals, objectives and strategies are:

Retain community vibrancy and scale.

Sustain economic opportunities and enhance community qualities that serve all segments of the population and which allow and encourage people to remain in Lee.

Maintain a population level that is generally at the present level or only a bit higher.

- *Craft and implement policies to keep the population level for the next 20 years within 10% of the present population level.*

Maintain and preserve Lee's sense of community that is essential to the quality of life.

Continue to encourage community bonding that occurs through strong local organizations and participatory activities.

- *Improve communication with residents through local media and give them continuing opportunities to participate in planning and community improvement projects.*

Enrich opportunities for interaction among the populace and with nature in a respectful manner.

Respect the rights and dignity of all members of the community, regardless of income, age, race, ethnicity, or disability.

When undertaking actions in the public domain, maximize participation and include balanced representation of all groups in the population.

- *Provide publicized opportunities for people to participate positively; continually build the base of residents willing to interact in the community and to further community betterment.*

Be receptive to a slowly changing demographic composition by continuing to embrace social and cultural diversity in the public and private sphere.

- *Encourage and support the efforts of newcomers to this country to become citizens and voters and to attend, participate and feel welcome in community activities.*

IV. COMMUNITY SERVICES, FACILITIES AND SUPPORT

The Town currently offers a variety of services for the public. These services often require facilities and infrastructure and are funded primarily through property taxes. This section includes a summary of conditions and future needs pertaining to education, recreation, public safety, and other town and government related services. Non-governmental community services are also briefly considered. Community service needs in Lee are often met by volunteerism and impromptu response to needs as they arise - by people who care about the community, are civic-minded and have a spirit of cooperation.

The water and wastewater systems serve most residents and businesses. Town officials and the Department of Public Works have been working hard to improve utility facilities and services. A new water filtration plant has recently come online. Lee needs to upgrade and expand the town's wastewater treatment facility, and design for the upgrade is proceeding. Utilities are discussed in detail in the Utilities section of this plan.

Other investments will be necessary to address long-term needs such as improved roads and additional sidewalks, discussed in the Transportation Section. Implementation of a basic capital program is proceeding systematically, and requires significant internal and external financing.

All public needs must be met through a careful allocation of limited local resources. Local government and the people involved with it at every level are working to do this important job.

A. Education and Learning

Provision of high quality educational services is extremely important in preparing students to reach their potential and for life-long learning opportunities for all of Lee residents. Lee is the center of a small school system that has had fairly stable enrollment in recent years.

Public school enrollment dropped sharply in the 1980's. It has been stable (increasing slightly) in the 1990's. Lee is the center of a small school system also serving Tyringham. Some students also come from Becket and Otis. A number of students take advantage of open enrollment/school choice.

Table COM1 Public School Enrollment

Year	K-6	7-12	Total
1982	418	562	980
1987	456	513	969
1992	360	446	806
1995	357	451	808
1997	360	453	813

Central School, built in 1894 and renovated over the course of the century, is an attractive, though decidedly aging, structure on a centrally located High Street site. The school has approximately 89,400 gross square feet in three distinct building portions. The school houses over 30 classrooms plus two laboratories, a gym, art rooms, music room and other facilities. A small grassy field and swing sets provide playtime outlets. A study completed in April 1998 by the engineering firm Alderman & MacNeish indicates the many of these facilities are ill suited for their present use and/or non-compliant with state guidelines, and would be too costly to repair.

Lee High School, completed in 1962, occupies a rolling 101-acre tract on Greylock Street. The current structure of 70,700 gross square feet houses about 30 classrooms, several laboratories, numerous special purpose rooms—including art and music rooms and metal and wood shops, and has a design capacity for about 400 students. Its facilities also include a library, a gymnasium, cafeteria, a faculty lounge, and various administrative offices.

Due to problems of age and size restrictions, the Central School, that houses grades Pre-K-8, is being replaced by a new school that will provide classrooms for grades Pre-K-6. The new school is being built adjacent to the high school that is being upgraded and expanded to accommodate grades 7 and 8. The high school will become an enhanced middle/high complex that will include an auditorium and other new features. The new elementary school is scheduled for occupancy at the end of 2001. At that time, grades 7-12 will occupy the Central School until the end of 2002 when the middle/high school renovations are scheduled for completion.

St. Mary's Catholic School is a private K-8 along Orchard Street with approximately 200 students. A portion of Lee's elementary school aged children attend St. Mary's which includes the usual array of classrooms, function and activity rooms; as well as a playground and playing fields. Based on steady enrollment and a recent addition constructed in 1998, this is likely to continue to be the case in the future.

Continuing Education

An existing adult education program exists in town in connection with the High School. Berkshire Community College (BCC) is a publicly funded, affordably priced, two-year school offering a host of credit and non-credit courses. BCC offers about 30 courses per semester, plus numerous workshops, in its Great Barrington campus, as well as hundreds of courses and workshops at its main campus in Pittsfield. Simons Rock, in Great Barrington, is a private two and four-year institution that attracts many talented high-school-aged students who wish to get an early start on their college career. Massachusetts College of the Liberal Arts, in North Adams, is a publicly funded four-year institution. Williams College in Williamstown is a private four-year institution. Its standards are very high, as are the costs to attend this excellent college. Westfield State College, located in Westfield, MA, is the nearest public four-year college to Lee and attracts numerous students from Lee.

Library

One of the town's strongest community assets is the Lee Library, located on Main Street. The library contains a meeting room, reading/reference room, offices, and other space for storage of assorted historic documents and other holdings and equipment. The list of physical facilities

hints at the range of services offered by the library. Special collections in art, music, local history and children's books enrich the total stock of over 56,000 volumes. A full time librarian and staff handle an annual circulation of 46,000 books and other media. Material not available locally can be secured through the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System, an inter-library loan system with access to some of the finest libraries in the state.

B. Recreation

There are a variety of active and passive recreational sites and activities available in Lee. Several organizations, including the Lee Youth Association, provide recreational services. Activities serve all age groups and are family oriented. There is a good base of recreation with neighborhood parks, golf course, youth sports, sports leagues, town beach, and areas along the Appalachian Trail. Many facilities are town owned, although privately owned parks and ball fields also serve an important role. Recreational information is detailed in the Lee *Open Space & Recreation Plan* (2000 or latest update).

Residents of and visitors to Lee already benefit from the extensive opportunities for passive recreation that exist in the State Parks, reserves and in-town conservation lands. These include hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, and cross country skiing in the October Mountain and Beartown State Forests. The federally-owned Appalachian Trail also crosses Lee and can be accessed on Route 20. Numerous opportunities for nature studies, bird watching, hiking and snow shoeing exist in parcels managed by the Lee Conservation Commission, including Dunn Park, Longcope Park, Ferncliff Reservation and the Town Forest. Although these facilities are widely used, their full potential, including the improvement, extension or development of trails, is yet to be realized due to a lack of resources for proper implementation and maintenance.

C. Town Hall and Public Safety

Town Hall

Lee's handsome Memorial Town Hall houses most town offices and is heavily utilized. The three-story brick structure, built in 1874 and well maintained, provides space for meetings and offices. The first floor includes offices, including the Clerk's office, and the courtroom in the southern section of the building, which is used for public meetings. The second floor includes Town Administration and other offices. The building is also used for storage of Town records and documents and hosts the police department and dispatch center.

Police Protection

Lee is a very safe community as is evidenced by the low crime rate. In 1993 there were only 110 crimes reported, indicating a rate of 18.81 per 1,000 persons versus the state rate of 47.95. Violent crimes were also very low.

The Police Department occupies offices in the Town Hall basement and part of the first floor. From here the chief and 9 full time officers administer Lee's twenty-four hour police coverage. On busy weekends this force can be bolstered by additional part-time employees available for traffic control.

The force annually responds to over 3,000 calls. Traffic problems present the major police activity. Thus road patrol, bus follow-up, and summer weekend congestion demand much department time. Judging from the community-wide survey, the force provides good protection.

Fire Protection

The Lee Volunteer Fire Department provides a very valuable service to the community that is greatly appreciated. Over 50 volunteers who work out of the two strategically located stations of the Lee Fire Department provide excellent protection for the town's developed areas, typically responding to between 150 and 200 calls annually.

The Lee Center station on Main Street was built in 1912. The historic two-story brick building serves as an attractive headquarters. The South Lee station is situated along Pleasant Street in South Lee.

In addition to alarm systems, the Fire Department maintains an extensive radio network. The Lee Center link with the Berkshire County Mutual Aid wavelength assures immediate access to outside help. Portable radios plus truck-mounted units provide extra flexibility in extended operations such as brush fires.

Emergency

Lee has very good emergency/quick response services. Joint EMT Fire/Police Dispatching from the Dispatch Center and E911 service is provided. E911 is also provided to Tyringham. Ambulance service, over 500 calls annually, is provided by the volunteer Ambulance Squad. It includes mutual aid agreements with the surrounding towns of Lenox, Becket and Richmond,

D. Other Municipal Facilities and Services

Lee Senior Center

The Senior Center, located in the Airolidi Building on Railroad Street, offers an ever-growing package of services to all Lee residents. The Center is heavily utilized. The Center has a director to oversee and develop programs for Lee's senior citizens.

DPW Building

The existing DPW shed building stores an extensive supply of maintenance equipment. It is centrally located on the west side of the downtown area. It is a non-conforming riverside use.

Cemeteries

Lee's main internment facility is Fairmont Cemetery. The Town's responsibility is largely upkeep - lawn and tree trimming plus headstone maintenance. The Public Works department and subcontractors perform necessary tasks to keep the cemetery in good condition.

The South Lee Cemetery is a small, historical facility that is full. St. Mary's Cemetery is maintained by the Catholic Church.

The following table summarizes information on the Town community facilities.

Table COM2 Town Community Facilities

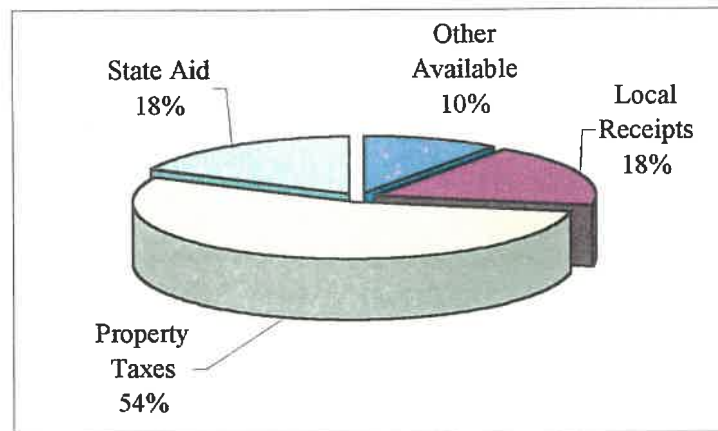
Facility	Service Function	Built	Rebuilt
Lee High School	Education, Recreation	1958	
Central School	Education, Recreation	1894	many times
Library	Library	1907	addition 1977
Town Hall	Government, Police, Meeting	1874	1912, 1992 - Interior renovations
Lee Senior Center (Airoidi Building)	Activities, Meeting	1969	renovated in 1975
Lee Central Fire Station	Fire	1912	
South Lee Fire Station	Fire	1959	renovated in 1970
Ambulance Building	Emergency	1997	
Public Works Building	Maintenance, Equipment Storage	1968	
Fairmont Cemetery	Cemetery	over 200 yrs. old	
Utilities (refer to Utility Section)			

E. Government and Fiscal Conditions

Lee is a Town with the representative Town Meeting form of government, an elected representative body of three Selectmen, a multitude of other elected and appointed officials, boards and commissions, and a Town Administrator. Sixty Town Representatives (six are at-large members) cover six districts in Town, meeting to vote at Representative Town Meetings several times during the year.

The Town currently provides a wide variety of services and facilities to residents including provision and maintenance of physical infrastructure and utilities. Currently all municipal functions are funded by property taxes, excise and other taxes, service fees, licenses, and transfer payments from state and federal levels. For FY 1998 (Fiscal Year from July 1997 through June 1998) the Town levy on residential real estate property was roughly \$14.90 per one thousand dollars of valuation. The tax rate has been stable in the 1990's, but total property valuation has also risen.

Property taxes comprise 54% of the revenue base for FY 1999. Non property tax revenue is an important component of local finances. Other Available Revenue includes grants, sewer and water charges, interest, cash savings, etc. The tax on overnight lodging (rooms) is a significant revenue source, totaling over \$200,000 in 1998. The following graph illustrates the basic sources of municipal revenues.

Chart COM3 Revenue Sources for FY 1998

Currently, 64% of the property tax base is residential, with 24% commercial, 5% personal property, and industrial 8%.

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue statistics note 1,688 single-family parcels in FY 1998, with an average assessed value of \$117,787. This average value is relatively high for Berkshire County, but not unlike other towns in the southern portion of the County. Single-family properties generated nearly three million dollars in tax levies, with an average annual tax bill of \$1,702 per property, which is near the County average.

There are also residential properties (mainly multiple unit structures) that are classified outside of single-family homes. These residential units generated just over one million dollars in FY 1998 tax levies. As noted in the Housing section, townhouses, condos, and assisted living for seniors are gaining a significant share of the residential construction market and assessment base in Lee.

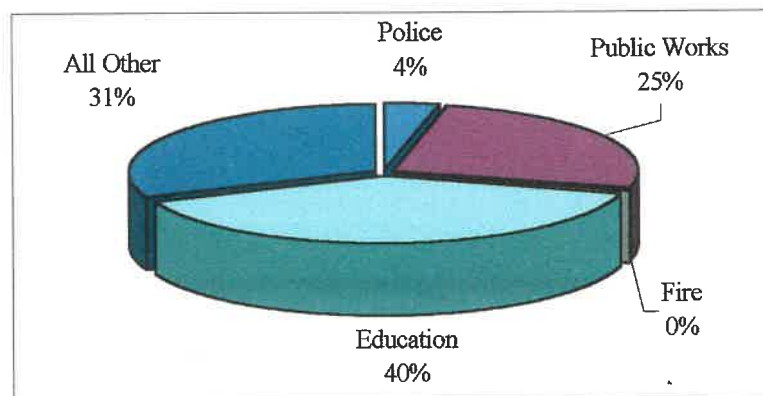
Commercial properties are also a significant portion of the property tax base, totaling over 1.4 million dollars in tax levies in FY 1999. The levy for the Industrial base was nearly one half million dollars.

There are nearly 300 seasonal summer homes in Lee. Some seasonal units have been converted to year-round use and may be either primary residences or second homes. Massachusetts allows the taxing of personal property contained in non-domicile housing units along with industrial/commercial equipment and furnishings; these sources comprise most of the \$289,094 in FY 1998 personal property levies for the town.

General fund expenditures for FY 1998 were \$8,902,936 with an additional \$3,507,030 going to special revenue expenses and \$3,301,879 for capital projects.

The expenditure graphic includes the new water system project, which soon, along with total revenues and expenses, will decline. However, the largest General Fund operating expense in Lee, as in most towns, is public education. The following graph illustrates the basic distribution of municipal expenditures.

Chart COM4 Actual Expenditures in FY 1997



Lee falls near the average for towns in Massachusetts and Berkshire County, both in property tax rates and overall costs for services. The per person cost of providing different services (1996) is shown below.

Table COM5 Comparable 1996 Residential Tax Rates and Expenditures Per Capita

	Residential Tax Rate	General Government	Police & Fire	Education	Public Works	Total
Lee	14.72	68	103	908	77	\$1,469
Lenox	13.50	120	102	1,090	83	\$1,953
Gr. Barrington	14.98	78	108	716	86	\$1,431
Stockbridge	9.83	158	151	655	254	\$1,431
Williamstown	13.40	74	58	658	110	\$1,080
Dalton	16.48	49	*69	593	153	\$1,034
Deerfield	13.35	62	*57	779	111	\$1,303
Hadley	12.56	110	95	740	81	\$1,390
State Average		81	220	753	132	\$1,639

Note: * indicates Fire Protection not included.

Source: Mass. Dept. of Revenue

F. Non-Municipal Community Services and Facilities

The Tri-Town Health Department is a major cooperative venture between Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge that provides joint services. A major responsibility of the agency is to administer Title V Septic Regulations. It also helps prevent and fight disease, conducts a tobacco awareness

program, coordinates food service standards training and collection of household hazardous wastes. The department offices and storage facilities are located in the Airolodi Building in downtown Lee.

Other prominent non-municipal community services and facilities include solid waste disposal and recycling, and the provision of health and medical, electric, natural gas, and telecommunications services.

Lee has a strong local Visiting Nurses Association that provides thousands of home health visits annually. Lee also has local medical offices, and access to hospitals in Pittsfield and Great Barrington.

Local clubs also provide services. The Lee Kiwanis helps provide transportation for seniors. The Congregational Church sponsors meals and a food pantry. State agencies and non-profit institutions also provide many community and social services.

G. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

Education and Learning

On January 12th, 1999, Lee voters approved funding for the new elementary school and the high/middle school expansion. The 25.5 million dollar project will be 66% funded by the state, and an additional \$800,000 to meet the actual construction bids was authorized at a special town meeting July 13th, 2000. It will also include a new auditorium, something that is sorely lacking. The school projects are expected to be completed around the year 2003.

The family oriented demographics of Lee indicate a steady school enrollment for the future, even if new development is limited. Potential future improvements to the existing public school might include increasing cultural educational opportunities, more advanced communications technology including plans for fiber optic connections, expanding adult education offerings for all ages and pursuing more joint educational ventures.

Independent school districts like Lee often face the choice of whether increased regional facility and educational sharing should be pursued. This issue often becomes a hot topic of public concern when a large capital investment is required for a school facility improvement. However, there were no clear opportunities to pursue in 1998 when Lee tackled the need to replace or completely renovate the Central School. The Lee school system has provided many benefits for those attending its high quality schools. It has been, and will continue to be, costly to maintain this independent system.

Many towns across the United States have consolidated high schools. A somewhat smaller number have consolidated middle grades, and there are many different breakdowns for placement of middle grades. A much lower percentage of towns have chosen to share lower grades. In the past, it appeared that a future decision to regionalize seemed inevitable. At this point, this conclusion still seems valid over the long term. Over the short to mid term, there may be opportunities to increase sharing of school system resources that would still allow varying

degrees of independence, while reducing costs. Study groups should continue to investigate and explore these various alternatives.

As far as other learning facilities, the Lee Library will require extensive work on a periodic basis. The School and the Library should explore ways of creating more of a continuum of education for all age groups that will enhance the independent learning of home computer and expanding media technology.

The 1998 Community-wide survey rated existing continuing education programs rather low, indicating this could be an area for improvement. Townspeople do heavily utilize the Lee classrooms. Part of the overall post secondary adult education problem is the lack of a four-year institution within easy commuting range. Most students graduating from Lee High attend schools outside Berkshire County. Many establish strong ties outside the area and do not return following graduation.

Indoor Recreation

The analysis of community needs revealed that there are serious deficiencies in the range of available recreation programs and facilities in the Town of Lee. Two surveys conducted in the last several years indicate that recreational needs are not being met for residents across the board, particularly for the disabled and young adults. In the 1998 community-wide survey indoor programs were seen as inadequate for teens and adults.

A priority identified in the 1996 recreation survey was a need for a community center facility. Such a facility would be suited for multiple uses and serve diverse segments of the community. The Lee Youth Association also identified the need for a community center as a priority in the 1986 recreation survey, and continues to pursue funding for its ultimate implementation. A Downtown Master Plan Study (Spring, 1995), conducted by students from the University of Massachusetts, also recommended the construction of a community center offering cultural and recreational facilities for all age groups, conveniently located in a central area. As the future of the Central School building is considered, this need should be kept in mind.

A theater is desired by both Lee and Lenox residents. There are various options and locations for a for-profit or non-profit theater or movies. Plans for a sub-regional community center (with a pool) are proceeding in Great Barrington. This facility might partially meet the need and desire expressed in survey results. The planned school auditorium will also be available for cultural activities, including theater. Lenox is also interested in an indoor pool and there may be opportunities for joint efforts.

Reference the 2000 *Lee Open Space & Recreation Plan* for more information on recreation.

Other Services and Government

Other weaknesses that were identified at the 1998 Community Visioning session were:

- limited town media/lack of coordination or information about existing activities
- unfair reputation of educational system
- children/teenagers lack options

- problem of underage drinking
- young people need broadening experiences (beyond sports) such as cultural and vocational choices in schools

These weaknesses are common to most communities throughout America. Lee does not appear to have any outstanding problem that could not be addressed through ideas suggested herein concerning recreation, educational programming, etc. External perceptions of Lee are clearly more positive in recent years; Lee should continue to promote itself as a "real" town with "real" people, successfully working through real issues.

Other elements of the community simply call for a continuation of efforts at the same level of services as currently exist. Services such as fire protection or emergency services are highly regarded, but their future effectiveness may require recruiting more volunteers or adding paid staff to supplement volunteer efforts. Many town fire departments have seen their pool of volunteers shrink. One key factor is daytime coverage. Recruiting more volunteers who work in town helps to keep coverage high. Realistically, Lee will possibly need to add incentives to keep the volunteer force fully manned, and probably need to provide additional funding to staff and train personnel for a high level of protection.

Over time, the structural condition of public buildings will need to be examined. Many public buildings are historical structures that require special consideration. The kind of detailed investigation and brainstorming being done for possible Central School reuse needs to be done on a wider scale integrating all public buildings, with current space evaluated in relationship to anticipated town employee and organizational needs for future space. The functionality of buildings should also be considered, as well as the location. A major advantage for some of the existing buildings is proximity to the center of town, facilitating access and use. Facility needs should be integrated into the Capital Plan.

The DPW shed garage serves its purpose although it is not ideally sized. The main concern is its location near the new Riverfront Park. It is a prominent structure that does not fit with the vision for an appealing riverside park area. If the shed were removed, the downtown park could be enlarged. The town would like to relocate the shed or build a new DPW building on public land near the sewage treatment plant on Route 102. Thus far grant funding has not been available for such a purpose.

There is projected growth in the population of senior citizens. Reuse of the Lee Central School Building may provide an opportunity to respond to this trend. Needs, such as expanded activities for seniors, will need to be partly met by the town. Lee seems aware of the need to keep community services in the central core for accessibility. It should prevent the relocation of public community uses, such as town offices or the Post Office, away from the downtown.

Providing services for seniors is also becoming a private sector growth industry. Lee is not an ideal location in relation to hospitals. Convenient medical services are often crucial to seniors. Special transportation can address much of this issue.

Fiscal Considerations Related to Growth

Personal property levies have risen a bit in the last few years. The industrial category, still significant in Lee, has been shrinking to a level of relative unimportance as a source of direct property taxes elsewhere in the County. Tourist oriented retail and services are making up for some of the lost industrial base in the County and have been important to Lee.

This plan includes many strategies that would either encourage or discourage development in various areas under different conditions. It is important to consider fiscal impacts of new development.

It is relatively easy to project actual increases in property tax revenues. If a new home is built at an assessed valuation of \$200,000 and is then taxed at the current FY 1999 local residential property rate per \$1,000, the annual expected tax revenue would be \$2,980.

$$(\$200,000 * \$0.0149 = \$2,980)$$

However, other potential fiscal benefits and costs are more difficult to quantify. Costs for specific types of development can only be roughly estimated, because it is very difficult to assign specific costs for general services that cover the whole town.

The foremost purpose of any local government is to serve the needs of its people. Educating our youth, while a crucial and ennobling responsibility, is a local expense that is simply not adequately compensated for by local residential property taxes and state funding.

Several studies in Massachusetts have shown that industrial and commercial development generally produce a net fiscal boost while residential development is generally a net fiscal drain. It can be shown that a parcel that will be developed for typical residential use would often actually be better fiscally for the town as non-tax paying, non-cost generating, Open Space.

Any new development is also likely to generate some cost. In a general sense, costs resulting from residential development can be estimated on a per unit and a person scale. Costs per person are relatively high in any community, and a new home would need to be highly valued and of lower household size to generate revenue that would exceed the estimated per person cost.

Residential units that are not generating school enrollment and associated cost; however, are likely a net fiscal benefit to the town, and that is why many communities in Berkshire County are encouraging senior housing and seasonal housing. On the plus side, it should also be noted that with residential growth, the commercial tax base might also expand due to an increase in local purchasing power.

Fiscal impacts have been estimated for various land uses. The following page from the Growth Impact Handbook (from DHCD) is not community specific but it does give a general picture of what to expect from different types of development.

Fiscal Impacts of Various Land Uses

Note: (+) means more revenue than service costs; (-) means less revenue than service costs

The development types listed below (on a sliding scale from high to low) return more revenue to the community than is expended to provide general government or school services. After Open Space development, the municipal break-even point is reached; the point at which revenues from particular kinds of development are equal to the cost of providing general government services to the development. Below this point, general government services cost more to provide than the kinds of development listed below would return in revenues.

<u>Type of Development</u>	<u>Revenue/Gen.Govt.</u>	<u>Revenue/School</u>
Research Office Parks	(+)	(+)
Office Parks	(+)	(+)
Industrial Development	(+)	(+)
High-Rise Garden Apartments (Studio/One Bedroom)	(+)	(+)
Age-Restricted Housing	(+)	(+)
Garden Condominiums (One/Two Bedrooms)	(+)	(+)
Open Space	(+)	(+)

The three types of development immediately below would generally cost more for general government services than they would bring in revenues, but would still bring in more revenues than would have to be expended to provide school services for them. After Expensive Single-Family Homes, the school district break-even point is reached. That is the point at which revenues from the development generally are equal to the cost of providing school services to the development.

Retail Facilities	(-)	(+)
Townhouses (Two/Three Bedrooms)	(-)	(+)
Expensive Single-Family Homes (Three/Four Bedrooms)	(-)	(+)

The four types of development listed immediately below usually cost more for both general government and school services than any of them returns to the community in property taxes.

Townhouses (Three/Four Bedrooms)	(-)	(-)
Inexpensive Single-Family (Three/Four Bedrooms)	(-)	(-)
Garden Apartments (Three+Bedrooms)	(-)	(-)
Mobile Homes (Unrestricted Occupancy)	(-)	(-)

Adapted from "Land, Infrastructure, Housing Costs, and Fiscal Impacts Associated with Growth", Robert W. Burchell & David Listokin, Center for Urban Policy, Rutgers University. This is an interesting view of revenues produced by types of development balanced against the cost of providing services to these kinds of development, although hedged by disclaimers and with the placement of retail facilities in the revenue loss category disputed by some experts.

Dept. of Housing & Community Development
Division of Community Services

Growth leads to increased costs to the general government and schools, specifically relating to operating costs and capital costs. Exact costs are difficult to determine because they may not be triggered until a cumulative threshold of growth is reached.

Examples of operating costs are the hiring of additional personnel or increases in the hours of existing personnel. Growth also increases complexity and additional emphasis on grants and infrastructure, and places importance on consultants or higher skilled personnel who often require higher salaries. On the other hand, some non property tax revenue would be also expected to increase with additional development, with much of this revenue related to infrastructure.

