

Town of Lee, Massachusetts

Proposed Community Center Questionnaire

July 10th, 2020



BRPC
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission



**The Lee Youth
Commission**

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Background

The Lee Youth Commission has proposed building a community center for the benefit and enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. The facility would serve as a hub for community functions in addition to both indoor and outdoor recreational activities.

In May of 2019, the Town of Lee appropriated \$30,000 for a feasibility study. As a preliminary step of this study, the Lee Youth Commission requested the assistance of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to conduct a surveying process. This involved creating, circulating, and analyzing a questionnaire which was distributed among residents in Lee and some neighboring municipalities. The thoughts of the respondents will be a crucial part of the planning process.

The goal of the questionnaire was to help answer three questions:

1. Do people want to have a community center located in Lee?
2. If so, which amenities should this proposed facility include?
3. Where should the facility be located?

After three weeks of circulation, the questionnaire received just under 300 responses which provide clarity to the three aforementioned questions. It should be noted that the results of this questionnaire are not presented as fact but rather the thoughts of people who live in Lee and nearby municipalities. This project is currently in early phases and the overall purpose of the questionnaire was to gauge if building a community center is feasible and to help guide the design of the facility based on the amenities that respondents have prioritized.

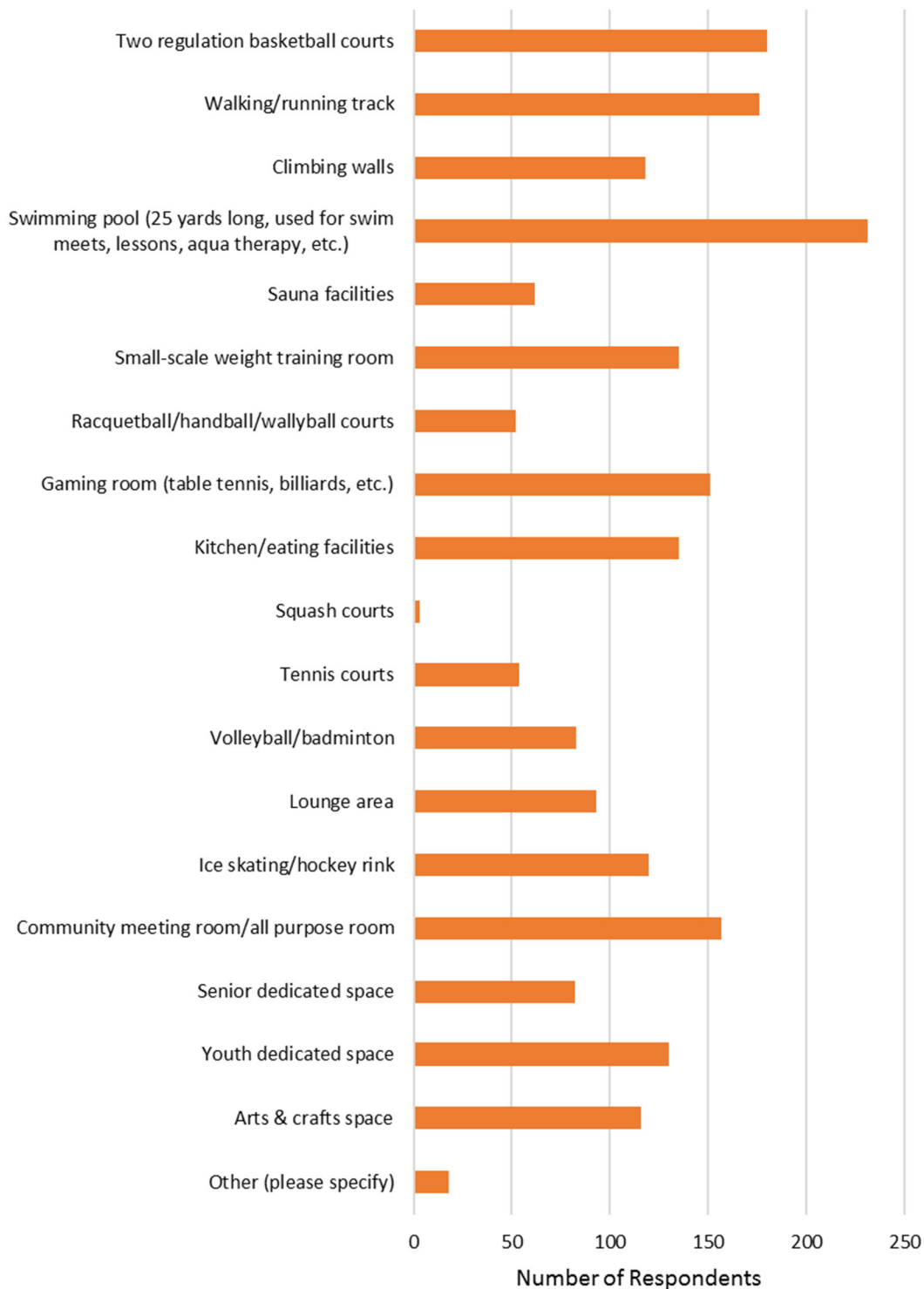
This document provides an overview of the responses to the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Results

1. The first question of the questionnaire is simple: “Do you think the Town of Lee would benefit from a community center?” This question received 288 responses, of which, 96.5% agree that building a community center in Lee would be an asset to the Town.
2. The second question presents the following possibilities for **indoor** recreational amenities to see which ones the respondents would prioritize. The options presented were; two regulation basketball courts, walking/running track, climbing walls, swimming pool, sauna facilities, small-scale weight training room, racquetball/handball/wallyball courts, a gaming room, kitchen/eating facilities, squash courts, tennis courts, volleyball/badminton, lounge area, ice skating/ice hockey rink, community meeting room/all-purpose room, senior dedicated space, youth dedicated space, and an arts and crafts space. Additionally, there was an option to enter a suggestion that was not included in this list. The questionnaire respondents were instructed to select up to 8 of the choices. The most popular selection for indoor amenities was a swimming pool which was selected by 231 out of the total 289 respondents. Additional suggestions which were submitted through the “other” category included a soccer/football/lacrosse field, roller skating rink, dance studio/dojo, flea market space, trampoline room, and a spa. The following are details of the findings.

<i>Indoor Amenities</i>	
Answer Choices	Responses
Two regulation basketball courts	180
Walking/running track	176
Climbing walls	118
Swimming pool (25 yards long, used for swim meets, lessons, aqua therapy, etc.)	231
Sauna facilities	62
Small-scale weight training room	135
Racquetball/handball/wallyball courts	52
Gaming room (table tennis, billiards, etc.)	151
Kitchen / eating facilities	135
Squash courts	3
Tennis courts	54
Volleyball/badminton	83
Lounge area	93
Ice skating/hockey rink	120
Community meeting room / all purpose room	157
Senior dedicated space	82
Youth dedicated space	130
Arts & crafts space	116
Other (please specify)	18
Total Respondents Answered	289
Total Respondents Skipped	0