Lee is well into this process of municipal growth, with infrastructure and personnel expansion. Lee has seen property tax and non property tax revenues increase in recent years. However, communities with more infrastructure generally have higher tax rates over time. Lee residents have also experienced a rising property tax rate over the last several years. They are likely to soon experience some of the rising infrastructure operation, maintenance and replacement costs through higher fees.

Although more space is commonly sought for all types of services, the relatively stable population has meant that capacity due to growth has not been a problem for most facilities. The exceptions, such as the utilities systems, are noted in this Plan. It is important to estimate *how much growth might be accommodated without triggering new costs*. This is done by first estimating what services and facilities are currently actually at or near full capacity. This is somewhat difficult, as most people in town and most segments of town/school governmental services would naturally desire enhancement of services that may push a service or facility beyond its current capacity even without growth.

There is potential for more growth in Lee. Recent improvements to the water system and the planned new school building and extension have been necessary to meet existing needs and are not intended to help spur growth. Responsible design has mandated that a measure of extra capacity be provided. Extra capacity is also being included in the design of wastewater plant improvements. The challenge for Lee is to determine how can it guide forms of development, at levels and in forms that are acceptable to the community that will lead to net fiscal benefits.

Another fiscal factor to consider is how the developed and undeveloped components of the community affect overall property values. This is difficult to calculate, but many communities that have built new facilities or amenities, revitalized or improved the appearance of key developed sections of town, or preserved key undeveloped sections of town, have experienced increased valuations for existing properties above that of nearby towns that have not done so.

Translating some of the above information into projected numbers is a useful exercise, even though we can only generalize. To a significant extent, any additional costs resulting from new residential development would be related to household size, and especially to new school children. The following are national ratios:

Table COM6: Table of Ratios of Persons and School Children for General Residential Types with Two or Three Bedrooms

Residential Type	Persons/HH		Avg. School Age Children/HH	
	<u>2 BDR</u>	<u>3 BDR</u>	<u>2 BDR</u>	<u>3 BDR</u>
Single Family	2.40	3.09	.20	.67
Manufactured/Mobile Home in Park	2.18	3.17	.26	.78
Senior Housing/Apartments	1.80	N/A	N/A	N/A
Garden Apartments	2.15	2.91	.30	.83
Townhouse Condos	2.05	2.81	.11	.44

Source: Development Impact Handbook, Center for Urban Policy, Rutgers University

The ratios in the table above may be roughly applicable to Lee. The rate of school age children in Lee is generally lower in New England than the national rate, but as indicated in the demographic summary, the proportion of children in town is above state and regional levels. Lee's level of student enrollment is a primary reason that its educational costs are relatively high compared to most Berkshire communities.

Public education (and to some extent, spending for it) is mandated. According to the State Department of Revenue, the integrated average per pupil cost in Lee was \$5,792 in (FY 1996). The need for most other town services is also related to population and demographics. An average municipality would definitely be expected to add employees and increase spending in relation to the level of growth it experiences. These expenses would presumably be in public safety, public works, health and welfare, and other general governmental duties.

In Lee and Berkshire County, school and other municipal cost estimates should also strongly account for seasonal residences (which generally carry far less costs). However, impacts should be estimated based upon *potential* year round units, as many units originally proposed or begun as seasonal units can become year-round.

For non-residential development, additional costs can be related to several factors, such as number of employees, volume of water usage, extent of wastewater treatment required, and traffic generated.

To some extent, the cost of services is also tied to the location and patterns of development. One national study estimates that the net public cost for a low density residential community is approximately three times higher than that of a high density community. The difference was due to inefficient expenditures for public school operational, instructional, and transportation services, and also because sprawl creates potentially higher public liabilities for road maintenance and future provision of public water and sewer. Local, state and national expenditures have heavily subsidized this costly pattern. Lee should provide adequate infrastructure, but carefully consider appropriate coverage and the impact of sprawl.

Many towns in Massachusetts and in Berkshire County have apparently come to the conclusion that residential development that is likely to produce school age children attending public schools should be discouraged or fiercely fought. Unfortunately, when this trend becomes widespread, it can lead to unbalanced communities and unsustainable regions (in human terms).

This situation, which is believed to contribute to the rising cost of housing and a shortage of affordable housing in Massachusetts, has led other states to shift the burden of education to the state level, to reduce governmental costs, or to allow local impact fees for schools. Other states have also been more inclined to allow more ways for municipalities or regions to directly collect fees or taxes for commercial uses and other forms of development. This has not been the case in Massachusetts and there is little reason to believe this situation will essentially change.

In summary, Lee is a town with relatively average residential values, but one with a significant and balanced non-residential tax base. It has to support extensive and costly public services, facilities and infrastructure. The town is investing in over-due infrastructure improvements. Lee administrators have documented increases in taxes and fees for the future. The pinch has yet to come. When it does, there will be a push to increase the tax base and use the excess capacity that is being designed and built.

Because there are limited forms of fiscally beneficial growth in Massachusetts, there is a need to carefully evaluate every new proposed development project that is within the discretion of Lee officials to approve or deny for fiscal impacts. Even fiscally beneficial development can change the character of the community or have other negative impacts. Development can also include indirect costs and opportunity costs. The greatest threat may be that growth will produce a need for a higher level of services than the community can support, leading to a degradation of service quality for existing service users.

Lee has the potential to continue to generate significant non-residential revenues. Subsequent sections of this plan will note that the pattern of development has contributed to increased costs; these costs may be mitigated to a certain extent. Because it can lead to explosive costs, Lee needs better controls on residential growth. However, there needs to be rational and flexible guidance to any fiscal growth policy or the community could find itself becoming, as others have, a victim of its own success.

It is important to remember that government revenues fluctuate, independently of growth. The present period is generally considered to be a peak. If and when the need to reduce governmental expenses occurs, the pressure to eliminate or reduce services will arise. For Lee, continued aggressive pursuit of grant dollars, from public and private non-profit sources, and continued voluntary services are crucial. Careful imposition of fees can also offset revenue losses. Fees should not lead to additional burdens, or the exclusion of opportunities, for those who have limited financial resources.

There is currently relatively little sharing of resources between different municipalities although the concept is appealing. The town needs to continue reaching outwards to surrounding communities when it is necessary to improve existing services or develop new ones. This will

help Lee to preserve its tremendous beauty, its high quality of life, its cherished small town feel, and reduce costs. Tri-Town Health is a good example of resource sharing that is currently working. Another smaller example is that Lee shares a Building Inspector with the Town of Stockbridge. In this Plan we have mentioned other examples of potential cooperative sharing.

In the past, Berkshire County government provided limited services. County government dissolved in July 2000. In August 2000, the Berkshire Charter Commission submitted a proposed charter for a Berkshire Council of Governments to the Secretary of state for inclusion on the November General Election ballot.

Town boundaries are linked to the political system, beyond actual geographic relationships, there is no rationale for duplicating services in each and every municipality. The principle of cooperative sharing can be applied to virtually all services and to most facilities unless there are strict distance requirements. A common starting point for cooperative sharing to reduce costs would be equipment; assuming details can be worked out. Community support for cooperative efforts was indicated in the community-wide survey. Lee has the prerequisite: a capable and cooperative staff. These efforts require time, energy and the support of community leaders.

Also, in May 2000, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission adopted a *Regional Plan for the Berkshires*. This document includes regional approaches to a variety of issues.

H. Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Community Services and Facilities

One mark of a good town is quality services. Residents are concerned with ensuring that town schools facilities and programs are outstanding, providing opportunities to meet a wide variety of interests and needs. They also desire efficiency in town government and services.

High quality facilities are an investment that should serve the community well over time. The main strategy should be to utilize these facilities to provide the fullest extent of efficient service feasible and also maintain its flexible response to town needs. While continued investments will be necessary, Lee should continue to carefully budget and schedule future building improvements (capital planning is generally covered in the Utilities section). Service quality and effectiveness is promoted by careful focus and refinement of service delivery. Efficiency is promoted by sharing. Those areas with special needs require particularly attention.

The 1998 community survey identified indoor recreational activities/facilities that residents most wanted to see developed or expanded as a movie theater and a public indoor pool. Also refer to the *Open Space & Recreation Plan*.

The goal of *Continuing to provide high quality public and educational services and facilities* can be met by:

Providing for orderly and cost-effective repair, replacement and extensions to facilities where appropriate and necessary; and Providing excellent indoor recreational facilities that are easily accessible.

- *Follow through completely to replace/improve Lee's aging school facilities to ensure that Lee students have an opportunity for a first-rate education.*
- *Carefully incorporate neighborhood and community consensus on all improvement projects.*
- *Explore cooperative resource sharing when planning for community building facility improvements, inclusive of indoor recreation.*

Preserving communal qualities by promoting full utilization of town facilities, amenities and meeting places.

- *Incorporate consideration of the needs of Lee's people into the overall realm of public investment.*
- *Update townspeople on events/news through a newsletter or town or sub-regional newspaper.*

Sustaining and enhancing community services.

- *Maintain an adequate operational budget and staff.*
- *Consider requiring Financial Impact Analysis for large projects.*
- *Consider the imposition of impact fees.*
- *Maintain public safety capabilities (police, emergency services, fire protection) to preserve, in real terms, Lee's secure feel and low crime rate.*
- *Develop a backup plan for providing professional emergency services should volunteer-only services no longer prove feasible.*
- *Maintain a current emergency/disaster management plan.*
- *Consider ways to enhance existing services and access to them for people with special needs, such as children, elderly, low-income, handicapped and disabled.*
- *Set and track performance measures for the provision of public services.*
- *Commit to a partnership aimed at improving total educational standards by linking community, business, parents and educational professionals in regular planning communication sessions.*

Provide a well-planned, structured, centralized program for both active and passive recreation.

- *Increase indoor recreational opportunities, potentially through joint community ventures, or develop a community center for year-round use.*

V. ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

The success of the local economy is very important to residents and businesses and is crucial to sustaining the community. Lee's economy is increasingly diverse and is a microcosm of the County economy in many ways. The Town has many economic strengths and also enjoys advantages over other communities. Recent data indicates about 36% of the property tax base is non-residential, the second highest percentage for medium to large communities in the County. As the key Turnpike access point, Lee is the gateway to the County's strong tourism sector. This sector of the economy has been growing in importance in both Lee and the County. Lee is rightfully proud of recent public/private initiatives that have enhanced the town. Other economic strengths include:

- excellent 'gateway' location in the center of the beautiful Berkshires, near cultural attractions/events/activities
- great downtown/main street with attractive historic buildings that provide good mix of stores to shop for 'real' needs in a pedestrian accessible manner and with available parking
- strong overall retail base with a variety of stores and a major outlet mall
- good selection of restaurants
- historic tradition of industry, blue collar mill town - a "real town", with a continuing manufacturing base that is diversified



A. The Regional and Local Economy

The economy of Lee is closely integrated with the economy of the region, and many decisions vitally affecting Lee are made outside municipal boundaries. Pittsfield serves as the retail, service and governmental center of Berkshire County as a whole, still employing well over 20,000 persons. It contains most of the primary commercial office space. Identified as Central Berkshire County, the Pittsfield Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), of which Lee is a part, is recognized as one of eleven major labor areas in Massachusetts.

As with the County, the MSA is centered around Pittsfield. While Lee is strongly tied to Pittsfield, commuting patterns support the common perception that the northern portion of the MSA, such as the Town of Adams, is not strongly tied to Lee. A strong relationship does exist between Lee and parts of southern Berkshire County such as Great Barrington, which is not in the MSA.

Despite its small size relative to the rest of the MSA, Lee comprises a significant part of the regional economy. This chapter attempts to put this in perspective, by analyzing the major sectors of the economy, in order to match conditions with community goals and provide guidelines for future growth.

Lee is generally a small representation of the entire Berkshires, with the exception that Lee's industrial base is still substantial. The town's growing economic reliance on seasonal tourism/visitors has some long-standing roots.

Trade and Tourism Services

The Allendale/Coltsville area and the Berkshire Mall represent the largest concentrations of commercial and retail floor space within the Pittsfield MSA. Lee has more than held its own, primarily due to visitor based trade. The primary market source of visitors is the New York City area and Southern New England although there is certainly a national and international influence as well. Trade includes the resident and market area customers in stores and centers located in the downtown and Housatonic Street, with a small presence along Route 102. The major recent commercial development was Prime Outlets at Lee, a 62-store outlet mall that opened in 1997.

Some of the businesses tap into the regional market while many, such as the Price Chopper Grocery, mainly serve Lee, and secondarily Lenox Dale, Becket, Otis and Stockbridge. According to the community survey, only 45% of residents purchase most of their groceries in Lee, about 20% purchase household items and around 16% buy most of their clothing in Town.

Due to its natural beauty and a clustering of cultural and arts organizations, Berkshire County has a strong tourism industry. The area's recreational facilities include a vast array of campgrounds, hiking trails, parks, downhill and cross country ski areas, and tennis and golf facilities. Berkshire County's cultural base includes music, dance, theatre, and museums that attract a national and international audience.

The region is at once synonymous with theater and musical performances, striking art collections, beautiful scenery and rugged landscape. Though Lee lacks a major cultural attraction, surrounding cultural attractions place Lee at the heart of the South County culture belt. Travelers visiting cultural attractions in neighboring Stockbridge such as the Norman Rockwell Museum, Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Lenox and Jacobs Pillow in Becket, also visit Lee as the Outlets and the downtown are partly visitor destinations.

This setting makes Lee an extremely convenient and attractive place to live and for visitors to stay. Visitors tend to stay in town for short periods of several days, commonly weekends or

weeks, although some continue the summer-long vacation tradition. Many stay at leisure and recreational resorts such as Lee's Oak and Spruce resort and Canyon Ranch, Cranwell and Eastover in Lenox.

The entire assortment of venues for the performance arts is both regional cultural assets and economic generators. Lee, like many other local communities, benefits economically from the tourist industry. Lee's motels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and gasoline stations benefit from these attractions. This cultural-economic activity continues, and shows no sign of dwindling soon.

Manufacturing

Regionally, this sector has declined drastically. The region has lost nearly 8,000 manufacturing jobs over the last dozen years. By 1998, Pittsfield had lost 70% of the manufacturing jobs it had in 1986. Lee still has a significant industrial base, with a degree of variety, located in several parts of town, still anchored by the paper mills. The mills are still the town's major employers, although they now represent only 5% of the real estate tax base, compared to 8% in 1975. Light industrial and warehousing facilities in the Winsock Industrial Park and Lee Corporate Center along Route 102 are other industries in town. The quarry, still commonly known by its former name, Lee Lime, is still operating.

Lee has five areas where industry is allowed by right if it will not create a nuisance, and an Office Park Light Industrial zone where the Quarry Hill Business Park is located. The Office Park light Industrial zone has higher standards. A new specialty manufacturer, Crescent Cardboard, has recently expanded in northern Lee, near Lenox Dale. Berkshire Wireless in Lee Corporate Center, which assembles and installs telecom towers throughout the Northeast and mid-Atlantic, is an example of a light manufacturing firm that is related to new technology.

Public, Non Profit, and Education

This continues as a key element of the economy in terms of employment and payroll, providing a significant segment of relatively high paying jobs. Non-profits and public entities do not contribute directly to the property tax base. State employment is partially due to the Turnpike and the large amount of publicly owned acreage. The Town of Lee and the Lee Public Schools are among the largest employers in Town.

Technology & Advanced Services

Financial Services employed 3,136 persons in the Berkshires in 1995. The county has an embryonic cluster of firms that offer new media products and services, e.g., virtual reality products, motion picture special effects, and information systems services. Internet based Wave Systems, Inc. in the Lee Corporate Center is a good example of a technology driven local industry.

Healthcare and Eldercare

Healthcare represents a large employment sector within the county, accounting for 6,874 jobs in 1995 according to County Business Patterns from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Eldercare

facilities are gaining strength in Lee and have growth considerably. The Village at Laurel Lake is one of the larger employers. Assisted Living facilities are discussed in the Housing Section.

Other Services

This would include personal services, repair services, etc. Some are based in the home. Home occupations that allow up to 2 non-resident employees are allowed by right in many zoning districts.

Home-Based Businesses

Berkshire County is experiencing growth in the area of home-based businesses. The Chamber of Commerce of the Berkshires estimates that there are over 2,200 home-based businesses in the county. These include both permanent residents and second homeowners. This sector is an important growth element in Town.

B. Employment

Overall, employment in Berkshire County has been decreasing in the last decade. Meanwhile employment in Lee has generally been stable (showing a small increase) with trade as the number one employment category, manufacturing second, and services third as Table ECON1 indicates. The impact of the Outlet Village on retail employment accounts for the largest change.

Table ECON1 Employment in Lee - Recent Trends

Total Employment	1990	1994	1997	# Change 1990-97	% Change 1990-97
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	39	35	50	11	28%
Construction	188	163	136	-52	-28%
Manufacturing	866	771	840	-26	-3%
Trans., Commun., & Public Utilities	47	22	97	50	106%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	108	114	95	-13	-12%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	850	903	997	147	17%
Services	532	636	598	66	12%
Government	261	249	291	30	11%
Total Employment	2,946	2,936	3,148	202	7%

Source: Mass. Dept. of Training and Employment (ES-202 Series)

The high concentration of local residents that work in local business and industry is a very important characteristic of Lee's employment (reference the Transportation section). The total number of people working in Lee is basically the same as the level of employed persons living in Lee, which means just as many people commute out of Lee as into Lee. This is an indicator of Lee's integration in the regional economy. Occupational employment of Lee residents is shown below.

Table ECON2 Lee Resident Occupations - 1990 Census

OCCUPATION	Persons
Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations	335
Professional specialty occupations	424
Technicians and related support occupations	144
Sales occupations	356
Administrative support occupations, including clerical	488
Protective service occupations	30
Service occupations, except protective and household	372
Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	39
Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	407
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	188
Transportation and material moving occupations	85
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	99
Total employed persons 16 years and over	2,983

According to the 1990 Census, Lee residents were employed in a diversified set of occupations as shown by Table ECON2. The diversity of occupations continues to exceed that of other comparably sized towns in the region.

Other than an increase in the Trade sector, the major change that has occurred in the resident occupational profile since 1990 is probably most related to changes in the regional job base since 1990 (namely losses in manufacturing). Despite this, many Lee residents continue to be employed in Pittsfield and with large regional employers. Lee businesses also compete for workers with these major employers.

Table ECON3 Major Employers In and Near Lee, 1997

Location	Firm
<u>1000+ Employees</u>	
Pittsfield	Berkshire Medical Center
Pittsfield	General Dynamics Defense Systems
<u>500-999 Employees</u>	
Dalton	Crane & Company, Inc.
Pittsfield	GE Plastics
Pittsfield	Hillcrest Hospital
Pittsfield	The Willowood Group
<u>250-499 Employees</u>	
Lee	Mead Corp - Specialty Paper Division
Lee	Schweitzer-Mauduit International, Inc.
Lenox	Canyon Ranch in the Berkshires
Dalton	Beloit Corporation
Pittsfield	Berkshire Life Insurance Company
Pittsfield	Berkshire Physicians & Surgeons
Pittsfield	Kay-Bee Toy Stores
Pittsfield	NYNEX
Pittsfield	Price Chopper Supermarket
Pittsfield	Stop & Shop Supermarket
<u>100-249 Employees</u>	
Lee, Stockbridge	Country Curtains at the Red Lion Inn (and Route 102 in Lee)
Lenox	Beloit Corporation
Lenox	Edgecombe Nursing Home
Great Barrington	Fox River Paper Co. - Rising Paper Division
Great Barrington	Simon's Rock College of Bard
Lanesborough	Hills Department Store (became Ames - 1999)
Lanesborough	Sears, Roebuck & Company
Pittsfield	Bank of Boston
Pittsfield	Berkshire County Savings Bank
Pittsfield	Berkshire Gas Company
Pittsfield	Berkshire Hilton Inn (renamed Crown Plaza)
Pittsfield	Big Y Supermarket
Pittsfield	Bradlees Department Store
Pittsfield	General Systems Company
Pittsfield	Lakewood Industries
Pittsfield	J. H. Maxymillian, Inc.
Pittsfield	New England Newspapers
Pittsfield	Petricca Industries, Inc.
Pittsfield	Wal-Mart
Stockbridge	Red Lion Inn

Note: Does not include municipal and public school employment

Source: Central Berkshire Chamber of Commerce

C. Income

As noted elsewhere in this Plan, Lee residents are generally representative of the County in terms of skills, education, and financial resources due to income or savings. The basic correlation of income for Lee residents versus the Metropolitan area that is shown below is still valid. Income levels are not extremely high overall compared to the rest of the State. This is due primarily to lower incomes prevalent in the Berkshires and outside the Boston Area and eastern Massachusetts.

Most accounts and recent statistics would indicate the regional income gap is widening in the County although in Lee income is apparently rising. Although not a wealthy community, Lee has few residents on public assistance. Compared to the statewide average of 8.9%, Lee had only 6.6% of its residents with incomes below poverty level.

Table ECON4 Income Levels - 1990 Census

	Lee	Pittsfield Metropolitan Area	Massachusetts
Median Family Income	\$42,363	\$40,030	\$44,367
Median Household Income	\$33,613	\$31,900	\$36,952
Per Capita Income	\$15,289	\$15,848	\$17,224

D. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

The economy of Lee is closely integrated with the economy of the region and many decisions vitally affecting it are made outside the municipal boundaries. Proximity to Pittsfield, a much larger year round market, drives the location of most larger consumer businesses. South County supports many businesses in Great Barrington, which may thereby preclude their presence in Lee. Although Lee could certainly support a larger grocery store, spatial and market issues are involved. Small stores struggle to provide satisfactory pricing and variety.

Many businesses are reliant on tourists and are successfully capturing benefits. The Outlet Village is an example of the trend of such establishments gathering greater dominance in the local economy. Lee has the economic advantage of being the primary Berkshire access point to the Massachusetts Turnpike. Visitors increase the market base, particularly in the summer. Commercial and retail preferences are to locate along major corridors. However some industries, such as resorts, do not necessarily wish to locate in conventional non-residential zones, as they sometimes prefer a more natural setting. All these businesses can create impacts that need to be carefully considered and controlled. The Route 20 and 102 corridors, and indeed the entire town, need a framework that provides sufficient opportunities for successful marketplace development without encouraging detrimental or incompatible uses.

Tourism based industries such as resorts do not necessarily wish to locate in conventional non-residential zones, as they sometimes prefer a natural setting.

Regional Economy

It is useful to conceptualize the future in a regional context. The following table provides a countywide employment projection, broken down by sector.

Table ECON5 Berkshire County Employment Projections

Employment Sector	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	790	837	864	879	879
Construction	3,930	3,987	4,169	4,372	4,459
Manufacturing	10,298	9,412	8,826	8,174	7,421
Trans., Comm., & Public Util.	2,270	2,275	2,275	2,263	2,206
Finance, Ins., and Real Estate	4,263	4,429	4,722	5,001	5,187
Wholesale & Retail Trade	16,897	16,385	16,190	16,093	15,711
Services	32,411	34,766	36,587	38,072	38,726
Government	7,312	7,387	7,364	7,471	7,604
Total Employment	78,729	79,995	81,488	82,792	82,638

Source: Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI), Amherst, MA

The future of traditional manufacturing and processing industries in the Berkshires does not appear bright. However, the trend of continued manufacturing job losses will probably be partially offset by higher technology/advanced service jobs. Some evidence of this trend is seen in job growth in "Niche" services between 1990 and 1995, including a 15% increase in Engineering fields, employing nearly 1,000 persons, a 14% increase in Research and Testing, 46% growth in Human Resources, and 18-22% growth in Consulting, Management and Public Relations.

The following three paragraphs, excerpted from the Berkshire Connect Assessment & Recommendation Report (1998), represent a short synopsis of economic opportunities related to advanced telecommunications.

Focus industry clusters represent areas in which growth would likely create high quality jobs for the region. The common denominator for success in these different industry clusters is the existence of an affordable, advanced capacity telecommunications infrastructure.

A second essential component is the availability of an information skilled work force. Whether in manufacturing or services, increasingly many positions require information-based skills. According to the former director of the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, many available jobs require such additional skills and can pay less than the traditional manufacturing positions which have mainly since evaporated. The combination of an improved infrastructure with advanced skills training is essential to growing the economy in Berkshire County.

This audience for TOURISM, CULTURE, AND THE ARTS can be vastly increased through the strategic use of an advanced communications infrastructure. With the

requisite infrastructure, new MULTIMEDIA, SOFTWARE & COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES firms can compete effectively with their counterparts in metropolitan areas, while enjoying the cultural and natural assets of the Berkshires. HEALTHCARE accounts for a sector that will continue to grow particularly in the areas of long-term care, assisted living, and group homes for special populations. An advanced telecommunications infrastructure is essential to the growth of quality healthcare, particularly in rural regions such as Berkshire County. Increasingly, people who live in nearby metropolitan areas, with second homes in the Berkshires, are extending their weekend stays and working from a remote HOME OFFICE. The number of people considering co-location and relocation would likely increase significantly with access to an advanced telecommunications infrastructure. Services organizations that have grown from 1990 to 1995 include a fairly diverse mix of higher-end or "NICHE" SERVICES. These firms may start up in an inauspicious manner, and may experience rapid growth.

As noted in the Community Facilities and Services Section, Lee is at an economic disadvantage in terms of nearby advanced educational and training facilities. This is a regional issue that will become increasingly important as advanced training is increasingly valued in the workplace. Fortunately many skilled people are open to relocating to the Berkshires. The pool of former residents who have left the area and attained higher education and skills is an important resource to recapture.

Berkshire Growth is a new regional organization formed to promote a strong diversified economic base through stronger training and employment links and economic development consistent with the character of the Berkshires. Lee High School could work closely with this group and related organizations to build a stronger school to work program.

The Local Economy and Business Areas

Threats to the traditional economy would appear to loom on the horizon. Manufacturing has remained viable in many small metropolitan areas where it is supported; key factors for retaining it include training, technology and sufficient appropriate and feasible sites for expansion or addition of new enterprises. Meanwhile employment growth in the services sector is projected. Demand for additional warehousing space is also one of the stronger market forces. Redevelopment and reuse of large industrial sites will be necessary. The new state brownfields legislation may provide some opportunities.

Continuing the pursuit of strategic efforts to capitalize on the quality of life assets of the Berkshires to transition for the future while maintaining and enhancing existing economic areas is sound and necessary. The Lee CDC is well suited to organize and implement part of this overall strategy. Recently developed with infrastructure, the Quarry Hill Business Park presently has 8 parcels available for sale or lease tied into financing and incentive programs. Projected potential total employment at the Park is 400 full-time jobs. The CDC is developing a strategic planning initiative focusing on assistance to existing industries in Lee and planning for the development of industry "clusters" including telecommunications, paper, plastics, and other technology based industries. It is also pursuing the identification and reservation of appropriate economic development sites consistent with their strategies of small business incubation, and

small corporate and light industrial recruitment. The CDC has also begun to focus on agricultural based economic development.

Due to growing markets for telecommunication-based industries, and local and regional capacities for telecommunications, it is wise public policy to encourage expansion in high-tech fields to diversify the economic and employment base. The logical location for these types of uses is either downtown or along the Route 102 corridor. A fiber optic switch shed has been installed at the Quarry Hill and could serve the corridor. Additional access along the Route 102 area will need to be carefully accommodated within the capabilities of the regional transportation system. There are also potential conflicts between residents' desire for more and better jobs without a lot of new development.

In addition to preferred professional development opportunities, Lee will continue to enjoy opportunities related to cultural tourism and recreation and leisure services and commercial trade based on locational factors. Revenue information shows the importance of the tourism and commercial facilities to the towns' tax base. However, there are also drawbacks to relying too much on service-based economy. The town's position and desirability as a visitor destination point, as well as for retirees and vacation home owners, also will necessitate dealing with intense demands placed on the land and transportation system with resultant economic effects.

Results of the community survey indicate that community members shop outside the community to obtain access a wider selection and better prices. Significant opportunities to add retail/entertainment services are unlikely to occur in the traditional local demographic market segments. Overall, the population has been and will be increasingly be composed of those over 50 years of age, both long time residents and newcomers. This group includes retirees and those still working. Many of the older newcomers can be expected to have strong purchasing power. Market opportunities may exist to serve the elder population.

The community appeared not to desire additional retail in the community survey. Part of this feeling is probably due to the sense that additional retail services will serve visitors and not residents, as has been the trend. Additional provision of goods and services need to serve local residents. However, there is strong support for a larger, modern grocery store. Of options for adding retail/entertainment listed in the survey, the addition of a movie theater scored highest. This item also scored highly in Lee, so there is also a potential market there also.

Housatonic Street (Route 20) Corridor

For the Route 20 commercial area, it is necessary to maintain the tourist and regional retail shopping market areas, within the context of the gateway atmosphere. As indicated earlier, this business area is strongly connected to community character, transportation and land use. Strong access management and aesthetic standards are needed to ensure that this area is attractive to residents and visitors.

Pleasant Street (Route 102) Corridor

Further development along the south side of Route 102 is partially constrained by the floodplain. Lee also changed its zoning to restrict commercial uses along this road. It established the OPLI

district, to encourage jobs that are higher in pay scale and lower in traffic impacts, by choosing to encourage future office uses. The zone allows conversion or addition of space to accommodate advanced service, research firms, or corporate and professional offices, particularly those that cannot be located downtown or do not wish to be there. Access management and aesthetic standards were established to provide the best types of development and at the same time to assure its prolonged economic viability.

When the OPLI district begins to fill up, or as opportunities for redevelopment occur, the town could consider expanding these standards to other Industrial areas.

Laurel Street

This area may come under increasing pressure as vehicle traffic continues to climb. It has the traffic volume and visibility to be attractive to commercial and office uses. Heavy access along this road would increase regional traffic problems and steps should be taken to avoid this problem as long the Route 20 corridor follows Laurel Street.

Jacobs Ladder Byway (Route 20 East)

This route is a state and nationally recognized scenic byway that provides an alternative to I-90 for travelers from Westfield, MA. It is also a transportation route from Becket and Otis. The Jacobs Ladder Scenic Byway Committee is a regional public-private group that is working hard to maintain the scenic qualities of the route, improve recreation and other amenities along it and to target marketing for tourist related travel. In Lee, the context of this route changes when it gets closer to the Turnpike interchange. This area has the remnants of rural light industrial, repair and construction businesses that require space but do not return a high volume of revenue per square foot. Many of these uses would be inappropriate elsewhere. Beyond the uses grandfathered under zoning, some of these uses might be accommodated with better siting, landscaping and screening.

The Interchange/Outlets Area

This area may attract more commercial uses. Large commercial would add to the tax base but would be accompanied by increased traffic in an already congested area. Road access points would need to be redesigned to accommodate higher traffic. Since it is near Interstate 90 and the Berkshire Outlet Village, this area would be more appropriate for larger and regional scale commercial uses than other areas - in certain ways. As discussed in the Land Use Section, new retail such as the Outlets, while a net economic plus, have also posed a challenge to Lee. They also generally do not provide high paying jobs.

Lee Downtown Area

The Downtown area should continue to be preserved and kept vital. For the downtown area, the existing stores of broad appeal to town residents and visitors should naturally continue. Pedestrian and public spaces should be enhanced as discussed elsewhere in this Plan. Parking is discussed in the Transportation section.

There is a demand for office space in the downtown. One option is to allow smaller professional offices to grow where they want - into the sophisticated pedestrian friendly context - with careful

regulatory management. The historic and environmental setting of the downtown should be a definite asset for such activities. If traffic and parking can be accommodated, this type of expanded use and reuse can be compatible, even if it requires extending the uses into immediately adjoining Lee residential areas.

More of these types of office uses will likely modify the mix of businesses; for instance it might lead to restaurants for office workers (serving residents as well), and other year-round goods and services. The cost of space and parking limitations in Lee downtown are difficult obstacles to overcome for any large footprint buildings. Ideally new multi-use structures, if space can be found to build them, will be constructed in an architecturally consistent manner, and consist of lower floor worker/resident based commercial/office space, with apartments on upper floors.

North Lee-Lenox Dale Area

While the village of Lenox Dale is located in Lenox, it is certainly linked to the adjacent existing base of industry in Lee. Together this area provides significant employment for many persons. The Crystal Street reconstruction project in Lenox and other initiatives are critical to upgrade this area and keep it economically viable.

Open spaces and natural resources make the town aesthetically appealing and provide a sense of connection to the natural world. Pedestrian-based opportunities need to be bolstered in order to contribute to community interaction and quality of life. This is particularly relevant to Lenox Dale, and recreational amenities surrounding Woods Pond, the Housatonic, and October Mountain State Park. Eco-tourism seeks to balance natural resource ecology with tourism. Developing the environmental potential with an ecotourism theme in combination with state or federal funding for infrastructure and recreation improvements could help maintain and revitalize the area.

Beyond the more obvious funding and organizational links, there is a need to coordinate activities with the Town of Lenox, private landowners, businesses, and with other initiatives in Town. For instance, attractions and experiences related to Lenox Dale and October Mountain can be linked to existing strengths and resources related to Downtown Lee and Jacobs Ladder.

Resorts, Estates, & Cultural Attractions

The Oak and Spruce Resort in Lee and other resorts in nearby towns are large employers. This thriving tourism industry can produce town revenue income from tourism and room sales taxes. It is difficult to estimate their indirect contribution to area restaurants and shops, but this must be considerable.

High Lawn Farm is an extremely valuable farm estate with the potential to be an attraction at some point in the future (reference *Open Space & Recreation Plan*), depending on the decisions of the farm's current owners.

The summer remains the heaviest visitor season. The cultural attractions result in a noticeable increase in the July and August population consistently leading to heavier resort bookings, stays at hotels, motels, inns, bed & breakfasts, room rentals, and summer camp attendees. This

inflated summertime population increases patronage at eating and drinking places, and the growing array of shops downtown, at the outlets and elsewhere.

Although it is difficult to get exact information on the subject, it appears that growth is occurring in the small size Bed & Breakfasts. It remains largely short-stay oriented.

The long-range future of Tanglewood is not entirely clear, but this venue and other attractions will likely result in further growth, with more pressures on roads. The links between history, culture, the environment, education, and a strong economy create a synergy of resources and opportunities in the area that is self-maintaining. Tourism development is likely to continue in the form of historical sites, museums, galleries, research institutions, specialty restaurants, retail, resorts, educational and retirement facilities. Growth in Lee will probably be linked to this, either directly or indirectly.

Tourists today have more choices, and therefore they tend to be more demanding. The outward manifestation of these characteristics is that tourists, particularly those with busy schedules, tend to prefer shorter rather than longer stays. In order to adjust to this situation, Lee could/should foster a whole range of actions involving a sophisticated recreation program. This program should also benefit permanent residents.

The section points out some major factors regarding Lee's economy: (1) The importance of a balanced local economy; (2) The role and relationship of the regional economy and what that portends for Lee including a) potential market changes involving demographics and retirement relocation components, b) a lessened role of manufacturing regionally, c) the potential emergence of advanced services, and d) the potential growth of the tourist economy. Insofar as some of these elements reflect broad regional trends, there is no reason to expect that they will be substantially altered in the near future.

E. Goals, Objectives and Strategies to Guide Lee's Economic Future

In 1995, as part of the Lee Economic Development Plan and Strategies process, the Lee Economic Development Partnership created a mission statement. This statement spoke to links between a strong economy and many other aspects of the community including education, housing and the environment; basically indicating there is a strong correlation of economic prosperity and quality of life (reference Appendix 1).

As part of the Master Plan process it was apparent that few residents wish to see radical change in Lee, and community survey respondents generally favored minimizing environmental impact and the balancing of community needs when considering and planning new developments. There is also a healthy desire to support and retain existing local businesses that supply goods and services, especially downtown. An expanded or additional supermarket is strongly desired, as is a movie theater. However, it is important to residents to keep the supermarket in the Downtown area.

Most Lee residents and organizations realize the desirability of having and maintaining a sustainable diverse economic base to promote employment opportunities and a healthy local tax base. There is support for continued multi-faceted economic development efforts to maintain a renewable supply of local jobs; preferably skilled, higher paying manufacturing, technology or office opportunities.

The strong local business development organizations (LEAD and Lee CDC) can help ensure smooth public-private communication in permitting, coordinate informational workshops and help local cottage industries and home businesses to promote and market their products and services by providing a central source of technical assistance for small businesses.

Because the quality of the economy is strongly linked to the quality of the community, a balanced overall approach would include strategies discussed in other sections of this plan, as well as in the *Open Space & Recreation Plan*.

Lee should strive to balance the economic and community service needs of the town with environmental and aesthetic preservation and recreation needs. It can achieve its local objectives and contribute to a healthy regional economy through cooperation with surrounding municipalities in regional economic development efforts. Goals, objectives and strategies are expressed as:

Maintain a healthy local base of employment.

Continue to develop and deliver business retention and assistance programs.

- *Keep lines of communication open and encourage cooperation of all Business/Economic Development groups, businesses, property owners, & public boards/commissions.*
- *Generally increase emphasis on retention/expansion while focusing energy on recruitment of new "clean" business enterprises.*

Continue to promote and support a strong local and regional base of tourism

- *Continue efforts to extend access for and service by Berkshire Scenic Railway and consider ways of linking this initiative and Housatonic River Initiatives to benefit the Lenox Dale area; create linkages to Downtown Lee.*

Continually renew the supply of local job opportunities consistent with other community goals, particularly in environmentally benign manufacturing and in other advanced businesses that will employ young professionals and technically skilled workers.

- *Increase integration of education and training/re-training programs, continue/strengthen School to Work Initiative, etc. through coordination of schools, employers, state agencies/programs, and upgrade technology training for students. Coordination with the Regional Employment Board and the Applied Technology Council is vital.*

Maintain quality areas that host diverse businesses, providing a sustainable tax base and desired service and shopping opportunities.

Maintain and enhance a healthy downtown, preferentially through a variety of appropriate mixed-uses.

- *Preserve Lee's resident-friendly downtown area. Encourage Downtown stores to continue to cater to the needs of Lee residents, as well as tourists, and examine options for providing an enhanced grocery store downtown.*
- *Continue downtown based efforts of streetscaping, promotion, community forums, small number of annual events, tourism development and links to Outlet Village to support existing employers.*
- *Apply/enhance incentives, assistance programs, and preferential loans for businesses that will serve local resident needs; tie public support to adherence to community goals and policies.*
- *Enhance Downtown's visual appeal through building renovation/construction with design assistance and a strong but cooperative design review process.*

Beyond the downtown, maintain and enhance the functionality and attractiveness of business areas.

- *Revitalize industrial and commercial areas as necessary.*
- *Using this Plan as a guide, carefully consider if and where new commercial and business clusters can be located. If new commercial is allowed to occur, ensure it is well planned with strong permitting standards.*
- *Create a "user-friendly" Development Guidelines & Review Manual.*
- *Maintain public/private cooperative efforts, specifically maintain/develop LEAD and the CDC's budget and functions.*
- *Expedite development review process through development of strong design requirements in exchange for a quicker review and approval process.*

Support & Guide Various Forms of Desirable Economic Development.

- *Seek diversified economic/business development opportunities through continued multi-faceted business/economic development efforts.*
- *Recruit to fill Quarry Hill, other controlled sites and cooperate with owners to target suitable replacements for vacant properties (small business incubation, small corporate/light industrial for business park, high-tech, agricultural business, others).*
- *Prepare/exploit improvements in Fiber Optics/Telecom network access.*
- *Identify sites/standards for economic development.*

VI. TRANSPORTATION

The purpose of a transportation system is to get people and goods to their destinations efficiently and in a manner that is sensitive to community character and the natural environment. Transportation in Lee includes a variety of modes. Even though transportation sometimes make people think of just driving in a car, a significant percent of trips are made by other means, such as using the bus, walking, car pooling, etc.

Exit 2 in Lee provides the main access to the Berkshires from Massachusetts Turnpike. Exit 2 connects directly to Route 20 and downtown Lee. This route carries the bulk of visitors who travel to Lee, Lenox and central and northern Berkshire destinations from the larger metropolitan areas to the south and east. This exit also connects to Route 102, which provides access to Lee's main industrial/office areas and carries much through traffic to Stockbridge and points south as well.

A. Inventory and Capacity

Before planning for the future, it is useful to understand what transportation capacity is available. The following materials are an overview of the current transportation system.

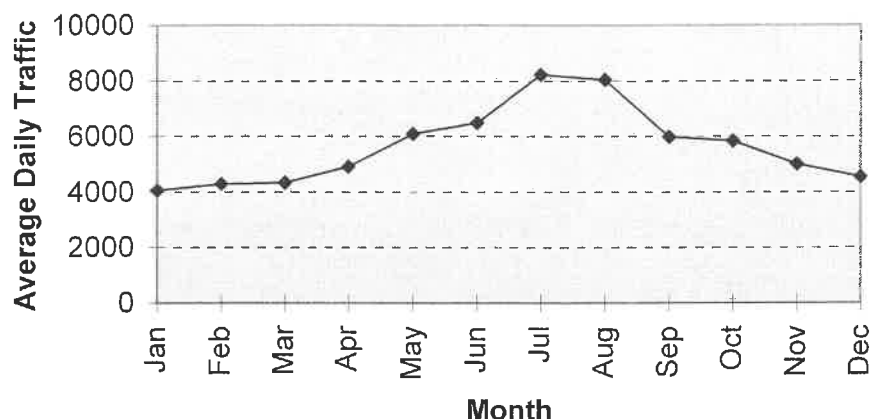
Roads are divided into functional classes. The highest classification, urban major arterial, carries roughly three-quarters of all traffic. A major source of traffic problems comes from having one road serve several functions. For example, having many driveways on arterial roads reduces the number of cars that can travel on it each day and increases accidents. A map showing road functional classes in Lee is on the following page.

The number of vehicles using the existing road network is measured with traffic counters. A common term of measurement is Average Daily Traffic (ADT). The ADT is the average weekday count in Spring, Summer, or Fall. A map showing ADTs in the Lee and Lenox sub-region also follows. Two related traffic terms are:

- Annualized Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts have a seasonality factor applied to balance the differences among months for more widely applicable results
- Peak hour is usually one hour between 4-6 PM when the counts are highest.

People familiar with the Southern Berkshire area are generally aware of the significant changes in traffic between summer and winter. The following figure shows these changes with data from the continuous traffic count station operated by MassHighway on Route 20 in East Lee.

Chart TRAN1 **Average Monthly Change in Traffic**
(1993-1996 on Route 20 in Lee)



Use of Different Transportation Modes

Even though transportation planning sometimes make people think just of commuters driving to work, a significant percent of trips are made by other modes and for other purposes, such as shopping, recreation, going to doctors, etc. The best data available on use of various modes of transportation only measures how people traveled to work, but is summarized below as one source of information.

Table TRAN2 **Mode of Travel to Work, 1990**

Town	Drive Alone	Car Pool	Transit	Bike, Walk, Other	Work at Home	Average Commute (minutes)
Lee Residents (% of total)	2,170 (75%)	307 (11%)	55 (2%)	35 (1%)	324 (11%)	16.6
Berkshire County Residents (% of total)	47,545 (75%)	7,593 (12%)	1,318 (2%)	517 (1%)	6,632 (10%)	16.8

Source: 1990 Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) data

Transit Inventory

Within Lee, in FY 1998 just over 17,000 trips were taken on the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) fixed routes through town. Approximately 850 trips were taken using BRTA paratransit service within Lee.

Trolley service between downtown Lee and the Berkshire Outlet Village started in July 1998. The vehicle was provided by Prime Retail (the owner of the development) and operating costs were covered by a one-year federal grant. In 1999, service continued on a limited basis with fares set at 25 cents a ride. In 2000, service is free once more, with operating costs covered by



MAP _ TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

grant. These steps, combined with local fundraising efforts, helped to continue the service. Ridership is the key to the long-term service that will be provided. Following is the ridership information available to date:

Table TRAN3 1998/99 Lee Trolley Passenger Counts

Month	Hours of Operation	Daily Average	Hourly Average
July	Mon.-Sat. 11-7, Sun. 12-6	119	15
August	Same as above	101	13
September	Beginning 9/8: Mon.-Sat. 11-3, Sun. 12-3	37	8
October	Same as above	36	8
November	Same as above	38	9
December	Mon.-Sat. 11-7, Sun. 12-6	39	5
January	Only ran holidays & weekends	38	6

Source: Berkshire Regional Transit Authority

Inventory of Walking and Bicycling Routes

A partial inventory of existing sidewalks was prepared and used for the Sidewalk Improvement Program prepared by the Lee Department of Public Works in March 1998. The proposal for an on-going program improving sidewalks in poor condition was not funded in the final budget. Information from it is one of the sources of information used for the preliminary Walking & Bicycling Connections map on the next page. Reasonable, safe connections can be sidewalks or well-kept shoulders wide enough to shelter a person from passing traffic. For the attached map, information from the Massachusetts Highway Inventory was used as a source of where there are road shoulders three feet wide or sidewalks. These sources were supplemented by additional discussions with the Lee Task Force and DPW, but the following map is only intended as a starting point. This map does not indicate whether sidewalks exist on one or two sides of a street or the condition of the paving. Maintenance of existing sidewalks and shoulders is important for the safety of people using them and it can extend the life of the vehicle lanes.

Everyone walks a little bit, even if just from a parked car. In addition, there are some trips that can conveniently and pleasantly be made by foot, bicycle, or wheelchair by some people. The purpose of a walking and bicycling network is to support that and make it safe. Encouraging walking or bicycling on short trips in nice weather reduces traffic, pollution, and need for parking.

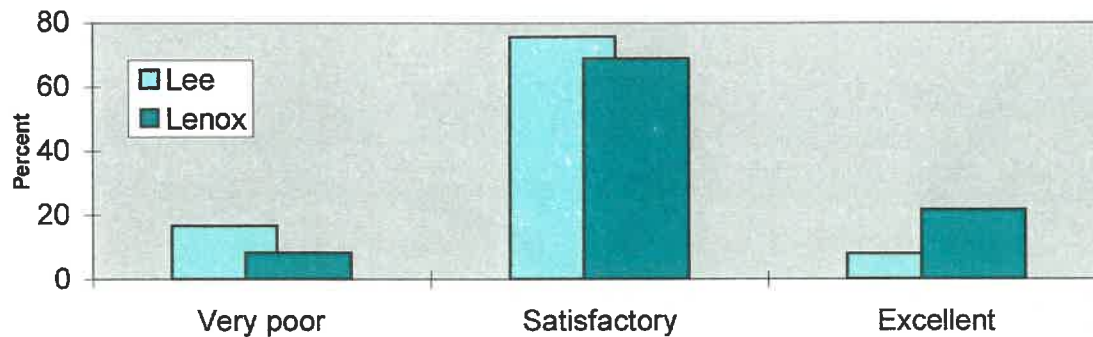
Lee should seriously promote walking to downtown as a means of reducing congestion and helping solve parking problems. This of course demands a commitment to maintenance, repair and construction of safe walkways. An important long-term approach is to fill in missing useful links in the network. Some other issues that can be considered further are snow removal, safety at intersections, and increasing amenities such as trees and lighting. While the intensity may vary by location, the next photo, looking south near the foot of Main Street, is a much-complemented scene that illustrates a variety of ideas.



Access to the Housatonic River is an issue that relates to many sections of this master plan and the open space plan. From a transportation viewpoint, a trail along sections of the River in the most developed parts of Lee could make walking and bicycling more common everyday activities. It could provide pleasant connections for short trips if access to the trail is planned with improved connections to the broader transportation network. It is also possible that people who walk or bicycle on it regularly will be more likely to use those modes for other short trips. For example, the benefits may outweigh the concerns for a path in downtown Lee along the River between Summer Street and West Park Street. Another idea for a recreation trail is for a short section in Lenox Dale, which Lee might be able to coordinate with Lenox as a sub-regional project.

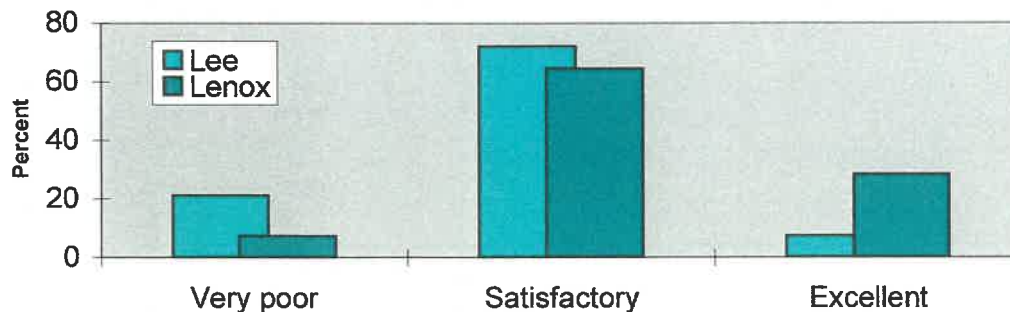
B. Transportation Mobility

There are two main sources of data about the whole transportation system. The sources are the 1998 surveys of Lee and Lenox residents, and 1990 Census data on transportation. The results of the Lee & Lenox community survey are both a source of information and of guidance for goals in the master plan. Below are some highlights regarding transportation and access (given for both Lee & Lenox only to give a sense of the range of responses):

Chart TRAN4 Satisfaction with Town Roads

The results regarding how Lee residents view their roads indicate that there is a significant group who think the roads are in very poor shape, although the large majority of respondents thought they were satisfactory.

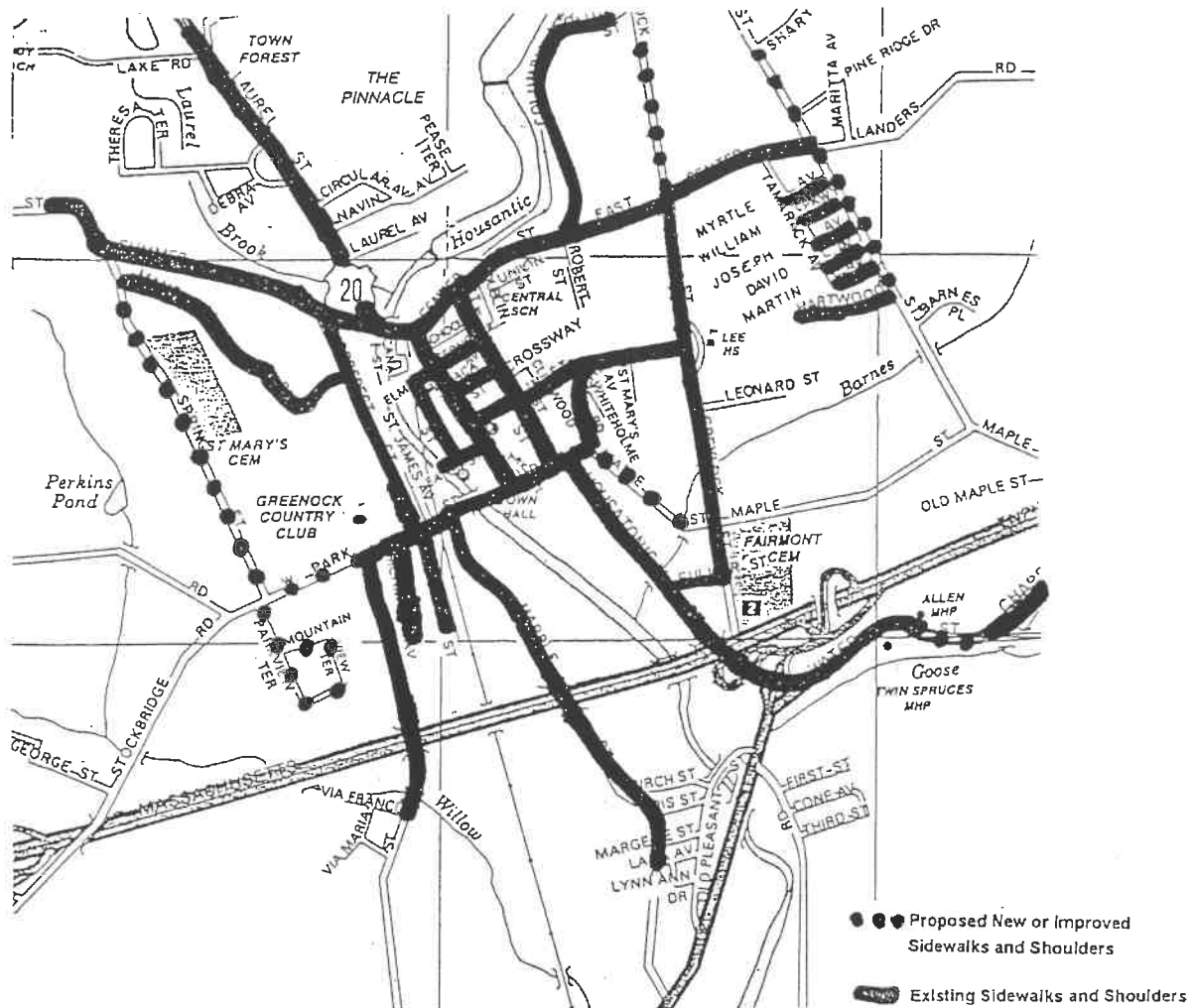
The results were similar when residents were asked about access to parks. Perception of access to parks may include a wide array of issues including number or size of recreation areas, but it also includes many transportation issues, such as directional signage, ability for children on bicycles to get there, and parking.

Chart TRAN5 Satisfaction with Access to Parks

Another source of data is the 1990 Census. It includes the following two types of data:

- Where people who work in Lee live (which can be anywhere in or out of the state)
- Where residents of Lee are employed

Although the information in the figures below is dated, the assumption is that towns or cities with many people commuting in 1990 are still likely to have strong commuting links to Lee.



LEE MASTER PLAN: DOWNTOWN SIDEWALKS AND SHOULDERS

This map created by:



Berkshire
Regional
Planning
Commission

This project was funded partially through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and through funds from the Towns of Lee and Lenox.

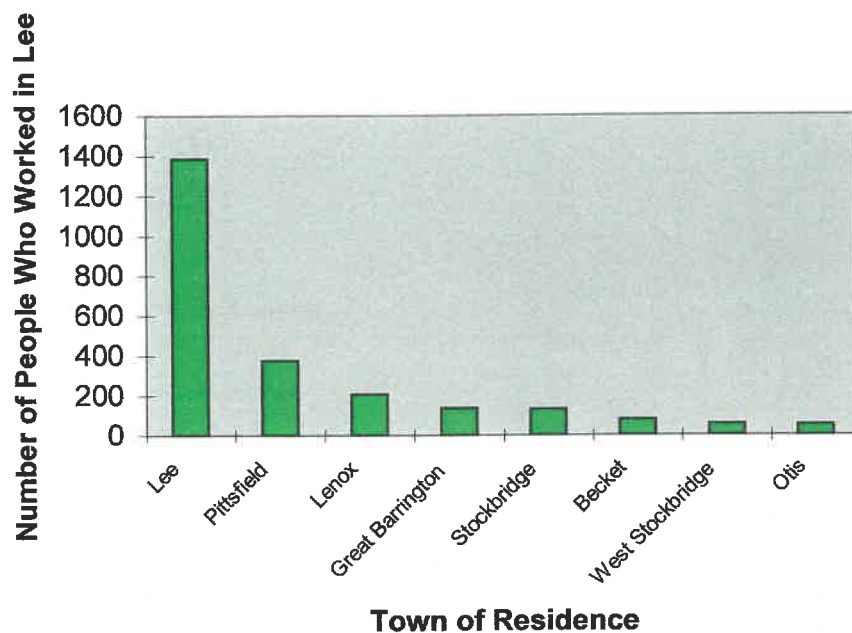
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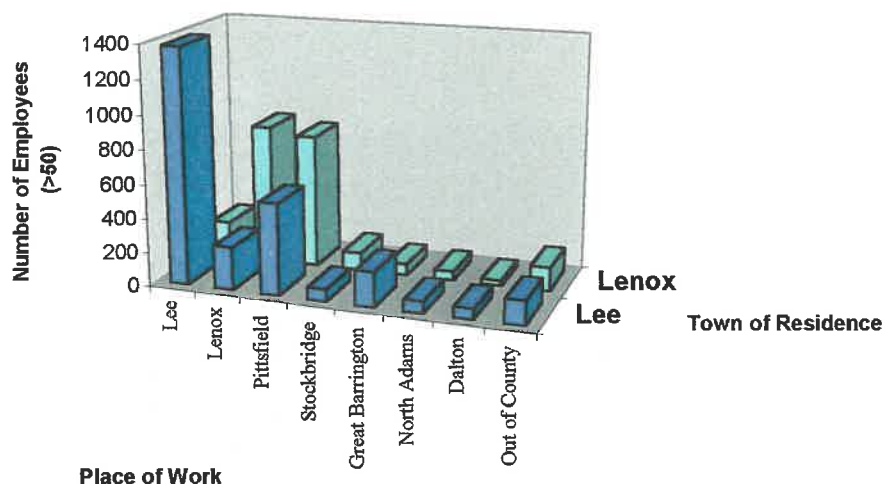
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Chart TRAN6 Where Significant Numbers (>50) of Lee Workers Lived in 1990

The Census information in the figure below shows where both Lee and Lenox residents worked. Both are included because of the contrast. Residents of Lee are roughly three times more likely to work in their own town than anywhere else. Residents of Lenox were barely more likely to work in town; 816 worked in Lenox and 781 worked in Pittsfield. This data shows that Lee really is a local center of activity.

Chart TRAN7 Where Significant Numbers of Lee & Lenox Residents Worked in 1990



Regardless of where people are going, there is a shared concern for getting there safely. Safety is the focus of many effective programs throughout Berkshire County and the broader region. However, it is always possible to do more to ensure the safety of drivers, passengers, pedestrians, motorcyclists, and bicyclists. Data about accidents is currently available by request from the Berkshire County Regional Community Traffic Safety Program. This data is summarized below.

Table TRAN8 Motor Vehicle-Related Accidents In Lee, 1997

	Berkshire County	Lee
Total Accidents	1,828	58
Serious Accidents (serious visible injury or death)	100	0

Source: Accident data from Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles, 1997

C. Challenges, Needs & Opportunities

It will be important to continue and enhance coordination between land use and transportation planning. Capacity and its relation to projected future traffic is pertinent when considering proposed changes in land use or zoning. For example, if a development is proposed, it is an important standard practice to consider how that will impact the transportation system. Many other interrelated factors also exist including 1) parking which is directly related to transportation and to business and economics, 2) scenic roads which are directly related to preservation of the historic natural landscape.

Clearly, many potential transportation impacts in Lee are regional in nature. The factors that are most controllable with a master planning effort are:

- level and type of change and development;
- how environmental impacts are managed and what are judged to be unacceptable impacts;
- state of the economy over the next few years and the next decades.

Even without any changes in roads or new buildings, the number of miles traveled is expected to continue to rise throughout the area based on local and national trends. It is important for Lee to decide how it will deal with these increases. Adding lanes or miles of road has the potential to make Lee look less attractive, hurt the environment, encourage sprawling land uses, and cost a great deal. Not doing anything has the potential to increase traffic to the point of discouraging economic development or making it difficult for emergency vehicles to get where they are needed. It is important that residents, business owners, and community leaders in Lee consider the following issues and come to a consensus on what is desired.

Transit Issues

There are two issues regarding transit that call for further discussion by residents and others interested in the direction Lee takes for future transportation. These are:

- Whether and how to continue funding for the trolley between Berkshire Outlet Village and downtown Lee, and further study of whether additional trolley routes are worthwhile for local transit
- Frequency and/or routes of Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority (BRTA) fixed route buses

A study prepared for Lee Economic Action Development (LEAD) by TranSales in early 1998 assessed the potential of shuttle services for the town and proposed the following trolley services based on 200 surveys:

- Shuttle service connecting Berkshire Outlet Village with downtown at least for the summer and Christmas tourism peaks
- Charter or subscription service to meet the needs of groups year round
- Flexible route service to serve major activity centers in Lee. Flexible route services serve different locations only when there are people who want to come or go to there.

Transit services have more potential within Lee than in some other places because there is a significant population of people who live, work, and shop in Lee. This might be enough to supplement tourists, students, and senior citizens who wish to ride transit to provide a viable level of use. However, further study would be needed to test whether enough people would actually use it, and where the land use patterns and road network make it reasonable.

Requests for service without corresponding ridership or funding is also a problem for the BRTA. Ridership is low, but at meetings and in letters to the editor (for example in the *Berkshire Eagle*) people in the southern part of Berkshire County say they want more service. Two options that could be further explored are providing the Lee representative to the BRTA Advisory Council with clearer goals and making it more convenient to use transit. The convenience of transit can

be increased through transportation decisions (such as improved shelters and increased prices for parking) or through land use decisions (such as encouraging development within existing centers).

North-Central Berkshire Access Study

Concerns about transportation access within the North-Central part of the Berkshire region and through it to the Massachusetts Turnpike have been discussed for at least forty years. One alternative, directly pertinent to Lee that has been considered in past transportation studies was to create a new interchange from Route 7 onto the Mass Turnpike in Stockbridge or Lee. Improvements to Route 20 have also been considered. The current approach to resolving the concerns started in July 1998 and a final report is expected in 2001. The study was initially called the North-South Major Investment Study but has been renamed the North-Central Berkshire Access Study. This is the first comprehensive, in-depth study of the problem in the entire North-Central part of Berkshire County ever done.

The North-Central Berkshire Access Study is a process for defining the problems, gathering information, and evaluating a variety of ways to improve transportation access. It will include alternatives for different modes of transportation and analysis of choosing limited or no changes. It incorporates meaningful public participation at all important points in the process of making a recommendation. The public participation process includes advertisements in major local newspapers and mailings to all who indicate interest in taking part. For information contact the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Lee has and will continue to have a severe negative traffic situation related to virtually all north/south traffic passing down Laurel Street and through Main Street and Housatonic Street. Many people in the Town of Lee have long been concerned with the volume of traffic, particularly truck traffic that passes through the downtown to and from the Turnpike. However, many local business people in Lee also believe that automobile traffic passing through the downtown is important to businesses in that area, and a strong central business district is recognized as important to the Town.

As far as the Town of Lee is concerned, for the future, something must be done! The greatest traffic improvement would be to reduce the impact of vehicles that have little or no benefit to the downtown. The type of traffic that most fits this description is non-local truck traffic. One alternative that would appear to satisfy this would be an alternative truck route, which would provide access to Pittsfield and the Turnpike. Unfortunately this alternative would appear very difficult to implement within or outside of Lee due to many factors. It is vital for Lee to participate in this important regional study to ensure that its concerns, and possibilities to address, them are seriously considered.

Inter-town Cooperation

Transportation is an issue that naturally crosses town boundaries since most major transportation facilities are used on a regional level. Cooperating with surrounding towns on transportation planning can reduce costs and increase the services any one municipality can provide. There is potential to share equipment, buy supplies in bulk, and explore other ways to cooperate. In

addition, through participating in the North-Central Berkshire Access Study and other broader efforts it may be possible to improve regional freight movement while reducing impacts of trucks and cars on downtown Lee.

Transportation Toolbox

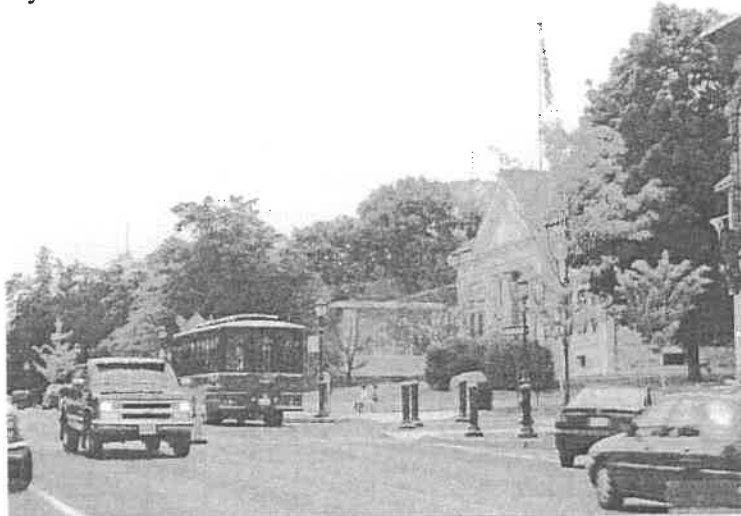
Transportation as a field has broadened far beyond building roads. Following are definitions for just a few of the newer concepts. They have been used with success in a wide variety of rural, town, and city environments.

Transportation System Management (TSM) - Programs of relatively inexpensive actions to increase the efficiency of the existing transportation system. This can include actual changes such as traffic light timing or intersection improvements, or changes in planning, such as changes in zoning to reduce transportation impacts. In Lee, this includes recommendations contained in the *Commercial Corridor Retail Build-Out Analysis* (BRPC, 1995)

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) - Programs to reduce the need for each person to have their own car such as ridesharing programs, transit, or the pricing or convenience of parking. In Lee, this includes projects such as the trolley between downtown and the Outlet Village.

Traffic Calming - Measures to reduce the negative effects of vehicles and improve conditions for non-motorized transportation. Many of these have been masterfully used in Lee already, but can be further pursued. These measures can include:

- Orange barrels with signs to remind drivers to watch for pedestrians.
- Speed Humps which are longer, safer versions of speed bumps.
- Speed Tables are even longer versions of speed bumps at intersections so that vehicles go up, rather than walkers stepping down.
- Changes in Pavement Texture are similar to rumble strips near toll plazas, to remind drivers to watch for pedestrians.
- Bump-outs are extensions of the sidewalk at intersections into the space used for on-street parking elsewhere to reduce the distance pedestrians have to walk exposed to traffic. They also slow down traffic.



D. Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Transportation

The transportation system should meet needs now and be sustainable in the future in terms of enhancing the community, preserving the environment, and supporting the economy. The following goals, objectives and strategies include various ways to fit the transportation pieces together in a planning framework.

Maintain & Improve Smooth Flow Of Traffic Throughout Town.

Reduce Impact of Trucks in Downtown Lee.

- *Find alternate truck routes and enforce.*
- *Improve signage to warn truck drivers of tight turns, such as at Park Square and where Route 20 turns from Center Street onto Laurel Street.*
- *Work with local paper mills, truck driver's organizations, and police to produce an educational brochure for truck drivers including a map with intersection warnings and truck bans in Lee.*
- *Maintain an educational outreach program to help citizens monitor streets with truck bans, since this is mainly their responsibility.*
- *Participate in North-Central Berkshire Access Study.*

Maintain and Improve Safety.

- *Review intersections with side streets where vehicles build up while trying to turn out into traffic for ways to improve safety and convenience.*
- *Maintain and strengthen enforcement of speed limits and no parking signs.*
- *Maintain a current emergency plan and detour signage in case of major accidents or closures of Route 20 through downtown.*

Consider Long Term Infrastructure Needs

- *Approve plan for maintaining roads (with funding sources), incorporate use of performance measures (such as the existing pavement management system) and publicize results to residents in order to address dissatisfaction reported in community survey.*
- *Budget and plan for long-term repair of roads and bridges.*
- *Participate in regional transportation planning.*

Enhance Walking, Bicycling, and Transit as Transportation Options.

Routes People Walk Should Be Convenient & Safe.

- *Complete the inventory of sidewalks in the Town of Lee, including condition and whether they are on one or both sides. Also refine definitions and locations of safe shoulders for use in less developed areas.*
- *Work with DPW to finalize a Sidewalk Improvement Program to support safety and convenience in reaching common destinations. Include maintenance of shoulders used for walking or bicycling.*
- *Adopt standards for when to install sidewalks and general design standards for width, street trees, lighting; consider private sector bonus for site plans that support walking network.*

Consider Safety Needs of Bicyclists.

- *Post “Watch for Bicyclist” signs where dangerous conditions are indicated by accidents, and on roads with narrow shoulders that are currently used by bicyclists.*
- *Review bicycle access safety to recreation areas and near schools.*

Actively Support Transit Where it Makes Sense.

- *Further discuss routes, frequency, and funding for BRTA with Lee representative to BRTA Advisory Board.*
- *Resolve operation and maintenance funding issues for trolley as necessary.*

Improve Access to Recreation Areas.

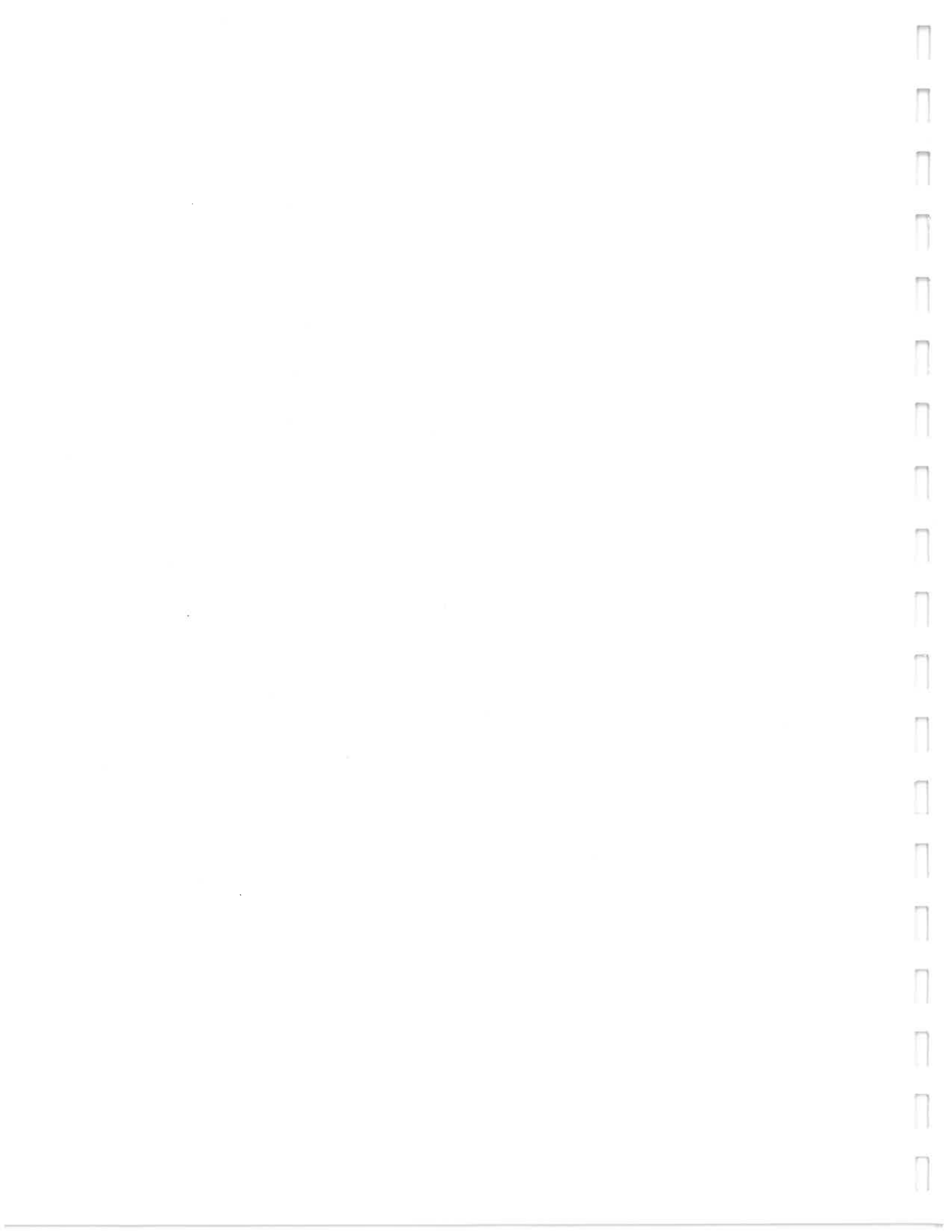
- *Improve access to parks by all modes of transportation especially from community focal points such as other parks, residential areas, and schools.*
- *Consider improving pedestrian and bicycle access along the Housatonic River between Summer Street and West Park Street in Downtown Lee.*
- *Investigate potential to convert abandoned railroad or trolley tracks to rail-trails. One possibility for further study is the old Huckleberry trolley line in East Lee.*

Maintain Adequate Parking Downtown.

- *Review potential for encouraging employee parking behind buildings downtown to leave the most visible spaces for short-term parking.*
- *Encourage maintenance of parking lots, including plantings, particularly near Main Street, in coordination with LEAD.*
- *Consider future parking needs to serve desired growth, perhaps including consideration of the area behind the Bookless Building and behind the Congregational Church.*

Promote the retention of scenic and community qualities related to road corridors.

- *Promote coordination between land use decisions & transportation projects, for example by continuing implementation of Commercial Corridor Retail Build-Out Analysis, Berkshire County (BRPC, 1995) regarding Routes 7, 20, and 102 corridors.*
- *Preserve and encourage enjoyment of town scenic roads in a process including clarifying roads designated by the town as scenic; reviewing guidelines for preserving them; and publicizing this information for general and landowner information.*



VII. HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS

A. General Characteristics and Conditions

There are a variety of residential housing types and living arrangements in Lee that provide for safe, enjoyable living experiences. Lee has housing and neighborhoods with unique and positive characteristics to preserve. However, over the long term, some housing challenges will need to be addressed to achieve many of the goals of this Plan that are related to housing and residential development.

Lee's year round population has declined in the last several decades after peaking in 1970, as noted in the population and demographics section. However, the number of housing units in town continues to grow in response to a number of factors, including a modest but growing demand for seasonal and second homes and a continuously decreasing median household size. Although Lee's population fell from 6,247 persons in 1980 to 5,849 in 1990, the number of households actually increased by 157. Both year-round population and household size stabilized in the 1990's.

The number of housing units has slowly but steadily grown since the 1960's, and residents have witnessed some changes in residential patterns as development spread outward from the Downtown and East Lee.

Table HOUS1 Age of Housing Units - 1990 Census

Period Housing Constructed	Lee	% of Total Units in Lee
1939 or earlier	1,162	43.4%
1940-1959	406	15.2%
1960's	318	11.9%
1970's	404	15.1%
1980's	385	14.3%
Total	2,675	100.0%

The majority of the housing stock is comprised of single family detached units. Most housing is of the traditional site-built type, with a wide variety of styles, ranging from simple Federal homesteads built over two centuries ago to ranches and other single family homes representative of the post-World War II era, to a limited number of condominiums and elderly housing of recent years. The typical Lee home is relatively modest, ranging in size from 1,000 square feet to 2,000 square feet.

Table HOUS2 Number of Housing Units by Type of Structure- 1990 Census

	Lee	% of Total Units in Lee
Single Family Detached Units	1,664	62%
Single Unit Attached	15	1%
Duplex to Quadraplex Units	574	22%
Multiple Family (5-9 Units/struct.)	113	4%
Multiple Family (>10 Units/struct.)	226	8%
Mobile Home and Trailer, Other	83	3%
TOTAL	2,675	100%
Condominium Units	23	1%
Number of Bedrooms		
0-1 bedroom	401	15%
2 bedrooms	679	25%
3 bedrooms	982	37%
4 or more bedrooms	613	23%

Building permits give us a general picture of the type of housing structures being constructed.

Table HOUS3 Building Permit Table

Building Permits Issued by Type of Permit	Single Family Units	Two- family Units	Triplex and Quadraplex Units	Units in structures with > 4 units	Total Units (estimate)
1990	16				16
1991	15		4		19
1992	23				23
1993	16		3		19
1994	15		6		21
1995	11				11
1996	11				11
1997	10				10
Total Permits 1990-1997	117	0	13	0	130

A seasonal unit in the Census was one that was being primarily utilized during the major visitor season (summer). This does not necessarily mean the home could not be inhabited year round.

Table HOUS4 Housing Units and Occupancy in Lee & County - 1990 Census

	Lee	% of Units in Lee	% Units Berkshire County
Total Housing Units	2,675		
Seasonal Housing Units	274	10%	9.8%
Year Round Housing Units	2,401	90%	90.2%
Occupied Housing Units (% YR)		93.1%	89.6%
Owner Occupied (% of Occ.)	1,379	73.5%	65.2%

Housing for Seniors

The existing population of seniors has grown and support services for seniors and Persons with Special Needs are excellent. Housing for seniors includes public, private and non-profit forms of ownership.

The Town does have two town-owned housing complexes for seniors, Clarke Court and Browne Memorial Court, both managed by the Lee Housing Authority. Disabled persons are also eligible residents. Occupancy is usually about 100%. Hyde Place, on Main Street is another affordable option for seniors. Proximity to the downtown virtually ensures full occupancy.

Assisted living residences are designed to promote resident's independence and dignity and offer supportive care to the frail elderly who do not require the intensive care of nursing homes. Assisted living residences fill a critical gap in attending to elders who require personal care but who do not have significant medical needs. An assisted living residence is a special combination of housing, supportive services, personalized assistance, and healthcare designed to respond to the individual needs of those who require assistance with activities such as bathing, toileting, incontinence, dressing, eating, mobility, hygiene, and grooming, shopping, running errands, and banking.

In 1999, the Berkshire Hills Nursing Home was relocated to a new facility at the northern entrance to the town across from Laurel Lake. It was transformed into a combined nursing/assisted living quarters with a unit for persons with Alzheimer's. Surrounding towns, such as Lenox, also have several similar facilities that have been developed over the last few years, or are currently under development.

The existing senior population creates increasing demand for senior housing in both the affordable and upper price ranges. One possibility for reuse of the Central School would be for more affordable housing. Reuse of the interior space would not and should not necessarily compromise the character of the historic facades of the school.

B. Housing Market and Affordability

In Lee, like most parts of the United States, there is a housing availability and affordability problem, particularly for those living on limited incomes. Affordability is tied to several factors, including income, supply and demand.

In recent years there has been a scarcity of available homes for sale or rent and the sales and rental prices have remained high despite a lukewarm economy. Housing in Lee is inexpensive compared to the Boston area, and when compared to nearby communities such as Lenox and Stockbridge. In the first six months of 1998, the median sales price for a home in Lee was \$93,000, (\$105,000 using incomplete data thru Sept. 1998), similar to \$100,000 for the County versus \$160,000 to \$187,500 median sales price for Lenox and Stockbridge.

Generally, existing home sale prices in Lee currently range from \$70,000 for a home that is small or in need of repairs to over \$175,000 for a large home in good to excellent condition. Of course, there are many homes and estates that are valued much higher. The sales price reflects the size, age, condition, location, the value of the land, and accessories of the home and lot (such as accessory structures, finished basement, garage, etc.).

Rental rates in Lee and the southern part of the County tend to be higher than the rest of the County. According to the 1990 Census, Lee's median contract rent (\$413/month in 1990) was higher than numerous towns (\$365 for County). This may reflect the small number and variety of rental units in Lee and other nearby communities (except for Pittsfield).

It is important to note the impact of seasonal and second homes upon the rental housing market issues. Demand for housing in the summer reduces the supply of rental units available year round. This has helped create a situation where many households with one or more persons working in Lee, earning up to 80% or more of the area median income, are paying a fairly large percentage of their income in rent. Due to cost and availability, many may not be able to find suitable rental housing in town.

Table HOUS5 Housing Cost and Affordability Levels - 1998 Sales and 1990 Census

Location	Median Sales Price of Home, 1998 (thru July)	Median Sales Price of Home, 1990	% Homeowners Paying >30% of Income for Housing	% Renters Paying Greater than 30% for Housing	% Low/Moderate Income households Paying >30% for Housing
Lee	\$105,000 (thru 9/98)	\$117,300	21.1%	29.7%	32.2%
Lenox	\$160,000	\$158,600	25.4%	46.5%	31.0%
Stockbridge	\$187,500	\$184,000	23.6%	33.7%	31.5%
Pittsfield MSA			19.3%	39.1%	
Berkshire Cty.	\$100,000	\$114,900	20.0%	40.0%	

Due to several factors, many of these same families and individuals may also find it difficult to purchase such housing in Lee. Even Lee families and employees at or well above the median

income level who may need to upgrade their housing often cannot find suitable, available, existing homes to purchase or sites to build on. Therefore, the housing affordability issue is intricately intertwined with the issue of availability.

Although it can only make a difference on a small scale, there is a house building program at the High School sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. Each year one modest new home is built by local students and then purchased for the cost of materials by a family that could not otherwise afford a new home.

C. Neighborhood Areas and Residential Patterns

A neighborhood area is basically an area of town that shares geographic location and often some level of service. Using a level of measurement available through the Census, the Block Group, in combination with the defined area of Lee's Downtown, Lee is basically comprised of five neighborhood areas:

1. Downtown
2. North Lee
3. South Lee
4. East Lee
5. West Lee

Lee is certainly known as a desirable location in which to live. There are many nice homes and attractive residential areas. As is the case overall in the Pittsfield Metropolitan area, median home prices are reasonably affordable in each of the five neighborhood areas listed above. However, there are marked demographic differences in different areas of town. This information has implications for other community needs.

There are various spatial patterns of residential land uses and development that can be seen throughout the region. The ones that are particularly evident in Lee are:

1. **Downtown Village Center** - Generally historic medium to medium high density, pedestrian accessible extended core of town that includes a variety of housing types with public and commercial uses (Downtown Business District and its immediate neighborhoods).
2. **Mixed Use Areas** - Along major transportation corridors, there are concentrations of homes mixed with adjacent non-residential development.
3. **Suburban Residential Areas** - Generally contiguous roadside and subdivision single family developments, generally with utility services, often medium to low in density. Like most of the nation, this pattern has been dominant since World War II.
4. **Agricultural/Residential** - Generally farm areas, that have rural surroundings of non-contiguous low density homes without utilities. As housing replaces agriculture, these areas often become suburban residential.
5. **Forest/Residential Areas** - Generally wooded areas, often at higher elevations, including rural surroundings of non-contiguous low-density homes. Like most of the larger region, there has been a conversion of significant forest areas to residential ones.

More information on land use patterns can be found in the Land Use Section of this Plan.

The dominant pattern of suburban sprawl contains environmental, social and economic deficiencies including:

1. It results in an inefficient consumption of land that degrades natural environments and habitats.
2. Land uses are separated and for the most part inaccessible from each other, except by car, which severely reduces community interaction and has negative impacts on the environment (This was highlighted at the Community Visioning Meeting).
3. It requires never ending expensive investment in infrastructure and results in inefficient or ineffective service provision.
4. Buildings are often set far back from streets so that spatial definition is lost and the design is so commonplace that there is no sense of place.
5. Housing is strictly segregated into large groups of equal cost, hindering socioeconomic diversity.

There are several factors, discussed in various sections of this Plan, that lead to the conclusion that this pattern of residential sprawl, if left unchecked, is likely to continue in Lee in the future.

An alternative to suburban sprawl can be seen in the historic traditional neighborhood pattern that has several positive consequences including:

1. Most of the activities of daily living are within walking distance; everyone, but especially the elderly and the young, gain independence of movement.
2. Pedestrian streets and squares invite neighbors to come to know each other and to watch over their collective well being.
3. By providing a full range of housing types and work places, age and economic classes are integrated and the bonds of an authentic community are formed.
4. The expenses of road construction are limited.
5. Public transit becomes a viable alternative to the automobile.

A newer emerging pattern, Planned Developments, can take many forms but generally have the density of villages with surroundings of permanent open space. Retirement condominium complexes are examples that can be seen in the Berkshires.

If a new large residential development is ever considered in Lee, it would be preferential for it to have at a minimum the following attributes common to a traditional neighborhood:

1. The neighborhood is limited in size so that a majority of the population is within a 5 minute walking distance of its center. This allows for advantageous design of streets in relation to other streets, buildings, sidewalks, and parking and would create the potential for a bus stop.
2. The buildings are limited in size but complex in use. There is a mixture of small houses, large houses, outbuildings, small apartment buildings, stores, restaurants and offices. Despite this diversity, buildings are compatible in size and massing.
3. One or more key civic buildings (meeting halls, churches, clubs, etc.), larger in size, can be placed on a square or at the termination of a street vista and serve as a landmark.

D. Housing Issues for the Future

In the last decade, new development has continued to occur along roadsides and in new subdivisions in forms ranging from traditional single family units to institutional residences.

While these developments are in response to market demand and have met some of the internal needs of the town and the region, in some cases these developments have been unpopular and have caused impacts, such as the October Mountain development, which caused problems with erosion.

The responses to the Community Survey question below indicate that in the eyes of the community the greatest housing needs require affordable housing options.

Table HOUS6 Survey Responses on Most Needed Types of Housing in Lee

Rank	# Responses	Please check the types of housing, if any, most needed in Lee
1	244	Year-round apartments for families such as 2 bedrooms for \$500/month
2	229	Suitable housing options for seniors
3 (tie)	196	Already-existing homes which can be purchased for under \$100,000
3 (tie)	196	new homes which can be built for under \$125,000
5	95	None
6	94	Suitable housing options for the handicapped
7	77	new homes which can be built for over \$125,000

It is certainly likely that the cost to purchase an existing home will rise in Lee in the future. Independent of qualitative factors, price is largely a factor of supply and demand. Due to income trends, and the fact that very little new starter or mid-range single family housing is being built in Lee and surrounding towns, the demand for affordable single family homes is likely to outpace market supply. Part of the reason for this is that the availability of suitable land for residential development is becoming increasingly scarce and such land is becoming increasingly expensive.

Housing demand is related to economic conditions and local economic development and it appears that the latter will create internal demand for new housing. There will be a need for middle range housing, both single family units for families and apartment condominiums for single professionals, a need for affordable rental housing for low/moderate income workers, and a variety of affordable housing options for seniors. Due primarily to demographics and projected market, more non-single family units can be expected, including conversions of existing structures (such as the vacated nursing home and possibly Central School) and new condominiums.

There is little doubt that if no new construction of affordable housing is pursued in the future, there will be a shrinking supply of affordable or medium-priced rental and owner occupied housing. Part of the reason for this is that the existing supply will be lost to natural aging, fire, and commercial/office conversions.

Specific future needs are uncertain. Across Massachusetts there is often a weak relationship between housing needs and community desires, leading to little being done to address needs. A large part of the reason for this is related to fiscal implications. While Planners and well meaning citizens and organizations can highlight better forms of residential growth, there is often opposition to any new development by those living in nearby existing development. According to a segment of people in town, there are no locations where new housing should be approved.

Even if Lee were to address all its internal housing demand in the future, many issues would still be present. Availability of affordable housing in the towns surrounding Lee is much worse than in Lee. Some of these towns look to Lee to provide residential options for their workforce. There is no regional force to address affordable housing issues and, despite much effort, a weak framework to address them at the state level.

The most fruitful approach might be for Lee to protect and preserve its existing housing stock and pursue reuse and fuller utilization of existing structures for housing. There is a potential to utilize vacant/underused upstairs space in the Downtown area for rental housing. Due to aging some housing will continue to require rehabilitation. CDBG funds from HUD are available for rehabilitation to owners of single family homes and rental housing. A combination loan/grant package of up to \$12,000 per unit can be secured with interest rates between 0 and 9%. Other program options from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development also exist.

Lee should consider housing needs within the overall spectrum of community and economic needs and incorporate attention to this issue. One way for the town to do this could be by expanding the role of the housing authority and coordinating their efforts with a public role in maintaining and enhancing downtown improvements.

E. Goals, Objectives and Strategies for the Future

Despite not desiring a large volume of growth, local officials, groups, and individuals recognize that there is a need to meet the housing requirements of various segments of the town's population. At a June 1998 Community Visioning Workshop, residents also expressed a desire to preserve the town's aura of safety, and proud tradition of strong community involvement. In addition, they recognized that efforts should be made to ensure that young families can secure suitable affordable housing. Good neighborhoods and an adequate supply of safe, suitable and affordable housing are crucial to Lee if it wishes to continue to maintain a diverse population that includes a variety of household types from retirees to families.

In the Task Force meetings and the Visioning Workshop, residents of Lee stressed that the town must encourage the maintenance of a varied population in order to fully function as a true community in which people grow up, work, raise children, and retire. Creative affordable housing policies that respect town desires for land preservation should be enthusiastically pursued or market forces may drive out many younger families and moderate-income retirees.

Housing needs and desires will be met consistent within the overall-planning framework as:

1. The ability of singles, young families and moderate-income retirees to afford quality housing within town boundaries remains secure while environmentally sensitive lands are protected from development.
2. An appropriate level of additional housing is concentrated near the Lee's Downtown in order to take advantage of economies of scale for utility provision and in order to promote the core as a truly mixed-use civic center.
3. Housing developments include a variety of housing types, and residences within town and are connected by a network of sidewalks, trails, and open spaces that will encourage greater interaction between residents as members of the community.

A major goal is to ***Provide a variety of housing to meet the needs of Lee's population.*** This goal is linked to objectives and strategies below:

Maintain and utilize programs for the existing residential base.

- *Continue to support, enhance senior and special needs housing programs.*
- *Continue/expand access to state and federal program funds for homeowner housing repairs and rehabilitation.*
- *Allow single to multifamily unit conversions to encourage fuller occupation of larger old homes, particularly in areas around Downtown.*

Monitor and address changing housing needs over the long term.

- *Periodically evaluate housing gaps and determine preferred residential forms affordable, seniors, condos, mixed uses, clustered.*
- *Provide encouragement to developers to include a mix of housing types within new multifamily developments in order to fill gaps.*
- *Strengthen the importance of meeting community needs as a criterion for granting Special Permits.*
- *The Town and its Housing Authority could work closely with other organizations such as the Berkshire Housing Development Corp. and local employers to sponsor affordable housing and address housing gaps as they arise in the future.*

Another important goal is to ***Encourage residential development to shift to efficient pedestrian forms.*** This goal is linked to objectives and strategies below:

As necessary, increase housing for elderly residents and young families in or near the pedestrian services and amenities of the downtown and other densely developed areas.

- *Permit and encourage innovation, such as town houses in the Downtown, where in keeping with the character of the area.*
- *Consider allowing redevelopment and new infill development at higher density under special permitting in such areas.*
- *Make plans/reuse/renovate existing buildings in or near the Downtown area (such as the upper stories of the primary Main Street block or Central School) for affordable senior housing and apartments, mixed with community center space and office space.*

- *Possibly offer tax incentives and creative alternatives to parking requirements for building reuse.*
- *Create a zoning framework that will encourage proposals for compact housing with community parking, accessory residences in businesses, etc.*

Create more alternatives to traditional development.

- *Permit and encourage innovation in zoning such as housing clusters, allowing back lot development and flexible frontage in exchange for open space easements or dedications, in non-conservation areas.*
- *Encourage/require new development/redevelopment to have a pedestrian orientation to minimize dependence on individual auto transportation.*

VIII. MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Quality municipal utilities are important to Lee. Essential facilities ensure healthful provision of drinking water and environmentally sound collection and processing of wastewater. The facilities must be adequately operated and maintained by the Department of Public Works. Distribution and collection lines must be located to cost effectively service the majority of the population of Lee now and in the future in a sustainable manner. The town also has infrastructure that handles stormwater flows.

A. Water

The water system in Lee is owned and operated by the Town. Portions of the system date back to 1881. The system, composed of water resources, treatment and storage facilities and distribution lines, has gradually been modernized and expanded. Public water is supplied from four surface water sources: the long standing upper and lower reservoirs (Leahy and Vanetti) located in Lee along October Mountain; and October Mountain Lake and Schoolhouse Lake in Washington, which have recently been added to the system.

A new water filtration plant near the lower reservoir came online in the fall of 1998, allowing the utilization of the new lake sources. A state of the art Krofta system at the plant has upgraded the quality of drinking water to a level of purity meeting all EPA standards. Water is stored at two new storage tanks at the plant and also pumped to a tank in South Lee. The distribution system, which extends throughout most of the lower elevation portions of town, is also connected to the water systems in Lenox and Stockbridge. A small number of users from those towns, in the Lenox Dale area and along Route 102, can be serviced by the Lee Water Department.

The one million gallon water storage tank in South Lee is relatively new and in good general condition. Altogether, the three storage tanks have a capacity of 2.5 million gallons. Lee has an average daily demand of approximately 800,000 to 900,000 gallons and a peak demand of well over 1,000,000 gallons during hot and dry summer days.

There is a clear seasonal variation in water usage. The summers characteristically result in monthly demand that is considerably greater than other months of the year. This demand has historically caused water shortages in dry summer periods as supplies in the Reservoirs are drawn down. The new expanded water source and facilities should eliminate this problem. If the system can maintain reliable operation, it will easily allow the Town to maintain sufficient usable and stored water.

The distribution system is composed mainly of 6" and 8" pipes located under the streets. The major feeder lines are of a larger diameter, often 12" or 16". The system includes original cast iron water mains (approximately 18% of system) some of which date back to the late 1800's. Most of the piping (about 80%), installed during the 1950's to 1970's, is transite concrete. More recent piping (2%) is made of ductile iron.

The Lee system utilizes both gravity flow and pumping, with its accompanying power costs, to supply water to the distribution system. The water pressure is good, averaging about 75-80 lbs. (and quite higher in some places). In addition to supplying everyday needs, the pressurized system hydrants consistently provide a good source for fire fighting needs.

The Town DPW has replaced some sections of pipes in the past decade and made additional connections to 'loop' the system. This looping has increased the freshness of drinking water, and has allowed an increase in pressure, thereby improving fire protection. Pipe repairs also eliminate leakage of water sometimes caused by breakage in the lines. The town has an ongoing funded program for repairs. Recently the Town extended water to serve the Outlet Village and the Quarry Hill Business Park.

Over 90% of housing units are supplied by the public water system, with the rest covered by private companies, or community or individual wells. The provision of water to some of the more rural areas of town is limited.

Water usage is not metered. Water rates are set by schedule for different types of users. The 1998 rate for single family dwellings was \$80 per six months with a 10% discount for prepayment.

B. Wastewater

The sanitary sewer system in Lee is owned and operated by the Town. The sewer system consists of original clay tile collector pipes of various dimensions, newer transite and PVC lines, pump stations, and the wastewater treatment plant located near the Housatonic River south of Route 102, constructed in 1968.

The sewer system has grown gradually into a larger collection network that extends throughout large portions of the lower elevation parts of town. The public system dates to 1931 when clay tile lines were installed in the central portion of town. Newer lines, installed following World War II as development extended outward from the core, are transite concrete (about one half of the system), and the newest sections are composed of PVC piping. Some sections of clay tile have been replaced with PVC pipe due to problems with root infestation resulting in leakage and blockage. PVC represents about 25-30% of the system.

The growth of the wastewater system has reduced the need for individual septic systems which, due to seepage or failure, have historically contributed to water quality problems. Over 85% of Lee's households are on public sewer. Where septic systems do exist they are well maintained, due to aggressive enforcement of Title 5 by the Tri-Town Board of Health. The few contamination problems that do exist are due to system overloads that arise as seasonal lakeside cottages are converted to year-round use and involve the seasonal high water table.

The gravity flow collection system runs in a general southerly direction, under the Turnpike to the treatment plant. The plant utilizes extended aeration, and discharges into the Housatonic River. Sludge resulting from processing is now disposed of off-site. The wastewater treatment

plant has the capacity to handle one million gallons per day. The system had an average daily flow of 920,000 gallons in 1998. Ongoing improvements, such as the Abby Court project, and other repairs and modifications to correct inflow/infiltration (I & I) problems that have been required for new projects have reduced the flow level from the 1,040,000 gallon average in 1996. Flows are heavier in the summer due to increased water usage, and periodically throughout the year due to increased localized weather events.

There is a problem of inflow and infiltration when heavy storms occur, at which time the system can experience flows of about 2.3 million gallons. This load severely impacts the treatment plant's normally strained ability to process waste. Plant overloading has led to a reduced quality effluent from the plant into the Housatonic River. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has mandated improvements to the plant which are expected to be completed by December 2003.

Mead Paper Company on Route 102 and Schweitzer-Maudit have their own water waste treatment facilities to handle their industrial waste discharges which are subject to State environmental quality review. Mead recently built a secondary treatment facility that went online January 2000, and is in the process of upgrading their primary treatment facility that is projected to be ready January 2001.

Sewer charges are set by schedule and are not directly measured and tied to actual flows. Sewer rates for single family residential users are \$80 per six months.

C. Storm Drainage System

The origin of stormwater flows is normally rainfall that will return to surface or ground water with a small percentage evaporating into the atmosphere. Natural storm drainage flows are changed by the built environment. Increased stormwater flow volumes result from landscapes and land covers that allow a high rate of runoff, such as steep slopes, impervious surfaces and poorly drained soils. Other sources include incidences of air conditioning condensation, springs, wash water for streets, or water consumed from the public water supply for use of washing vehicles, watering lawns, etc.

Stormwater may often be best handled through adequate on-site drainage methods and areas. Modern building practices aim to minimize changes to stormwater flows. Historically however, storm or surface water drainage systems have usually been designed to convey storm water off-site as quickly as possible. This typically caused increased flooding in downstream areas and degraded overall water quality.

Storm drainage systems can be defined as the entire network of streets, curb and gutter, ditches, ponds, culverts, catch basins, bridges, manholes and inlets. The destined location is normally a retention pond, creek, river or lake. The wastewater treatment plant, through direct and indirect means, is another destination.

Lee is located in the valley of the Housatonic River, which is the destination of the storm water from the land surface of the Town. Tributaries intercept storm water in various parts of town and carry it to the River. Streets, particularly those with gutters, ditches and storm drainage structures, also convey stormwater. Stormwater flows are generally not strong in areas with high soil permeability. Storm drainage does not generally cause serious problems of flooding in Lee as the patchwork system basically provides adequate drainage. However, in many instances stormwater can carry pollutants straight into the River.

D. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

The maintenance and improvement of public utilities requires a constant effort on the part of the local government. Good utilities are essential to residents and businesses, and are important to economic growth. In many ways, public utilities can be described as adequate. However, as in the case of the wastewater system, local and external financial resources will be necessary to implement improvement or installation of some new infrastructure projects. Currently, service fees are low and are flatly applied. Efficiency would be promoted if there were a more direct relationship between utility revenues and expenses and if charges were tied to actual use of water measured with meters. This would more fairly distribute costs to users and would promote water conservation by both individuals and businesses.

To some extent the cost of services is tied to patterns of development. One national study estimates that the net public cost for a low density residential community is approximately three times higher than for a high density community. The difference was due to inefficient expenditures for public school operating, instructional, and transportation services, and also because sprawl creates potentially higher public liabilities for road maintenance and future provision of public water and sewer. Local, state and national expenditures have heavily subsidized this costly pattern. Lee must provide adequate infrastructure but carefully consider appropriate coverage. Lee needs to continue reaching outwards to improve existing services, or when necessary to develop new ones, with surrounding communities. The public has expressed some support for the concept of cooperative sharing, for example of some equipment, to reduce costs if the details can be worked out.

Water

The water supply is a valuable commodity that needs to be protected, as there are still small portions of the watershed for the town reservoirs (areas around Vanetti) that may not be adequately protected. Zoning and other regulatory tools should be examined to protect watershed resources.

Although it is wise to protect other potential future drinking water sources, if kept pure, the current water supply is apparently more than adequate for the foreseeable future. Supply and system capacity should not be limiting factors in regard to development and expanded water demand unless very large water consuming industrial users are added.

However, excess, unnecessary water usage is not desirable from an environmental and fiscal standpoint. The current system does not measure and bill users for actual water used. It

therefore does not encourage water to be consumed at a lower rate. Metering contributes to water conservation. Studies have consistently shown that when user bills are tied to metered rates, usage is significantly reduced. The potential savings in usage would lower water treatment and pumping costs, as well as wastewater treatment costs. Meters would require an initial installation cost and on-going administration cost, but would guarantee that the rates charged for water are applied equitably. Leaks are also a likely source of some lost water. Leaks can be isolated by comparing subsystem flows with metering totals.

The water distribution system is not adequately sized in some areas, for instance along East Street. The system might be extended along Maple Street to serve the area near just north of the Turnpike and under the Turnpike to provide better, more direct service to the Outlet Village.

Lee's water distribution system, including cast iron mains, is also aging. Replacement of mains will be necessary in the future. This work could be performed in conjunction with street repairs to benefit from state funding opportunities, to gain cost efficiencies, and avoid unnecessary construction and disturbance. Fortunately, many of the old pipes are still in good shape, although some lines, prone to corrosion, are beginning to deteriorate. Those made of transite, which is brittle and can easily break, may require work.

Replacement of water mains will be a continuing need that must be addressed. Lee should strive for a future water distribution system that includes new lines that are looped. "Looping" to avoid dead ends equalizes pressure and demand within the system and eliminates possible problems. Areas of West and South Lee might eventually be looped including lines along Church Street and Devon Road. Regular flushing of lines is another necessary on-going task. Overall, the age of the original distribution system dictates that the currently ongoing program of repair and replacement be maintained and possibly expanded with the aid of external funding sources to continue providing quality, uninterrupted service to the community.

One option is for the Town to plan for the gradual replacement of the poorest condition mains. Replacement could be implemented through a large comprehensive approach, on a section basis, or by prioritizing heavily used lines most in need of replacement.

The water treatment plant will require careful operation and maintenance to ensure the integrity of quality drinking water. The water storage facilities will provide sufficient storage capacity for the foreseeable future.

As is the case with the wastewater system, extensions to the water system should be carefully considered within an overall growth-planning framework. An extension policy should encourage and support extensions in designated areas and discourage or disallow them in others, with provisions to keep the policy flexible and effective.

Wastewater System

Lee is in the design phase for a major upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant. The new expanded plant will be financed by the state's revolving loan program and town funds. The estimate is that the plant upgrade may cost approximately 9.2 million dollars. The planned

wastewater facility improvements are necessary to address the existing needs, discussed previously, for increased capacity, and more efficient and effective treatment.

The plant upgrade is intended to provide for peak usage events. The upgraded plant is being designed for a 50% increase to current capacity. The increase in capacity will need to be funded through an increase in user fees. In other places this has been an arguing point to extend lines and increase development in order to spread the costs. While the plant should not be undersized, the town needs to carefully weigh the needs for extra capacity with the potential that this may unintentionally spur growth in conflict with the town's desire to have limited growth.

Improvements to reduce the I & I problems should continue to be made over time. Many of the original clay tile lines still in place are not in good condition. These and other lines will need to eventually be replaced with PVC or other technologically advanced piping. The DPW needs to continue to identify causes of inflow problems and recommend replacement of bad sections as well as other actions to reduce and prevent inflow.

Residences that are currently not connected to the sewer, particularly those with aging septic systems, may desire to tie into the sewer system. There is no set Town policy on extending sewer lines now or in the future. Under zoning, properties that have sewer and water can be developed at a higher density. This is an incentive to extend sewer to outlying areas, particularly in the R-40 zones. This may be contributing to sprawling residential patterns that have various consequences (see the Sustainable Land Use section). A map indicating the general location of wastewater system facilities, lines and a general service area is shown on the following page.

The service area shown on the map provides an area where new users can tie in without greatly extending lines. Gravity feeds are possible in many locations. Providing new connections within or immediately adjacent to the existing service area would be an economically feasible strategy. Extending the lines in an unplanned manner beyond the service area might spur unwanted or inappropriate growth. The method of paying for these improvements is also an issue that town officials, and possibly the voters, will need to further consider.

There is a nucleus of residences on or near the north shore of Laurel Lake that pertains to Lenox, that are currently on private septic systems. These systems may contribute some nutrients to the lake and thereby be at least partly responsible for the long-standing problem with weed growth. New state regulations affecting septic systems encourage the upgrading of existing systems to prevent contamination of the water supply. Extension of sewer to serve that area may be a more environmentally sustainable solution.

Some lower elevated portions of town may require a lift station to link into the sewer. It may be more feasible to allow private or community septic systems in areas where sewer hookup is especially difficult. Any septic system must be designed to avoid potential contamination of the underground water supply however.

MAP SEWER SERVICE AND ZONING

Storm Drainage and Watershed Concerns

Uncontaminated runoff should be directed in such a way as to recharge the groundwater within the lot where it originates and in such a manner as to not alter natural runoff into any wetland, nor to cause erosion, pollution or siltation into or towards any wetland. The Lee Conservation Commission should consider the incorporation of local standards in a Lee Wetlands Bylaw in addition to the enforcement of state Wetlands regulations in this regard.

Poor drainage along roads can be addressed during road reconstruction projects. Connected to the problems and potential solutions with inflows, new storm drains and other means may be required to handle heavy storm flows. Reconstruction work should include drainage remediation work with serious consideration given to sidewalks.

A Housatonic River Watershed Non-Point Pollution Assessment study was completed in 1999. This study identified general and specific methods and areas in which storm drainage could be handled in a more environmentally sensitive manner.

E. Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Municipal Utilities

Community needs and desires for this sphere are expressed in a primary goal to ***Provide for orderly and cost-effective repair, replacement and extensions to infrastructure and facilities where appropriate and necessary to serve the public.*** This goal can be met through the following objectives and strategies:

Generally reinforce an infrastructure policy that is consistent with other aspects of this Plan.

- *Establish a formal Infrastructure Policy that strongly discourages unnecessary and inefficient costs, including long term costs, and is consistent with other strategies.*
- *Continue policy that development or redevelopment that significantly increases usage should not occur unless the existing infrastructure has adequate capacity to support it and contributes funds toward the necessary improvements.*
- *Create/Implement policy that new infrastructure shall only occur after an analysis of the potential impacts with regard to land use, traffic, water quality and community services.*
- *Create/Implement policy that public investments should reinforce the traditional character and desired land use patterns.*
- *Plan and budget for all short- and mid-term capital infrastructure improvements on a fiscally responsible timetable without significantly increasing total debt, and access external funding sources where possible.*
- *Promote public understanding and support for necessary utility repairs, improvements and funding through Public Hearings and information releases.*

Maintain a viable system for cost effective delivery of high quality drinking water.

- *Begin to plan and provide for gradual long-term replacement of water mains.*
- *Pursue a comprehensive pipe, valve, and hydrant replacement program.*
- *Implement a water-metering program.*

Maintain viable systems for the safe and effective collection and treatment of wastewater.

- *Complete a comprehensive upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant.*
- *Continue to design/fund/build wastewater system improvements.*
- *Create and implement scaled sewer fees based on water usage.*

Provide for the orderly extension of utility services only where appropriate and necessary.

- *Repair/enhance infrastructure from town center outward.*

Maintain and improve environmentally sensitive storm water and flood protection systems.

- *Install storm water drainage facilities as part of road improvements according to best management practices.*

IX. NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Lee's natural features, including water, soils, forests and scenic vistas, have long instilled a sense of pride amongst residents. Important natural elements include the Town's nestled location between mountain ranges to the east and south, where altitude ranges up to 2,000 feet, and the Housatonic River, the major water resource in central and southern Berkshire County. These steep slopes are the largest single physical element affecting the future development of Lee. This upland is dissected by the Washington Mountain, Coddington, Beartown, and Greenwater Pond Brooks. These streams flow out onto the limestone-underlain valley of the Housatonic River. Small hills dot the valley, such as those in the Town Park and Town Forest.

Residents of Lee and the many tourists who visit the "Gateway to the Berkshires" already benefit from extensive opportunities for passive recreation that exist in the State Parks, Wildlife Protection Areas, Town Conservation lands and private recreational facilities. Active outdoor recreation is also hosted in town parks and other lands. This array of wonderful aesthetic and environmental resources must be conservatively used, and protected wisely. In addition, many of the factors involved in resource preservation and habitat protection cross municipal boundaries, necessitating that Lee work in cooperation with other communities.

This section provides a general understanding of the natural features of the town. For greater detail, refer to the *Open Space & Recreation Plan*. This section is basically a summary of that Plan, which is inseparably linked to this Plan.

A. Water, Wetlands & Floodplains

Lee residents place a high priority on the protection of water resources, having an laudable appreciation for the importance of clean drinking water supplies and recreational waters, intact wetlands for wildlife diversity, and the economic usefulness of area waterways. Settlement in Lee generally centers around the Housatonic River Valley, and the river has played an enormous role in the town's history as both a natural and economic resource. Agricultural, industrial, passive and active recreational users have utilized the river and the town's other water bodies throughout the past few centuries, although their respective uses have sometimes been at odds with each other.

Chemical pollutants from industries in Lee and upstream have contaminated the Housatonic River, rendering the fish inedible and making it undesirable for swimming. New methods of wastewater treatment were instituted by local industries that still use the river, including several paper mills in Lee and South Lee. Starting in the 1960s, these methods began abating the further deterioration of the river. In the last few years local and regional environmental groups, including the recently formed Lee Land Trust and the Housatonic River Initiative, have worked to clean up the river and plan for its broadened recreational and scenic use. An initiative is also underway to create a natural greenway through Lee and a downtown park that could be utilized by bicyclists, hikers, canoeists and for nature activities.

One of the most significant of the town's ponds and lakes is Laurel Lake, which is shared with the Town of Lenox. Facilities at the lake include the Lee town-managed Sandy Beach, the Lenox town-managed beach, and a state-run boat ramp. Limited water-based recreation also exists at Goose Pond, although public accessibility is extremely limited. Laurel Lake is a popular site for cottages, whose septic systems can contribute nutrients that are likely causes of excessive weed growth (eutrophication) at the Lake. In general, new state regulations affecting septic systems will encourage and even mandate upgrades to existing systems and help prevent further contamination of the water supply.

Wetlands in their natural state have historically been considered undesirable, and are in fact unsuitable for many types of development. However, the intrinsic value of wetlands has been formally recognized by the State Wetland Protection Act, which protects wetlands in order to ensure wildlife diversity, outdoor recreation, purification of aquifer recharge areas, flood control, reduction and prevention of erosion, and scenic qualities. Many towns have enacted their own Wetland Bylaws to more specifically apply protections allowed by state law.

Lee draws its public water supply primarily from town reservoirs located on October Mountain, obtaining its public water supply from the Leahy and Vanetti Reservoirs, which provide a total of 900,000 gallons per day. With the completion of the new water treatment facility, the town is also using water from the Schoolhouse Lake and October Mountain Lake Reservoirs.

Drainage

Lee lies entirely within the confines of the Housatonic River drainage basin, and all streams in town flow into the river. The Water Resources map shows the location of these smaller streams. Two of them, Coddington Brook and Washington Mountain Brook, are presently used to supply town water. Both streams have relatively large area watersheds. The extent of the flood plain of the Housatonic River is also indicated on the map. These areas are quite extensive and receive special treatment under the Lee's zoning. It should be noted that the center of town and several paper companies are so close to the flood plain as to be in serious jeopardy in the event of flooding. The 1997 Rivers Protection Act is now in place, and establishes development buffer zones around area waterways.

B. Soils, Slopes and Development Constraints

Lee's population, economic development, and recreational areas are restricted due to the town's steep slopes, erosion-susceptible soils and extensive floodplain. When combined with the highly erosive soils present throughout much of the town, steep slopes make much of Lee's terrain questionable for development and results in premium costs for development and acquisition of buildable land. October Mountain and Beartown State Forests occupy miles of these upland acres, and provide regional recreational sites for hiking, boating, swimming, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and camping. While these lands fall under state protection, others do not.

MAPS

_USGS TOPOGRAPHICAL

_Environmental constraints on land development

Soils

The characteristics of the various soils throughout town are one of the most important physical features to be considered. The map on the following page gives the general scheme of the soils and is useful in analyzing the various areas of the town. The vast majority of upland areas are listed as "rough, stony land" with no discernible soil characteristics. These are areas that would be difficult to develop because of the extreme rockiness of the soil and shallow depth to bedrock. The Becket Series is another very rocky soil.

Several of the soils present, such as the Pittsfield Loam and Lenox Loam, are good for agriculture but have impeded underdrainage that makes them very undesirable for residential use. Others, such as Lyons Loam, Ondawa and Saco Series, Muck, and Meadow Land, are permanently wet or subject to flooding due to their location. While these soils would cause problems for septic tanks, other soils are better suited for residential development. The best drained of these soils are probably the gravelly Rodman and Palmyra soils; the latter is so porous that streams partially drain through it. Small patches of Hinckley and Merrimac soils are also well drained, but are probably too dry for agricultural purposes. The Dover series is fairly well drained, and the Dover Fine Sandy Loam is very well drained. This particular soil series, desirable for both agricultural and residential purposes, is worthy to note in that it covers the largest part of the town, especially west of the center.

Topography and Slopes

Two distinct types of topographic landforms cover the town. Looming up to the east is the hilly New England Upland, while to the north and west lies the rolling Housatonic Valley. In the south the town is also blocked by upland pierced by the picturesque Tyringham Valley. Steep slopes are present on approximately 6,650 acres of Lee's land. According to EOE Digital Elevation Model information, approximately 17.7% of the town's area is steep slopes of 15-25%, and 20.6% is very steep slopes over 25%.

Elevations in the center of the town are around 600 feet while the Upland approaches 2000 feet. The tops of the Upland are quite level, although covered by a stony soil. Less resistant limestone rocks have weathered out from the underlying metamorphic rocks to form the rolling Housatonic Valley where, except for local hills and knobs, steep slopes are generally not present.

Geology

The pattern of limestone deposits and location of more resistant rocks has a more significant impact on Lee than geological features usually do. The floor of the Housatonic Valley is underlain by Stockbridge Limestone of Ordovician Age. The lower dolomitic part of the formation was mined for marble for building purposes, and the upper calcitic has provided commercial fertilizers. The New England Upland to the east and south is primarily composed of iceaceous Quartzite, Becket Granite Gneiss, and Hinsdale Gneiss, while the resistant rocks remaining on the valley floor and as part of the Taconic Range to the west are Berkshire Schist and Amphibole Schist.

Overall Development Constraints

According to 1997 land use information, 2,994 acres or 17.3% of the total area in Lee could be classified as developed, including institutional/recreational lands. The map on the following page shows a combination of areas classified as developed, areas of natural physical constraints, legal or regulatory restrictions, and areas of concern related to the natural environment generated with the BRPC Geographic Information System. This evolving technology allows advanced analysis although it does have its limitations.

Approximately 50% of land is considered undevelopable, 15% is considered to have significant moderate constraints, while at least 10% is considered to have concern factors. After subtracting developed land, the remaining land, about 5%, had no identified constraints or concerns that were derived from the mapping layers shown. This gross information is for general planning purposes only. Further investigation and site specific information would certainly upgrade or add other constraints or concerns in some areas, while eliminating or downgrading the situation in other areas.

After subtracting developed land, protected open space, known wetlands, steep slopes and other constraints, Lee has a shrinking amount of potentially buildable land. There are many areas with sensitive natural features and constraints. The western portion of town has the greatest acreage without higher level constraints, having either with concerns or no identified environmental constraints. Much of the higher elevation areas would also appear to be without higher-level constraints if they can be accessed.

C. Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Areas

Residents of, and visitors to, Lee already benefit from the extensive opportunities for passive recreation that exist in the State Parks and reserves and town conservation lands. These include hiking, camping, hunting, fishing and cross country skiing in the October Mountain and Beartown State Forests. The Appalachian Trail also crosses through Lee and can be accessed on Route 20. Numerous opportunities for nature studies, bird watching, hiking and snow shoeing also exist in parcels controlled by the Lee Conservation Commission, including Dunn Park, Longcope Park, Ferncliff Reservation and the Town Forest. Although these facilities are widely used, their full potential (including the development of trails) is yet to be realized due to a lack of resources. Numerous town and neighborhood playgrounds and ball fields round out Lee's outdoors recreational areas, but several are privately owned and additional ones would likely be welcome.

Table NAT1 Inventory of Recreational Areas

NAME	LOCATION	EXISTING USE
Town Forest	Golden Hill	Passive recreation (P.R.)
Longcope Park	Church St.	P.R.
Dunn Park	West Road	P.R.
Ferncliff Reservation	off Dublin Hill, Cliffwood, Robert & Orchard Streets	P.R.
State Park Lands	Woodland Road	P.R.
Burt Property	Stockbridge Road	P.R.
Maple St. Property	Maple St.	P.R., Ballfield
Hartwood Road Playground	Hartwood Road	P.R., Playground, Ballfield
Bradley St. Playground	Bradley St.	Playground
Athletic Field	Housatonic St.	Playground, Tennis courts
South Lee Playground	Church St.	Playground
East Lee Playground	Chapel St.	Playground, Ballfield
Pleasure Park	Pleasant St.	P.R., Soccer/Ballfield
Laurel Lake Property (Jointly owned with Lenox)	Laurel Lake Road	P.R.
Riverfront Park	Downtown by River	P.R.
Marble St. Playground (Private Property)	Marble St.	Playground, Ballfield
Little League Field (Private Property)	Lee Bank	Ballfield

D. Open Space and Land Resource Status

Existing Open Space and Preservation Areas

The Town has an extensive inventory of protected open space, including many acres under State and Federal ownership. However, many treasured spots are unprotected or in temporary protection (Chapter lands). The protection and management of the Lee's open spaces should be broadened to protect wildlife habitat and natural resources, provide recreational activities that respect their natural surroundings, maintain scenic views and preserve Lee's rural character. In addition, many of the factors involved in resource preservation and habitat protection generally cross municipal borders, necessitating that Lee work in cooperation with other communities. All of the Lee's borders with other towns are in the Housatonic River Watershed.

Farmlands: Historic and Cultural Resources in Jeopardy

Agricultural lands, although difficult to farm profitably, are a valuable open space and historical resource that promote Lee's rural heritage. Ideal farmlands, limited due to topographical and soil quality reasons, are most abundant in the western part of town, where working farms actually dominate the landscape. One of the region's few remaining dairy farms, High Lawn Farm, is located on a hill overlooking Laurel Lake (749 acres in Lee and significantly more in Stockbridge). The conversion of remaining farmland and increased housing development could threaten the rural landscape and scenic views that still exist in all sections of town aside from the town center. These lands are actually well suited for development, and Lee officials, residents and groups such as the Lee Land Trust should work in order to preserve these lands for the enjoyment of future generations. Possibilities for doing so include the direct acquisition of land

and increased use of the state agricultural preservation restriction program. Recent efforts of the Lee CDC to encourage new models of agricultural economic development that add value to farm products may also help preserve working farms.

Scenic Resources

Lee's water resources, rolling terrain, extensive farmland and pastures, parks, thriving downtown and residential areas are aesthetically pleasing to resident and visitor alike, and are important to maintain the quality of life desired by residents and tourists. Though the town is quite handsome, it faces potential threats from over-development, traffic congestion and pollution due to pressures from tourism, residential housing needs, industry and other key components of the local and regional economy. For example, the somewhat haphazard development of the southern entrance to town has diminished the impression made on those entering this "gateway." Strip commercial and residential development along scenic roadsides and hilltops is a potential degradation that can and should be minimized. The town has already made numerous efforts to improve entrances to the town and protect these scenic resources through initiatives and by-laws. These must be continued and expanded, or the town will lose the beauty that makes it so attractive currently.

E. Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

Many of the resource protection needs identified in the 1989 Recreation and Open Space Plan remain valid today. With increasing development pressure in Lee (as evidenced by the Walmart proposal a few years ago and recent construction of the Berkshire Outlet Village), there is a great need for strong conservation policies to protect the quality of life in town. An appropriate balance between conservation and aggressive efforts to promote economic development, which also have popular support among residents, must be achieved. The rationale for such a balance is best summarized in the mission statement in Lee's Economic Development Plan and Strategy (1995), which concludes that *"A vital economic base will maintain and increase our quality of life by respecting and contributing to our social and physical setting."* It is this balancing act that poses the greatest challenge for the community and underlines the importance of the master and open space planning process.

One of the most important factors to consider in evaluating the town's resource protection needs is the declining amount of buildable land. A buildout analysis conducted as part of the Town's economic development planning study in 1995 revealed that there is currently very little easily accessible, buildable land left in the community that is not subject to some developmental constraint. As a result, much of the future growth will occur on marginal lands.

Using a geographic information system, a modified buildout analysis, based upon environmental factors, was undertaken as part of the Master Planning process. It determined that, though it would be difficult in many cases, much development could be attempted in the future through subdivision development of land set back from existing roads and in agricultural areas not protected in perpetuity (reference buildout in the Sustainable Land Use section).

We would agree with the conclusions of the 1995 buildout analysis if areas of concern are interpreted as marginal lands. The development of special prime agricultural lands, habitat, lots

that can carved out around wetlands, and many chapter lands would place heavy pressure on environmentally sensitive areas of Lee, as well as compromise features that contribute to the character and identity of the Town. Other resources that will be endangered in the absence of formal safeguards or protective strategies are: the integrity of hilltops and hillsides, the quality of drinking water and recreational waters and the continued viability of special environments, including those that support rare and endangered species of plants.

Lee already contains a significant percentage of publicly controlled land, although today the largest portion of this is reserved for watershed or conservation purposes and is not generally useful for recreation. The town has a large parcel of land set aside for a potential future municipal golf course. The town may be well served by continuing to reserve this land. It may someday be used for that purpose. If not, it will be useful for another purpose that will benefit the public.

Overall, the natural upland greenbelt will continue to limit the pattern of a monotonous, continuous suburban development and enrich the livability of the town. Lee's vast forests, wetlands, fields and meadows, in combination with extensive holdings of publicly owned land, offer a rare opportunity to develop a network of greenbelts, conservancy areas, nature preserves and sites for active and passive recreational purposes.

Collaborative arrangements and agreements with neighboring Lenox and other towns are necessary in order to ensure that open spaces, forests, parks, hillsides and waterways are used and preserved wisely, in conjunction with planning for the residents' economic livelihood and recreational needs. In addition to looking outward, Lee also needs to turn inward and work to support and promote internal community unity and coordination. Where necessary, the town may wish to explore the acquisition of "recreational easements" to protect important open spaces as well as playgrounds and ball fields that are in private ownership.

It is evident that an appropriate balance between conservation and recreation must be reached. There is a real opportunity to encourage appropriate use of the town's conservation lands for passive recreation. This could be pursued by: 1) cooperative initiatives that allow non-detrimental beneficial enjoyment of the natural areas such as the River; 2) efforts to better publicize what is available, and to emphasize their value through environmental education and other programs both in the school and elsewhere.

When considering a potential Housatonic River Trail, it will be necessary for a detailed feasibility study to differentiate between developed areas where pedestrian connections should be prominent, such as the west side of downtown near the river, and riparian habitat areas, which may need to be avoided entirely. A network that includes accessways on or along roads may prove to be the best solution. Trail design could also incorporate use of natural materials.

F. Goals Objectives and Strategies for Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation

Survey respondents, community visioning participants and Task Force members generally indicated a high level of appreciation of and support for both conservation of valuable resources and land and provision of adequate outdoor recreational opportunities. Well over 90% of respondents indicated that the town should seek outside funding to conserve open space and/or promote recreation with over 50% believing there should be an equal emphasis on both. Forty nine percent of respondents to the 1998 community-wide survey indicated they would favor a small increase in property taxes to promote conservation/recreation.

Overall, the protection and management of Lee's open spaces should be broadened to protect wildlife habitat and natural resources, provide recreational activities that are attuned to their natural surroundings, maintain scenic views and preserve Lee's rural characteristics and community. The areas recommended for conservation actions and recreational opportunities are shown in the *Open Space & Recreation Plan* Action Map. The guiding factors for proposed objectives and actions have generally been to contain residential sprawl, promote community interaction and pride and respond to economic, topographic and functional needs.

Achieving the following goals, objectives and strategies will help ensure that the Town's water resources, natural habitats, and other sensitive or precious resources are preserved for the use and enjoyment of future generations:

Protect Water Resources and Preserve Riparian Habitat.

Reduce contamination, discourage runoff from new development, and encourage groundwater recharge.

- *Review and consider implementing pertinent recommendations of the 1999 Housatonic River Watershed Nonpoint Pollution Report.*

Protect lands abutting identified riparian habitat areas.

- *Tailor and adopt a Lee Wetland Bylaw with a clearly defined scope and authority.*
- *Acquire land or obtain conservation easements grants, donations or funds of the Town or non-profits such as the Lee Land Trust.*

Protect Mountain Ridges and Steep Slopes.

Protect erosion-sensitive areas, scenic hilltops and ridgetops by selectively guided acquisition and/or regulation.

- *Adopt the Scenic Mountain Act for defined areas generally above 1,500 feet and develop protective regulation, and/or;*
- *Enact steep slope development standards under zoning to ensure that development in sensitive areas is curtailed and controlled.*

Preserve Farmlands and Pastures.

Preserve existing farmlands and pastures through cooperative efforts between state and local organizations and agencies to provide the means and ways to permanently farm appropriate parcels.

- *Support Chapter 61A designations providing tax relief to owners of farmed or pastured parcels, delaying development for an extended period of time.*
- *Proactively explore permanent protection alternatives such as APR's with the owners of farms and the towns of Stockbridge and Lenox to help ensure that farm resources are left intact for future generations.*
- *Support local fundraising and regional and state preservation initiatives such as land banking.*
- *Support local participation in agricultural cooperatives and farmers markets and preserve scenic roads.*

Promote Passive Outdoor Recreation and Trails.

As part of the Housatonic River Restoration, pursue public and private initiatives such as environmentally sensitive trail sections and other improvements to make the River more accessible for canoeists, wildlife observers, walkers and bikers.

- *Establish and/or improve connections between the River and Downtown, October Mountain State Forest and the Woods Pond area.*
- *Explore with others, including representatives of adjacent towns, a regional trail that roughly follows the Housatonic River.*
- *Selectively explore trails along connecting river buffers as momentum, consensus, and guidelines emerge from the HRR initiative.*

Fully develop Riverfront Park.

Provide Active Outdoor Opportunities and Areas.

Develop and implement a plan for securing long-term access to existing privately owned recreation sites through long-term lease and/or acquisition.

Identify, acquire and develop parcels suitable for meeting recreational needs, including more playing fields and suitably sited athletic facilities for residents of all ages.

- *Explore inter-town and inter-school cooperation in this area.*
- *Consider utilizing floodplain areas for recreation opportunities if such use will not increase flood exposure.*

Promote Cooperative Use of Resources and Encourage Participation.

Promote nature studies and an understanding/appreciation of open space, a sensitive balance between the needs of nature and man.

- *Boost public participation and awareness through the spread of educational materials, guided nature walks, school curricula on environmental conservation and management.*
- *Hold regular events, such as river clean-ups, to improve the environmental and recreational assets of the town while also promoting community activism and pride.*

Carefully maintain a balance, based on cooperation and compromise, between passive and active recreational activities, which are designed to minimize impacts to the environment.

- *The Conservation Commission, Lee recreation organizations, the Housatonic River Initiative, Lee Land Trust and others must cooperate when overlapping interests are at stake.*

Continue to protect the environment from adverse impacts when development will occur through cooperative means as well as regulatory means.

Utilize marble and other natural resources for economic purposes, while minimizing disturbances as much as possible.

X. SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

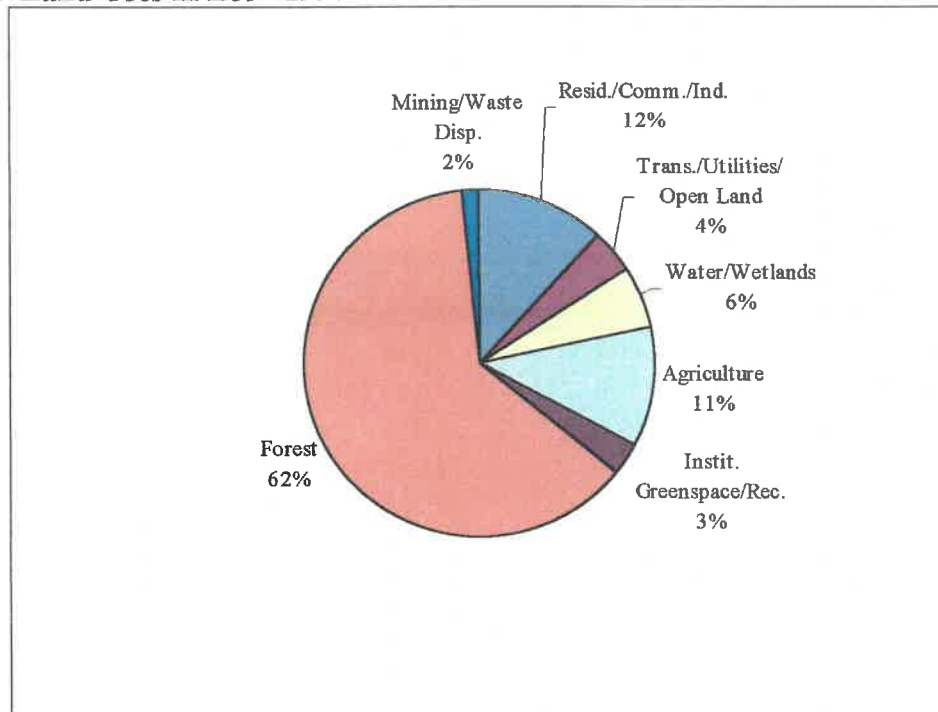
Building upon previous sections of this document, this section represents a basic plan for the usage of land, a basic element of the Master Plan. Land, and the differing uses of it, are important inputs to planning for the future employed by local officials, private organizations and individuals to determine policies and decisions involving the provision of services such as transportation, education, water, sewer and other infrastructure. A land use plan can help to effectively guide and integrate appropriate new development within the existing community.

Residents of Lee have an important role to play guiding the future of their town and their region. The challenge is to ensure that the community preserves much of what is dear, and adjusts and develops, in order to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

A. Existing Land Uses and Trends

Due primarily to its topography, Lee is fortunate to still have a great deal of land in a natural or passive state with over 75% of all land either not developed or used for recreational/open space and agricultural purposes according to BRPC's 1997 survey of land use. Over 60% of total acreage is forested. Of the developed areas, the largest portion is comprised of single family residential uses.

Chart LU1 Land Uses in Lee - 1997



As documented in other sections of this Plan, Lee currently has a balance of uses and differing forms of development. The Town is currently a participant in the State's Downtown Partnership

Program and has been a recipient of several grants that have been used to enhance the appearance of Downtown Lee, a designated National Register Historic District. The tremendous effort put into revitalizing downtown has been extremely successful. Commercial and civic activity is concentrated along Main Street in the center of town and along Routes 20 and 102, radiating away from the Massachusetts Turnpike interchange.

Since the 1960's, the townspeople have taken an interest in preserving a portion of the remaining unspoiled land in town for watershed and recreational use. Additional conservation land has been acquired along Laurel Lake, in the Tyringham Valley, and near South Lee. Lee has many well-kept properties and neighborhoods. Though not a large presence, trailer parks occupy a small tract near the Turnpike and the Bradley Park area in northeast Lee. Public housing, built by the town and Commonwealth, provide housing for low income, elderly and mentally disabled and physically handicapped residents.

The development of Lee, as of most communities, has been largely influenced by a combination of physical and economic factors. Historical development trends are documented in the History and Cultural Resources section. According to published estimates, in 1959, only 470 acres of land in Lee was developed for residential, business or industrial use. Then consumption of land accelerated. By 1985, over 1,800 acres of land was in residential, commercial or industrial use, and approximately 2,691 acres were developed including mining, transportation, recreation and institutional uses. Most of the land was converted from forest and agriculture to medium or low-density single family homes. This greatly diminished the supply of buildable land and caused impacts to the environment.

The declining population of Lee has hardly supported the need for conversion of land for new residences. However, the trend of 'sprawl' has continued, although at a slower rate, as over 300 acres of land were converted to development from 1985 to 1998.

Table LU2 Land Uses in Lee - UMass MacConnell classification 1985, 1998 BRPC update

Land Category Definition	1985 Acres	1997 Acres	Change in Acres 1985-1997	% Change 1985-1997
Agriculture	2,034.9	1,953.3	-81.6	-4.0%
Forest	10,975.6	10,723.5	-252.0	-2.3%
Water	530.6	530.6	0.0	0.0%
Wetland	436.0	435.4	-0.5	-0.1%
Open Land	591.7	623.1	31.3	5.3%
Residential < 1/2 Acre	899.1	953.1	54.0	6.0%
Residential > 1/2 Acre	642.1	757.3	115.2	17.9%
Commercial	192.1	244.5	52.4	27.3%
Industrial	97.0	95.1	-1.9	-1.9%
Other Developed	859.4	942.4	83.0	9.7%

MAP _ LAND USE CHANGE 1985-1997

There are cumulative overall impacts related to these land use trends and impacts to specific areas that are being, or will be, affected if the trends continue. To a certain extent, the trends shown in the table above can be viewed as detrimental to community character. The land use changes are partly linked to costly provision of infrastructure and services to outlying areas. There are other impacts related to development and use of land; environmental, transportation and fiscal (which is sometimes positive).

In the 1980's, Leisure Lee, a private development of second homes near Goose Pond, accounted for one of the largest changes in land uses. Housing development has become limited in recent years due to the current shortage of buildable land and strict enforcement of environmental regulations, although a senior housing project was completed in 1999 and several subdivisions are planned.

Much forestland has been left relatively untouched because of its steep slopes and, although much is privately held, it remains conserved. One exception is the recent construction of the Berkshire Outlet Village retail complex on a previously forested tract overlooking the Turnpike, for which extensive slope cuts were also made.

The impacts of the changing land use patterns are many. Specifically:

- a. The conversion of much of the remaining farmland and increased housing development have threatened the rural landscape and scenic views, which have traditionally existed in all sections of town removed from the town center.
- b. The haphazard development of the commercial district has diminished the scenic beauty and impressions made on visitors when they entering this "gateway" town. The rural landscape and the New England character of the buildings is important to Lee, and other Berkshire communities, in maintaining the quality of life desired by their residents and in attracting tourism.
- c. Neighborhood recreational facilities are more extensive than in many surrounding communities. They provide opportunities for pedestrian usage and neighborhood interaction, although there may be some issues with ownership and maintenance. At the same time, the centrally located facilities at the schools have not been upgraded or expanded significantly.
- d. Telecommunication Towers have begun to spring up along the Massachusetts Turnpike, including Lee, with the ability of Towns to regulate them limited by the Federal Telecommunications Act. It is important to carefully limit and guide the siting of these facilities, particularly to preserve scenic resources.
- e. The supply of buildable land is diminishing. This usually translates into higher land prices, and, in certain high value areas, market transition to uses of higher density.

Throughout Berkshire County, in response to the actual and threatened harm to the environment, conservation organizations have been acquiring or helping permanently or temporarily protect large amounts of land against development.

Existing Regulations

Land use in Lee is controlled through the zoning by-laws, originally adopted in 1963, most recently amended in 1995, and through sub-division control regulations. Zoning has a multitude of different classifications. The following table corresponds to the current Land Use and Zoning map. It identifies several areas in which land use varies from the zoning classification.

Table LU3 Zones and Land Uses

Zoning District	Zone Location	Current Major Land Uses
Residential Multiple Dwellings - RM		
Residential R-20	central-east	Med. Density Res., open land Med., high density res., forest, schools, recreation
	Prospect St., central-west	Med. density res., recreation, forest,
	south	Med., high density res., agr., wetlands, recreation, open land
	east	Med., high-density res., forest, recreation, open, agr.
Residential R-30	west	Med. density res., forest, agr.
	south	Agr., forest, med. density res.
Residential-Agricultural - RA	west	Agr., forest, med., low-density res.
	northeast	Forest, med., low-density res., agr.
	North	Agr., med. density res., forest
	south	Med., low density res., agr., open land
	central-east	Agr., open land, med., low density res., trans.,
Conservation-Residential - CR	east	Forest
	south	Forest, agr., wetlands, low, med. density res.
	north forest	Forest, agr., low-density res.
Downtown Commercial Business Corridor - DCBC		Commercial, high-density res., public/instit.
Commercial Bus. Corridor - CBC		Commercial, high, medium residential, recreation, open land
Rural Business - RB	north 20	Commercial, med., low density res., forest
	west 102	Med. density res.
	east 20	Low, med. density res., forest, commercial, open land
Planned Commercial Village Center - PCVC		Outlet Village, forest
Office Park Light Ind. - OPLI		Quarry Hill Business Park, forest
Industrial - I	Lenox Dale	Mining, forest, med., low density res., open land
	Columbia St.	Manufacturing, high, low density res., commercial, agr.
	Interchange	Transportation, med. density res., forest
	102/quarry	Mining, light ind., manufacturing, trans., commercial, forest, res., open land, agr., wetlands
	Forest St	Forest, wetland, industrial, commercial, open land

Zoning reflects attempts to differentiate residential density over decades of sprawl, to deal with commercial uses along a corridor with development pressures and a more recent level of sophistication in dealing with large commercial and modern industrial/office uses. The zoning also includes districts that do not cover any geographic area.

The community has adopted regulations to reduce the rate of land development and some of the impacts from non-residential sprawl, as well as residential growth. The zoning does include an environmental review procedure in several instances and conditions where special permits are required. Still, the regulatory framework in Lee remains conducive to development in comparison to surrounding communities. Land uses and zoning are shown on the map on the following page.

Table LU4 Summary of Zoning

Zone	Description	Minimum Lot Size (SF for Res.)	Minimum Road Foot Frontage	Comment
RM	Residential Multiple Dwellings	10,000	75	Only zone primarily for Multi-Family
R-20	Residential	20,000	100	Despite location, does not promote higher pedestrian density
R-30	Residential	30,000	125	Density similar to R-20 and RA
RA	Residential-Agricultural	20,000 with utilities, 40,000 w/o	125	Promotes residential development in outlying areas
CR	Conservation - Residential	3 acres	200	Density helps protect sensitive areas but mountain slopes/hillsides not strongly protected
DCBC	Downtown Commercial Business Corridor	8,000	60	Smaller scale traditional downtown uses - generally works but could promote more mixed uses
PCVC	Planned Commercial Village Center	50 acres	1000	Large single property development under strict guidelines
RB	Rural Business	1 Acre	200	3 distinctly different zones
CBC	Commercial Business Corridor	8,000	60	Allows mixed uses but demand higher for strip retail commercial
OPLI	Office Park Light Industrial	2 acres	125	Single area - encourages modern uses at medium scale under strict guidelines
I	Industrial	1 acre	125	Does not allow commercial, 5 zones comprise the largest by right industrial areas south of Pittsfield, part of area north of 102 has very limited depth

While Lee would prefer advanced technology office firms (and has some), for employment of local residents, it has a great deal of acreage (966 acres) in the I zones that allow heavy industry, manufacturing and processing, distribution and intensive mining. Operations for the existing paper mills do not actually use very much of the I zone acreage. Buffering is required to mitigate impacts.

The most progressive zoning regulations cover PCVC, OPLI and DCBC zones. Much of what is promoted there could be used in other parts of town if new commercial or office/light industrial is to be accommodated.

The large western RA zone is most troublesome in terms of encouraging sprawl. This same zone contains both developed areas with infrastructure and undeveloped areas. As mentioned in the utilities section, incentives allow and encourage density under zoning that is basically the same as for the center of town. Across the border in Stockbridge, an area that is not very different physically, a four-acre minimum lot size is required.

For each zone, the Lee Zoning Bylaws list uses and permit requirements. While this is handy information when a site is known, general evaluation can be aided by Appendix 3 of this Plan which is a detailed listing of uses and where they are allowed. For instance, this appendix can be used to easily identify all the places in town where a fast food restaurant can locate by special permit (CBC zone) and areas where it is allowed by right (RB zones).

B. Potential Use of Land and Zoning

Continued conversion of most of the traditional farmlands and forested areas in Lee to medium and low density residential development not only threatens the rural landscape and scenic views, it is a pattern that cannot be sustained over the long term without effecting sensitive environmental areas and increasing municipal costs. To understand the challenges, opportunities and choices for the future we can start with a very general breakdown of land uses.

Table LU5 General Land Uses and Alternatives

Current Form of Land Use	Strengths/Assets	Weaknesses/Threats/Challenges
Developed - Residential	Affordable, varied types of SF, Neighborhoods w parks, some pedestrian	- Sprawled, - Some housing, infrastructure aging,
Developed - Non Resid.	- Employ locals @ decent wages, - Downtown - Good Tax Base, relatively low taxes, low debt - Quarry Hill Park	- Strip Sprawl - Sporadic commercial and residential uses break up an otherwise concentrated business/industrial area along Rt. 102 - Will the paper mills continue to flourish?
Undeveloped Permanently Protected Open Space	Much land, state trails, good habitat, river areas	- Only 1 APR - Expand passive recreation opps. in a sensitive manner
Undeveloped Greatly Constrained	Much land, good habitat, river areas partly protected, some temp. protected areas	Development may be spurred as overall developable land supply shrinks. This may involve private roads going up steep slopes, may encroach on habitat, etc.
Undeveloped Not Greatly Constrained	Much prime ag. Land still being farmed, good habitat, some temp. protected areas	- Sprawling services/infrastructure occurring around this land - Potentially large buildout - High Lawn Farm future?

MAP _ LAND USE AND ZONING

Various Land Use Challenges

- Full service areas must be provided for preferred employment opportunities of medium scale or larger; these are best when congregated
- There are some areas where a mixture of residential and complementary pedestrian shopping is appropriate. There is not enough density in most residential neighborhoods to support this.
- The downtown revitalization has improved Lee's image and its overall valuation base. West Housatonic Street is the gateway. Any improvement or degradation of this area will likewise have an impact on overall property values. This would support the concept of greater control over change in this area.
- Much of the town's open space is currently unprotected and could be developed which could radically alter the character of the community.
- Some of the uses permissible in certain zones, such as resorts in the environmentally sensitive CR zone, combined with less than rigorous protections for factors such steep slopes, may put town boards and commissions in an inadequate regulatory position.
- Direct or indirectly, new businesses like the Outlet Village will put pressure on the town. Lee can plan sites for those businesses, such as areas along or near the major corridors and therefore also actively work at retaining the essential elements of the town's character.
- Mining operations will not last forever. Gravel areas in north Lee near Lenox Dale could potentially be redeveloped or reused in many ways given the setting. Thought should be given to this area's long term future, working cooperatively with the property owners.

The future will present challenges to residents and all involved with the community. The future is always difficult to predict; however by projecting past and present trends we can estimate potential and likely scenarios. This Plan can serve as a useful tool in understanding the challenges and the choices that the community has. Market circumstances are the primary force driving development. However, in simple terms, there are three paths that the community could take that would influence rates and forms of growth:

- 1) **Pro Growth** - Due to its location, its supply of potentially developable land, the recent and planned expansion of facilities, and an active economic development organization, Lee could experience the highest volumes of growth in the County, if it so desires.
- 2) **Anti Growth** - By severely modifying its zoning and enacting strong anti-growth regulations, the community could radically alter development trends.
- 3) **Sustainable Growth Management** - By moderately modifying its zoning, and connecting the zoning and other regulations to revised fiscal and infrastructure policies, the community could more effectively shape and influence forms of development.

The following table shows some very general possible future patterns of change and their impacts. This table is also intended to illustrate the interconnection between the different sections of the plan and to make clear that different futures call for different levels and types of investment. The two columns on the right show growth with limited management producing some detrimental affects. Planning principles would support the Managed Growth approach.

Table LU6 Development Patterns, Transportation & Infrastructure

	Managed Growth with focus on Communities	Growth With Little Focus On Planning	Status Quo
How Lee Might Develop in Twenty Years	Development that preserves differences between community centers, suburban & rural areas	Suburban, generic development at a higher rate of growth spread over a larger area	Mixed suburban and more traditional developments
Transportation Impacts	• Need for additional lanes is minimized • Some traffic congestion is considered acceptable • Greater use & safety of walking, bicycling, transit	• Need for significant additional lanes • Reduced potential for modes other than driving due to distances and lack of facilities for walking, bicycling or taking transit	• Some areas along Rt. 20 need additional lanes, signals, etc. • Increased mixed uses on through roads cause safety and traffic problems • Access to recreation remains a problem
Infrastructure Cost	Medium-Low	High	Medium

Build-out Scenario

Development is still occurring in a low-density, sprawl-like form, which has been and still is resulting in the permanent loss of farmlands, open space, scenic areas and historic resources - the very qualities which give Lee its distinctive character. The high costs of low-density sprawl development can over-stress public infrastructure and local fiscal capacity, affect natural resources such as aquifers and waterways, increase traffic congestion, and change community character. In short, contemporary development patterns can threaten the very quality of life, which makes Lee a desirable place to live, work and play. The potential for continuation of these development patterns in the future remains strong.

After subtracting developed land, protected open space, known wetlands, steep slopes, and other constraints, the town of Lee has approximately 5,071 acres of potentially developable land, which is 29% of the total area of the town. If this land were developed to the maximum allowed by zoning, it would result in 3,813 new housing units and 11,198,634 square feet of additional commercial/industrial floor space. If the maximum residential build-out occurred producing additional permanent residents at Lee's projected household size, at maximum build-out, the population of Lee could potentially swell to 15,209. A summary table is listed below.

Table LU7 Potential Residential Build-out

Zoning District	Potential Housing Units
Residential Multiple Dwellings - RM	93
Residential R-20	539
Residential R-30	192
Residential-Agricultural - RA	2,306
Conservation-Residential - CR	684
TOTAL	3,813

Source: BRPC for EOE, Report on Potential Build-out of Lee, MA, January 2000

The largest area of developable residential land falls within the Residential/ Agricultural district. With 2,104 acres of developable land, this district could support a maximum of 2,276 new home building lots. There are two large areas of land within this district in the western portion of town, separated by the Massachusetts Turnpike. With very few environmental constraints, these could be the most desirable areas in Lee for large-scale residential expansion.

There is an almost equally large area of developable residential land within the Conservation/Residential district, 2,051 acres. Most of this developable land is located in the eastern and southeastern portions of the town. It is very unlikely that maximum build-out would ever happen in these areas due to a combination of steep slopes surrounding much of this land, limited access, rocky soil, and shallow depth to bedrock. However, the Leisure Lee and Chanterwood Estates subdivisions show that development is very possible in these areas and will continue to happen if demand is sufficient.

Overall, there are many pieces of potentially developable land, mostly off the road fronts, that may be more intensely developed or redeveloped in the future. Appendix 5 - EOEA Build-out Report for the Town of Lee, lists potential residential and non-residential build-out for each zoning district in town. The EOEA Build-out Report maps indicate the location of existing development and areas of constraint.

Much of the land that is mapped as constrained and even land that is mapped as without identified constraints is difficult to access and will, upon closer site examination, prove unbuildable due to environmental considerations, including most prominently wetlands. A large amount of land shown on the Map of Environmental Constraints and Concerns may be suitable for agricultural preservation or conservation or will be used for other purposes.

Another way to consider potential build-out is by analyzing parcel data in relation to our identified environmental development constraints and areas of concern. Sixty-six parcels were found without identified development constraints or concerns (2 large parcels had limited acreage with constraints) totaling 1,088 acres. One hundred and twelve parcels were identified that had only concern factors (4 large parcels had limited acreage with severe constraints) but did not otherwise appear undevelopable. This land totaled 1,478 acres. Upon closer examination, much of this acreage would prove very difficult, if not impossible, to actually build on.

The build-out analysis shows the extent of potential residential development under current zoning. While the analysis indicated up to 3,813 additional dwelling units might be possible, the recent documented land use trends and market evidence does not indicate a level of demand to make this happen within the 20 year planning period or any time soon thereafter. The amount and types of growth which are reasonably possible are based not only upon supply but upon demand, cost and preferences of the marketplace. Actual demand threats and factors include population demographics, employment, purchasing power (in town and in the region) and projected externally based visitors and residents (including second home and seasonal). Any realistic projection would also need to account for the difficulty of accessing land, legal restrictions, the active preservation movement in Berkshire County, and that maximum build-out almost never occurs.

While the total amount of potentially developable land for residential and non-residential purposes is still considerable, this land will have to provide for the needs of future generations. Left purely to chance, with a minimum of regulatory controls, the vast majority of undeveloped or underdeveloped land that enters the marketplace will eventually be developed. The most attractive, easily, legally and profitably developable land will likely be developed quickly. This would include the remaining accessible land with frontage on roads and much of what might be considered open space that is currently unprotected. This development could radically alter the character of the community. The ever-smaller amount of land that remains will increase in price, become unattractive for economic development and unaffordable for most long time residents and families in Lee. To satisfy some segments of demand, however, more development will be attempted in places where it is not really appropriate or environmentally sound, such as on steep hillsides.

C. Growth Management for a Sustainable Community and Region

Fulfillment of Lee residents' future vision for the town is dependent on sustainability through the provision of quality services, affordable housing, a robust local economy and preservation of its natural assets. Over the long term, the community will need to renew itself and create new opportunities. This can best be accomplished through a strategy of sustainable development.

A more sustainable community includes a variety of businesses, industries and institutions that are environmentally sound; financially viable; provide training, education and other forms of assistance to adjust to future needs. A more sustainable community recognizes and supports people's sense of well-being, which includes a sense of belonging, a sense of worth, a sense of safety, and a sense of connection with nature. It enables people to feel empowered and take responsibility based on a shared vision (from Cambridge, Massachusetts, Sustainable Community Characteristics).

Resource use and development, indeed all economic activity, unless undertaken with reference to capacities, simply will not be maintained over the long term. The concept of sustainable development is essentially promoted through the wise management of growth and unites two activities. Environmental protection needs to be promoted with reference to human needs and in recognition of the role of economic development in meeting them (from Sadler, *Convergence for Today*).

Sustainable growth management involves the following guiding principles (source: BRPC Regional Plan Draft):

- spatial efficiency in land use development and management
- preservation of sensitive environments and open space
- social equity and character of life
- economic development and fiscal responsibility

As with many issues facing the town, this is truly a regional challenge. These guidelines need to be translated into public policy that is supportive of cooperative efforts among towns and

organizational entities. This requires community leadership and inclusive, ongoing dialogue with the public to get input and expand public understanding.

One major element of sustainability is land and how it is used over time. Growth Management contributes to a sustainable community which respects nature and provides social and economic opportunities for its citizens and its children. Sustainability is truly a challenge involving people, institutions, places and nature to be addressed at every level: globally, regionally and locally.

A prescriptive strategy can help to effectively guide and integrate appropriate new development within the existing context of Lee. This can be accomplished through:

- regulatory protections aimed at preservation of outstanding natural assets
- keeping the historic Lee town center and existing neighborhoods vibrant
- revitalizing industrial and commercial areas as necessary
- carefully guiding the location and form of new commercial and business clusters
- providing ways for new residential development to meet community needs and desires

Directly or indirectly, new businesses like the Outlet Village will put pressure on the town, and Lee must be able to respond in a way that both accepts necessary changes and retains the essential elements of the town's character. Land that is currently undeveloped is a precious resource.

A growth management strategy involves further protection of fragile and important natural resource areas, designation of areas where development should be restricted, areas where reuse or redevelopment might occur, appropriate densities and the reservation of tracts of land for specific residential and non-residential uses. For the long term, land areas with identified moderate constraints and lands of concern should be considered for permanent conservation restrictions. It is also very important that considerable land be reserved for future development needs beyond the next 20-year period. Other growth management methods would include zoning, other regulations, design guidelines and a careful control of infrastructure.

D. Goals, Objectives and Growth Management Strategies for the Preferred Future

All goals in this Plan draw on the results of the Lee community survey, workshops, task force meetings, and previous planning efforts. As we have documented throughout this Plan, residents of Lee desire to maintain a population level that is generally at the present level or only moderately higher. They want good jobs and available services. The public desires effective provision of quality public water and wastewater services. They generally appear to desire a blending of both socioeconomic benefits and environmentally beneficial land uses.

Much of the vision of previous planning efforts remains valid. Lee should continue to "encourage innovation in business/residential development in a way which preserves its heritage as a working town with bucolic vistas and a "real" downtown which serves as a community center of commerce, recreation, etc." (from The Lee Downtown Plan)

Lee and its leaders must prepare the town to respond to change and development pressures and, if deemed necessary and beneficial, pursue adjustments to zoning to promote preferred land uses. Specific densities and incentives, defined areas and controls for mountain or erosion control regulations, options possible under the River Protection legislation and other specific potential revisions to regulations or zoning bylaws will require further evaluation and consideration.

On the preservation side Lee should continue to examine possibilities for using state grants for land acquisition; encouraging donation of parcels and conservation easements to the Town or non-profits. In the future, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's) will probably become an available tool in the region to protect sensitive areas from development pressure, while providing more opportunities for necessary growth.

The *Open Space & Recreation Plan* identifies areas that need to be protected to conserve valuable natural and cultural resources. This Master Plan identifies preferred general patterns for land uses. It presents information on potential areas that would generally appear appropriate for development, should it be necessary, such as areas along or near existing utilities and away from sensitive environment areas.

General patterns for future land uses are shown on the map on the following page. This information builds on information from throughout the plan. Residential areas with infrastructure, namely within 500' of sewer mains, are shown as medium density residential. The lowland areas away from existing infrastructure are generally shown as agricultural or low density residential.

The recommended strategy is to encourage sustainable growth and development in keeping with community desires to help maintain an overall high quality of life. This will require jointly accommodating both socioeconomic and environmentally beneficial uses.

Undeveloped land is very valuable now, but will become even more valuable in the future. It would be short sighted and contrary to the town's long term benefit to allow unmanaged growth. Lee should reduce the incentives for sprawl and provide incentives for spatially efficient growth and preservation of legitimate environmental resource areas.

Where conditions and the regulatory system do not or may not promote the proper mix of uses and types of development for the land use categories below, underlined objectives and italicized strategy alternatives should be pursued to meet the primary goal to ***Assure an overall high quality of life, now and in the future, in terms of managing land to meet social and economic needs while maintaining or improving the quality of the environment.***

Promote the Preservation and Utilization of Developed Residential Areas to Keep them Healthy and Vibrant

- *More closely integrate social needs, transportation means and land use by focusing public investment on repair/enhancement of existing infrastructure from the pedestrian center outward*
- *Secure key private park areas (would also meet active outdoor recreation objective)*

MAP _ GENERAL PATTERNS FOR FUTURE LAND USES

- *Consider ways to appropriately integrate new housing (consistent with housing objectives)*

Utilize and Redevelop Non Residential Areas for Economic and Community Purposes

- *Participate/cooperate in efforts to enhance/revitalize/develop the Lenox Dale area (including northern Lee) and by directing appropriate investment opportunities there*
- *Renovate and reuse buildings for senior housing, apartments, community center or office space*
- *Plan to redevelop industrial and commercial areas as they become vacant, underutilized or inappropriate, particularly gravel mining and heavy industrial sites. Depending on site conditions, planned redevelopment might encompass office/light industrial or specialized housing and recreation, if not conservation uses.*
- *Consider declaring densely developed areas around portions of the Housatonic River accompanied by standards for development and redevelopment*
- *Determine use theme for each RB zone, for instance Scenic Byway (Jacobs Ladder), Historic Mixed Uses (South Lee), Inn/Institutional (Rt. 20 by Laurel Lake).*
- *Extend DBCD zone south where pedestrian uses make this logical*
- *Revise and expand design standards in the CBC zone*
- *Provide a large area to cultivate advanced telecommunications and high pay/low impact jobs by modifying zoning for Industrial areas along Route 102 to Office/Light Industrial. This would not have to include areas where heavy industry is currently located.*
- *Allow new Planned Commercial in a consolidated area with permitting standards*

Steward Permanently Protected Open Spaces and Increase Protections for Undeveloped Areas with Sensitive Environmental Features

- *Pursue activities as noted in Natural Resources section and in the Open Space & Recreation Plan*

Wisely Manage and Direct Growth in Undeveloped Areas that do not have Significant Environmental Constraints

- *Incorporate consideration of the needs of Lee's people into the overall realm of development regulation*
- *Consider/pursue protections for critical resource buffer areas*
- *Consider zoning boundary changes and set new area standards for density and uses, to discourage sprawl in areas where it would not be in keeping with the character of the community, but rather encourage utilization of land in and near infrastructure, particularly within pedestrian access to services*
- *Consolidate R-20, R-30, and RB zones to the same density*
- *In R-40 zones particularly, determine area for future urban/suburban growth - basically maintain zoning in those areas, provide incentives to cluster and meet community*
- *For the R-40 zone areas not near infrastructure and not conducive to efficient planned growth, downzone, eliminate utility density bonus, provide some incentives to cluster*

- *Provide enticements for residential developers to set aside open space for recreation and/or conservation in their projects in general through incentive laden flexible alternatives through Planned Unit developments, neo-traditional neighborhood development, flexible lot frontages and other techniques*
- *Modify and update subdivision regulations, strengthen the importance of meeting community needs as a criteria for granting waivers for subdivision requirements*
- *Maintain lands through the voluntary state chapter programs, to not only preserve open space but also to ensure that the supply of undeveloped land is not prematurely exhausted*
- *Modify/Expand Site Plan Review*
- *Support sub-regional cooperative efforts and organizations involved in growth management, including educational endeavors*

XI. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Public Investment and Planning

The town government has an active budgeting and capital planning process guided by a Capital Outlay Committee. The Capital Planning Program for FY 1998 is included as Appendix 4. It is important to continue to pull together all information from new projects that have recently been approved and those that are approved, have mandated deadlines, or have preliminary approval for future action within the next five years, all within a comprehensive integrated budgeting system. The Capital Planning Program should be mainly comprised of projects that have definite funding sources or feasibly can be funded (with status clearly indicated), although it can note other potential priority needs to be explored. Each year the Capital Outlay Committee should update the 5-year Plan and a detailed one-year funding program.

The Master Plan will need to be modified to remain a viable document. The soonest logical time to review and prepare a modest update to the Master Plan will be when the detailed results of the 2000 U.S. Census are released, in or after the year 2002.

The Open Space & Recreation Plan will need to be updated every 5 years. Since that Plan is not as comprehensive in scope, it can and will be updated in a more frequent manner. Updates to the OS/R Plan should be incorporated into the Master Plan, particularly the Natural Resources, Open Space and Outdoor Recreation section when the Master Plan is updated. The OS/R Plan should not include policy statements that go beyond the scope of Open Space & Recreation and are inconsistent with the Master Plan.

B Guiding Growth through the Regulatory Process

Others in the public and private sector also seek change to achieve individual or community needs or desires. Many do this on a day-to-day basis while others pursue this through project initiatives. As they will continue to do so, the community will need to evaluate individual actions and overall trends to help guide the community incrementally and comprehensively. Local Zoning and Subdivision regulations, and the State Wetlands Act are common regulatory rules to guide development and use of land through review and enforcement. A host of regulatory methods can be employed. The use of regulation should promote the goals of the Master Plan.

C. Short Term Action Plan

Implementing the strategies of this Plan is a powerful way to contribute to the future quality of life in Lee. Although the town's vision is for controlled, sustainable growth, this will take determined effort. There are many organizations and persons already working hard to maintain and improve the community's existing qualities. The implementation will include working on short term priorities (Table IMP1). Each year the Planning Board and Conservation Commission, along with other concerned residents such as participants in the Master and OS/R Planning process, should get together and review the accomplishments and make modifications to the short term priorities.

TABLE IMP1 SHORT TERM IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Note: Leadership group responsible for soliciting resource assistance and coordinating efforts

PLANNING AND PROMOTING COOPERATIVE SOLUTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY ACTION	LEADERSHIP	TIME	POTENTIAL RESOURCES, FUNDING, PARTICIPATION
Conduct a public meetings on the Plans, be prepared to listen and incorporate input, hold one or more public meetings/hearings of the Planning Board to further consider Master Plan, adopt Master Plan	Planning Board	2000	Planning Task Force, BRPC
Work to ensure that farms in Lee remain intact viable resources for future generations to enjoy. Consider voluntary preservation, economic programs, and regulatory solutions.	Lee Community Development Corporation	2000- Beyond	See OS/R Plan. APR Program, Lee Land Trust, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, working with property owners, the towns of Lenox and Stockbridge, and other organizations
Meet with representatives of key surrounding towns to discuss sub-regional planning issues. At a minimum agree to share information on projects near municipal borders.	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Lee Delegate and Alternate	2000	Planning Task Force, Other Town Organizations involved in regulatory matters, include Lenox, Stockbridge, possibly designate Planning Board inter-town coordinator or liaisons, BRPC
Meet with representatives of key surrounding towns to discuss sub-regional service issues. Explore potential initiatives such as service/facilities/equipment sharing.	Town Administrator	2000	School, DPW, Other key Town Service Organizations, BRPC Delegate and Alternate, include similar reps from Lenox, Stockbridge, others towns, BRPC

PUBLIC INVESTMENT FOR QUALITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Create/enhance a detailed 5 yr. Capital Plan to continue to plan for large public infrastructure and facility improvement expenses and to include buildings, roads, sidewalk improvements and parking, schools, other	Town Administrator	Update Annually	Selectmen, Capital Outlay Committee, DPW Director, reps of Finance Committee, Planning Board, School Committee, others
Seek external funding for community supported improvements. Identify and actively apply/lobby for state or federal grants	Town Administrator	On-going	Selectmen, Depending on specific need programs of MassHighway, DHCD, EOE, DEM, DEP and other State and Federal agencies.
Continue to provide high quality public educational and town services by maintaining adequate operational budgets and staffing, continuing organizational fundraising efforts, and by setting and tracking performance measures for the provision of public services	School Committee Selectmen	On-going	School Superintendent, Town Admin, voters employees, orgs.
Develop a comprehensive program for active and passive recreation in Lee	Recreation Committee	On-going	See OS/R Plan. Town, LYA, Conservation Commission, others
Secure continued access to private lands used for public recreation through voluntary donations, easements, or acquisition	Recreation Committee	On-going	See OS/R Plan. Town, Corp. successor to Lee Lime, Lee Bank

BALANCED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY ACTION		SUGGESTED LEADERSHIP COMMITMENTS	TIME	POTENTIAL RESOURCES, FUNDING, PARTICIPATION
Continue to support an active role for the Lee Community Development Corporation in filling the Quarry Hill Business Park. Find and secure other appropriate sites for target job/tax base additions, and other initiatives to serve the residents of Lee		Lee Community Development Corporation Executive Board	On-going	CDC Director, Planning Board
Continue to support an active role for Lee Economic Action for the Downtown in preserving and enhancing the downtown as a viable center.		Lee Economic Action for the Downtown Executive Board	On-going	LEAD Downtown Manager utilizing various grant programs, Selectmen, Chamber
Conduct a feasibility study on providing a modern supermarket with a broad range of products proximate to the downtown		Lee Economic Action for the Downtown	2001	Previous Study. Form Study Committee, include input from current supermarket, those with other concepts. CDC
Conduct a parking study		Lee Economic Action for the Downtown	2001	Consultant. Utilize previous studies, BRPC, utilize/incorporate info from other initiatives

GUIDING GROWTH/PRESERVING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH REGULATION

Review and consider changes to the Industrial and OPLI Zoning, particularly along Route 102, including allowable uses, zoning districts, and standards.		Planning Board	2000	CDC, Ind. Zoning Committee, ZBA, BRPC
Work at adoption of a Scenic Mountain Area and developing regulations for protection of it.		Conservation Commission	2000	Planning Board, Selectmen, Legal and environmental experts from surrounding communities including Stockbridge, Adoption requires town meeting vote
Adopt regulations to implement the Scenic Mountain Act		Conservation Commission	Directly following adoption of area	No town meeting vote required. Planning Board, Selectmen
Craft a local Wetland Bylaw		Conservation Commission	2001	BRPC, Others, Adoption requires town meeting vote

OTHER MASTER & OS/R PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY ACTION		SUGGESTED LEADERSHIP COMMITMENTS	TIME	POTENTIAL RESOURCES, FUNDING, PARTICIPATION
Provide for targeted open space preservation		Lee Land Trust	On-going	Conservation Commission. Town, others
Work at thoughtfully expanding the range of affordable housing and housing for seniors in Lee		Lee Housing Authority	On-going	Berkshire Housing Dev. Corp., Town Boards including Planning, CDC, Lee Bank, others
Implement improvements to the Gateway to Lee Along Housatonic Street		Town Administrator	2000	LEAD, Town DPW, MHD
Conduct a review of progress in achieving the goals of the Master Plan & the Open Space/Recreation Plan.		Planning Board	Annually	Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee, See Master & OS/R Plans
Provide input, guide and support the implementation of a Regional Plan for the Berkshires		Planning Board BRPC Delegate & Alternate	2000 and Beyond	
File an update to the Master Plan every five years at a minimum. Update data tables with information from the 2000 Census, conduct a general evaluation, modify strategies as necessary		Planning Board	2005 at the latest, then every five years	

APPENDICES

Living in Lee

Which of the following would you use to describe

Lee? Check all that apply. n=761 Rank/# responses

7/146 Diverse 10/73 Divided 8/104 Vacation-oriented
9/74 Fun 4/337 Attractive 6/312 Convenient
5/320 Stable 11/48 In decline 1/459 Improving
3/355 Historic 12/37 Cultural 2/399 Family-oriented

How long have you lived in Lee? n=759

5.5% Less than 2 years 16.5% 11-20 years
8.4% 2-5 years 14.8% 21-30 years
8.2% 6-10 years 46.6% 30+ years

n=755 How would you rate the quality of life in Lee?

13.0% Excellent 29.7% Average 0.8% Very poor
54.7% Good 1.9% Poor

Using the map on the back of the cover letter, in which section of town do you live? n=752

23.8% North Lee 19.7% West Lee
17.7% South Lee 9.8% East Lee
29.0% Town Center

If you own a home in Lee, how large is your property? n=636

25.2% under 1/2 acre 2.2% 6-10 acres
61.6% 1/2 - 2 acres 3.9% over 10 acres
7.1% 3-5 acres

Please check if your residence has either town water, sewer, or both? n=695

1.4% town sewer 8.1% town water 90.5% both

Do you think you might move from Lee in the next 5 years? n=737

12.3% Yes 65.3% No 22.4% Unsure

If yes, why?: job/career, retirement, taxes, schools

You and Your Family

Please indicate the number of household members in the following age brackets (include yourself): Total: 1793, 679 households (H), mean H=2.67

5.1% Under 5 years 9.0% 25-34 11.7% 55-64
17.0% 5-17 16.7% 35-44 9.9% 65-74
8.7% 18-24 16.5% 45-54 5.4% Over 75

Do you have or plan to have children attending what kind of school? # of responses

177 Lee Public Schools 23 private schools
65 religious schools 9 home school
318 I don't have children. 71 other: _____

Are you: n=761

82.7% A full-time Lee homeowner?

1.7% A seasonal resident (e.g. second home owner/renter)?

14.1% A full-time renter?

1.6% Other (specify): _____

Do you or another member of your household have a physical disability that limits your/their mobility and requires special access features (e.g. wheelchair ramp, handicapped parking space)? n=760

6.7% Yes (# of household members: _____) 93.3% No

Please indicate your total (gross) household income for 1997: n=693

6.6% Under \$9,999 19.8% \$35,000-49,999
19.2% \$10,000-24,999 24.0% \$50,000-74,999
12.3% \$25,000-34,999 18.2% Over \$75,000

Recreational Activities

Are existing outdoor programs adequate for:

	yes	no	don't know
n=657 young children	33%	30%	37%
n=640 teens	15%	50%	35%
n=549 adults	22%	42%	36%
n=656 elderly	13%	35%	52%
n=625 disabled	6%	28%	66%

Are existing indoor programs adequate for:

	yes	no	don't know
n=658 young children	30%	29%	40%
n=637 teens	12%	47%	41%
n=648 adults	13%	48%	39%
n=649 elderly	20%	25%	55%
n=619 disabled	8%	22%	70%

Are you satisfied with your neighborhood's:

n=656 Parks 57.3% Yes 42.7% No
n=630 Recreational facilities 41.3% Yes 58.7% No

Please indicate the frequency of activities (all that apply) which any member of your household has participated in within the last year.

Rank	Total	daily	weekly	monthly	yearly	
1	593	228	279	64	22	Walking/Running
4	309	10	61	133	105	Hiking
5	300	42	112	75	71	Bicycling
3	360	38	114	87	121	Swimming
13	157	1	37	42	77	X-C Skiing
10	193	8	67	46	72	Downhill Skiing
20	65	3	21	16	25	Snowmobiling
21A	49	1	4	16	28	Snowshoeing
7	282	16	75	85	106	Fishing
15	128	7	35	43	82	Hunting/Shooting Sports
9	196	5	38	65	88	Boating/Canoeing
11	178	2	13	41	122	Camping
21B	49	6	10	10	23	Horseback Riding
6	296	4	29	109	154	Picnicking
12	175	25	81	34	35	Football/ Baseball/ Basketball/Soccer
16	115	16	40	32	27	Rollerblading
18	110	4	41	37	28	Clubs e.g. social/garden, etc.
14	129	4	23	51	51	Dancing
19	84	18	41	16	9	Aerobics
17	114	4	21	23	66	Ice Skating
22	43	10	12	10	11	Skateboarding
2	439	3	105	242	89	Movies/Concerts
8	276	6	36	149	85	Art/Historical Activities
	27	6	13	5	3	Other: _____

Rank/# Check the five recreational activities/facilities responses you would like most to see developed/expanded:

- 13/105 Tennis courts
- 17/ 30 Volleyball
- 14/ 79 Basketball courts
- 15/ 71 Baseball/Softball fields
- 16/ 54 Soccer fields
- 5/193 Playgrounds
- 4/264 Bicycle trails
- 11/132 Golf course
- 9/166 Picnic/BBQ area
- 6/178 Ice Skating
- 8/168 Hiking and Skiing trails
- 7/169 Outdoor Swimming area
- 2/313 Public indoor pool
- 10/133 Concert facilities
- 1/347 Movie Theater
- 3/269 Access to or along the Housatonic River
- 12/119 Drama/lecture facilities

Where do most of your recreation/exercise activities take place? # of responses

367 At home	195 In neighborhood
38 Lee Youth Association	120 Elsewhere in town
49 School	44 Church
54 Other	304 Out-of-town

Services

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following conditions in town.

		Very Poor	Satisfactory	Excellent
n=721	Condition of town streets	16.6%	75.6%	7.8%
n=716	Appearance of community	2.1%	73.6%	24.3%
n=726	Appearance of downtown	1.8%	48.2%	50%
n=661	Quality of parks	26.9%	69.5%	5.6%
n=645	Accessibility of parks	21.1%	71.8%	7.1%
n=682	Water quality and service	29.8%	58.5%	11.7%
n=660	Sewer quality and service	4.7%	75.5%	19.8%
n=719	Police department service	5.8%	55.8%	38.4%
n=718	Fire department service	1.7%	39.1%	59.2%
n=697	Ambulance service	2.4%	38%	59.5%
n=618	School facilities	19.6%	68.8%	11.7%
n=597	School programs	16.4%	70.7%	12.9%
n=706	Library	6.1%	59.5%	34.4%
n=651	Municipal governance	12.9%	79.1%	8%
n=625	Town-wide activities	28.6%	66.4%	5%
n=608	Adult education	22.7%	69.2%	8.1%
n=627	Recreational facilities	47%	51.1%	1.9%
n=626	Conservation efforts	17.6%	73.2%	9.3%
n=612	Cultural resources	44%	53.9%	2.1%

Would you favor a small increase in property taxes to expand or improve the general level of town service listed above? n=685

42.0% Yes 58.0% No

Which Service?: _____

Please rank the following town facility/service improvements in order of importance to you (1= most important) Ranked #1/Overall Rank

- 227/ 2 Town school facilities
- 120/ 1 Town roads
- 120/ 3 Town utilities (water, sewer)
- 6/ 7 Other town services
- 16/ 8 Town government facilities (e.g. Town Hall)
- 85/ 4 Park and rec. facilities
- 9/ 6 Town-wide activities (e.g. festivals, parades)
- 29/ 5 Cultural facilities
- 8 Other (specify): _____



n=662 Would you favor a reduction of a town service you currently use, to lower your property taxes?
18.3% Yes 81.7% No

Would you be willing to have the town share the following town services/equipment with neighboring communities?

Yes	No	Maybe	% of Replies
48/25/26			Department of Public Works functions
73/ 8/19			Conservation projects
74/10/16			Landfill/compost/recycle center
32/44/24			Municipal administration
56/17/28			Professional planning services
60/18/21			Inspection services
53/16/26			Economic/community development services
71/ 9/20			Cultural/social programs
55/26/19			Schools
			Other

Shopping

Which of the following Retail service establishments, if any, would you like to see more of?

Rank/#		Rank/ # responses
7/110	Restaurants	
10/25	Hotel/ Resort areas	
1/560	Groceries/supermarkets	
8/65	Clothing/gift stores	
6/112	Department stores	
11/11	Gas stations	
2/457	Movie theaters	
4/128	Galleries	
5/121	Cafes	
3/187	Nightlife establishments	
	Other 17, assorted responses	
9/50	None	

Please check where your household spends the greatest amount of money for each of the following items:

	In Lee	Other town in County	Outside County
Groceries	45%	53%	2%
Clothing	16%	70%	15%
Household items	21%	71%	8%

When you shop outside town for goods or # responses services which are also available in Lee, what are your main reasons for doing so? (Check two):

360	Better prices	529	Better variety/selection
77	Store hours	80	Quality of merchandise
68	Convenient from work		
20	Other (specify):	Parking (6), etc.	

Development of Lee

Over the next 10 years, do you think that the town's population (currently about 5,700) should:

7.3%	Increase greatly? (add over 500 persons)
40.1%	Increase modestly? (add 200-500 persons)
48.3%	Stay roughly the same
4.3%	Decrease significantly (by more than 200)

In the last ten years, the town of Lee gained approximately 200 housing units, with most being single family homes. Is this volume and type of growth acceptable to you? n=692

61.6%	The volume and type is okay.
23.8%	The volume is okay, but would rather see mixed types of residential growth.
14.6%	I'd like to see residential growth decrease.

Please check the types of housing, if any, most needed in Lee: # Responses

229	suitable housing options for seniors
94	suitable housing options for the handicapped
244	year-round apartments for families such as 2 bedrooms for \$500/month
196	already-existing homes which can be purchased for under \$100,000
196	new homes which can be built for under \$125,000
77	new homes which can be built for over \$125,000
95	none
25	other:

Which of the following business and employment enterprises, if any, would you like to see more of?

423	Industry/high-tech manufacturing	# responses
271	Office/professional service businesses	
260	Art/music/culture related businesses	
123	Home businesses	
151	Agriculture related businesses	
12	Other Grocery, tourism, health/medical facilities	
51	None	

How much do people in your household work?
 (Please indicate the number of people who work
 on each schedule.) 1 person/2 person/Total

225/121/497 one full time job (35 hrs/week or more)
 36/ 24/100 more than one full time job (each)
 130/ 23/188 one part time or seasonal job (less than 35
 hrs/week or 6 months/year)
 15/ 7/ 29 more than one part time or seasonal job
 68/ 10/ 88 self-employed or own business full time
 31/ 4/ 39 self-employed or own business part time
 62/ 2/ 66 homemaker
 130/ 47/224 retired
 69/ 39/215 student
 12/ 1/ 14 unemployed
 15/ 1/ 17 do not work for pay
 3/ 2/ 12 other: volunteers

**Would better access to any of the following
 services make it easier for members of your household to work as much as they need or want?** #responses

75 childcare 53 eldercare
 82 public transportation
 18 other Transportation, etc.

**Complete the following sentences by choosing all
 statements that express your views:** #responses

To promote job development, Lee should:

515 Actively seek and welcome a wide range of
 new employers
 70 Attract only highly skilled employers
 255 Build upon the existing job base

For the future, I would generally support:

252 adding year-round residential housing
 287 adding commercial services/shopping
 211 very little new development
 58 no new development

**When it comes to new development, Lee
 officials/boards should strive to:**

361 minimize impacts to the environment
 279 minimize impacts to existing neighborhoods
 322 encourage reinvestment in existing areas
 321 ensure that providing additional town services
 is cost effective
 428 balance all community needs and potential
 impacts

Land & Resources

**Would you favor a small increase in property
 taxes to promote conservation/recreation?** n=691
 49.3% Yes 50.7% No

**Should Lee seek outside funding for purpose of
 conserving open space/ promoting recreation?** n=667
 24.9% Yes, though the town should lean towards
 conservation/preservation.
 17.4% Yes, though the town should lean towards
 recreation.
 51.3% Yes, and the town should emphasize both
 equally.
 4.6% No, because (specify): _____
 1.8% Perhaps, if _____

**Please rank the top five of the following
 conservation issues in order of their importance
 to you (1=most important):** Ranked #1/Overall rank

112/ 2 Making the Housatonic River more
 accessible for recreation activities such as
 walking, boating, fishing, picnicking
 35/ 6 Preserving historic/cultural properties
 62/ 4 Buying the development rights to farmland
 in order to protect the land from
 development in perpetuity
 29/ 5 Preserving other open spaces
 50/ 3 Protecting wildlife habitat to protect
 wildlife diversity
 315/ 1 Protecting drink water supplies
 18/ 7 Preserving the aesthetic of the natural and
 built landscape
 9/ 8 Preserving views of ridgelines
 3/ 9 Other (specify): Pollution (4)

**Comments (Feel free to attach additional sheets
 as you find necessary.):** _____

Thank you for your time!

Please return this survey in the enclosed postage
 paid envelope to:

Lee CDC
 480 Pleasant Street, Lee Corporate Center
 Lee, MA 01238

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION STATEMENT

Considerations

A vital economic base maintains and increases local residents' quality of life through providing jobs that match their skills, interests, and work preferences. Job security, good benefits, and earnings that correlate with the cost of living are essential. Business development can generate tax revenues to pay for local services. The pattern and location of business development can maintain the quality of our physical environment by respecting and revitalizing the Downtown, siting diverse new industrial firms at the Business Park, and being receptive to local concerns for aesthetics. Business activities can provide convenient shopping, entertainment for different age groups, higher technology jobs, and through lively diversity increase Lee's attractiveness to a wider range of social and economic groups.

The business community are important corporate citizens in Lee. Business people have much to contribute to town life, for example through supporting community groups and programs. Their participation and advice is vital to local schools' effort to prepare young people for the world of work. Their expertise can be very helpful on town committees and boards.

When townspeople think about what economic development should try to accomplish for Lee, an over-arching theme is strength through diversity of businesses that respect and contribute to our social and physical setting. A top priority is to work with our existing businesses of all sizes to help them stay and prosper here in Lee. New or expanding firms could add to our economic vitality in a number of ways. Better paying jobs with good benefits are important, and so are more high technology jobs. Business development needs to expand the local tax base without straining service capacities or increasing the burden on residential tax payers. One strength Lee has is a diversity among economic sectors; we should try to maintain this balance by fostering business activity that helps grow other sectors by supporting them. A major attraction to Lee is our physically beautiful setting, so it is important to work for a business base that is environmentally clean, culturally sensitive, and receptive to townspeople's concern for aesthetics. Lee needs to increase the community's cultural/educational offerings for all ages, year-round resident and visitor; perhaps business development can help with this.

Just as the community relies on the corporate good citizenship of local businesses, the community has an important role to play in fostering and supporting strong businesses. The community needs to make a sustained commitment to strengthen the local school system, especially in the areas of technological training, apprenticeships, and other educational and training offerings that equip our local labor force. The Town must work to keep Lee's telecommunications infrastructure current so that businesses of all sizes can actively tap the global marketplace. We need to promote the town's history and labor force to others. And we need to improve our self-image by informing residents about the positive aspects of life and business in Lee.

While maintaining our strong core of home-owning working families and middle aged people, we are especially concerned that our community also be a place for young people who are entering the labor force and/or starting their families. For young people who are starting out with limited skills and work experience, there need to be more entry-level jobs,

especially ones with opportunity for on-the-job training and career advancement. These same young people need more affordable housing opportunities (especially rental) whose cost fits with the wages they can earn. Other young people who go off to pursue advanced education and training need more local job opportunities so they can come home, too. High technology and professional opportunities are what they need. Vitality and diversity also require us to attract more upper income year-round residents, such as business owners and executives. Improvements in the school system, more cultural and educational activities, and environmental preservation will help these people see Lee as a good place to live and raise a family.

Mission Statement for Lee's Economic Development Efforts

After considering how local economic vitality contributes to residents' quality of life, participants in the 1995 Economic Development Planning Project endorsed the following Mission Statement to guide Lee's economic development efforts:

The key to securing economic vitality for Lee lies in fostering and expanding the current diversity of our local economy, and adapting this diversity to meet new opportunities and demands of the regional, national, and international marketplace. A vital economic base will maintain and increase our quality of life by respecting and contributing to our social and physical setting. We seek to foster and promote diversity in:

- economic sectors (manufacturing, service, retail)
- size of firms (ranging from home-based to large, regional employers)
- employment opportunities and skills requirements (unskilled, technical, and professional)
- sustained resident workforce (young people, middle income people, executives and business owners; singles, people raising families, older workers)



APPENDIX Table HIST1 Lee Historic/Cultural Structures and Sites

Property Name	Location	Era	Building Type	Past/ Current Use
Park Building	19 Main Street opposite town park	1914, Sullivanesque	Lee Marble	P: Retail/ Offices C: Retail/ Offices
Pease Block, McClelland's Drugs	43 Main Street between Morgan House and Lee National Bank	c. 1856, Greek Revival	Aluminum over Clapboard	P: Retail C: Drug Store 1974 addition to rear and extension of front portico
Baird and Benton Block	40-50 Main Street, just north of Town Hall	1879, High Victorian Italianate	Brick	P: Retail/ Offices C: Retail - Businesses have included grocers, Knights of Columbus, bowling alley, and H.A. Johansson's 5 & 10.
Northrup's Block, Central Block	51-59 Main Street at Railroad Street	1857, Federal	Painted brick	P: Retail and function halls C: Retail/apartments
Phelan Block	East side of lower Main Street (54-56) between Oman and Baird & Benton blocks	1912, Victorian	Lee Marble	P: Stores C: Stores/ Apartments Built after a 1911 fire destroyed an existing structure. Final building on lower east Main Street to use fireproof building material, ending the trend of several disastrous fires
Oman Block	East side of lower Main Street (60), between the Morey and Phelan Blocks	1879, Victorian Commercial	Lee Marble	P: Drug Store C: Retail Brick front replaced with marble following 1911 fire damage.
Morey Block	Lower Main Street (62), opposite corner of Main and Railroad	1879, Renaissance Revival	Brick	P: Retail C: Retail/ Apartments Following a history of fire on-site, this building was finally built of brick.
Baird Block	Southeast corner of 68-76 Main and Franklin Streets	1879, Renaissance Revival	Brick	P: Retail/ Offices C: Retail/ Apartment History of fire. Has housed clothing stores, restaurants, etc.
Central Fire Station	West side of Main Street	1912, Richardsonian Romanesque	Lee Marble	P & C: Fire station, though it also housed a kindergarten in the 1920's.
Eagle Street Mill Kimberly-Clark Corp.	Center Street at the head of Main Street	1872, Industrial	Brick	P & C: Paper mill Site has a long history of paper mill activity since approx. 1808; this mill has been extensively renovated but still retains a late 19 th century feel.

Property Name	Location	Era	Building Type	Past/ Current Use
First Congregational Church	20 Park Place	1857, Romanesque Revival. Tall, handsome spire. Regarded as one of the finest examples of its type in the country.	Clapboard	P & C: Church Building succeeds two previous churches built in 1780 and c.1800, the former torn down to build the latter and the latter destroyed in an 1857 fire. National Register of Historic Places C: Church
Good Shepherd Episcopal Church	South Lee	Shingle	Wood	
High Lawn Farm	Northwest corner Lee, with bulk of property in Stockbridge		Multiple	P & C: Dairy farm
Hurlbut Paper Company	South Lee	19 th century factory, 1872		C: Mead Paper Company
Rev. Alvan C. Hyde House	144 West Park Street	1793, Federal three story with considerable alterations	Wood clapboard	P: Home of first Congregational minister, boarding school, and home of Hyde, YMCA C: Private residence & business with spacious grounds and trees
Kelly Funeral Home	Corner of Main and Park Streets, opposite town park	1830, Second Empire French Mansard.	Clapboard, part of building's foundation dates back to 1775	P: Residence. Former Wellington Smith House C: Funeral Home Additions in c. early 1800's, 1840's, 1873, 1976
Laurel Lake-Wharton Park	Northwest corner of Lee, co-owned with the Town of Lenox	Adjoins Edith Wharton estate property in Lenox		C: Park jointly managed by the Lee and Lenox Conservation Commissions
Lee Central School "Hyde School"	High Street opposite East end of Academy	1894, Richardsonian Romanesque	Lee Marble	P & C: Public School
Lee Library Carnegie Memorial	100 Main Street, corner Main and Franklin Streets	1907, Beaux-Arts, with a hipped roof	Lee Marble	P & C: Town Library Although the town library was originally housed in Town Hall, by 1906 this space proved inadequate. The town's marble quarries were re-opened for the 1977 addition to the north side of the building.



Property Name	Location	Era	Building Type	Past/Current Use
Lee National Bank	Main Street between McClelland's and the Central Block	1835, Greek Revival/ Italianate	Brick	P: Bank C: Greylock Federal Credit Union following restoration
Lee Railroad Station	NW Corner of Railroad and Elm Streets	1893, Stick Style	Clapboard	P: Passenger Depot, businesses after passenger service ceased in 1971 C: Converted to Sullivan Station Restaurant in 1981
Lee Town Memorial Hall	32 Main Street, adjacent to the Town Park, with the First Cong. Church to the rear	1874, High Victorian Italianate	Brick	P: Post Office, town offices, Southern Berkshire Court (from 1912-1991) C: Town Offices, Police Station, Interior renovations in 1912, again recently Built as memorial to soldiers of the Civil War, occupies the former Hick's Hotel site. Also formerly housed a movie theater, and Arlo Guthrie's "Alice's Restaurant" trial took place in the Courtroom.
Marble/ Lime Quarries				Supplied stone for local houses and national landmarks alike, including Grant's Tomb, Philadelphia's City Hall, parts of the Capitol Building in D.C., and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.
Methodist Church	136 High Street	Shingle	White painted wood	P: Church C: Church (Greater Grace)
The Morgan House	Main Street opposite Town Hall	1817, Federal	Clapboard	P: Residence. Owned during the 1970's by Maria Cole, wife of Nat King Cole. C: Inn and restaurant. Public house/inn since 1867. Additions in 1868 and 1871.
Peter's Cave	Fern Cliff off High Street	Natural outcropping of igneous rock		This cave hid Shay's Rebellion convict Peter Wilcox from the time of his escape until authorities dropped the charges against him.
Rice Building	High Street opposite East end of Academy	1917	Marble	P: Former Lee High School C: Part of Central School complex
St. Francis Church (R.C.)	South Lee	Gothic Revival, late 19 th century		C: Church
St. George's Episcopal Church	20 Franklin Street, behind the Baird block on Main Street	Gothic Revival, 1865	Built entirely with Lee marble.	P & C: Episcopalian Church Built to replace former church—destroyed by fire in 1861. Alteration in 1925, when a parish house was built at the rear of the building.
St. Mary's Church (R.C.)	Main Street and Academy	Lombard Romanesque, 1856	Clapboard	P & C: Church. St. Mary's was built in response to the large influx of Irish Catholic railroad workers and later Italian marble cutters. Major interior renovations were done in 1902 and 1982.
St. Mary's Parochial School	Main Street	1885, wood	Clapboard	P: School at Academy Street C: An Inn, building was moved after a new school was built in 1957 to meet increased demands for enrollment

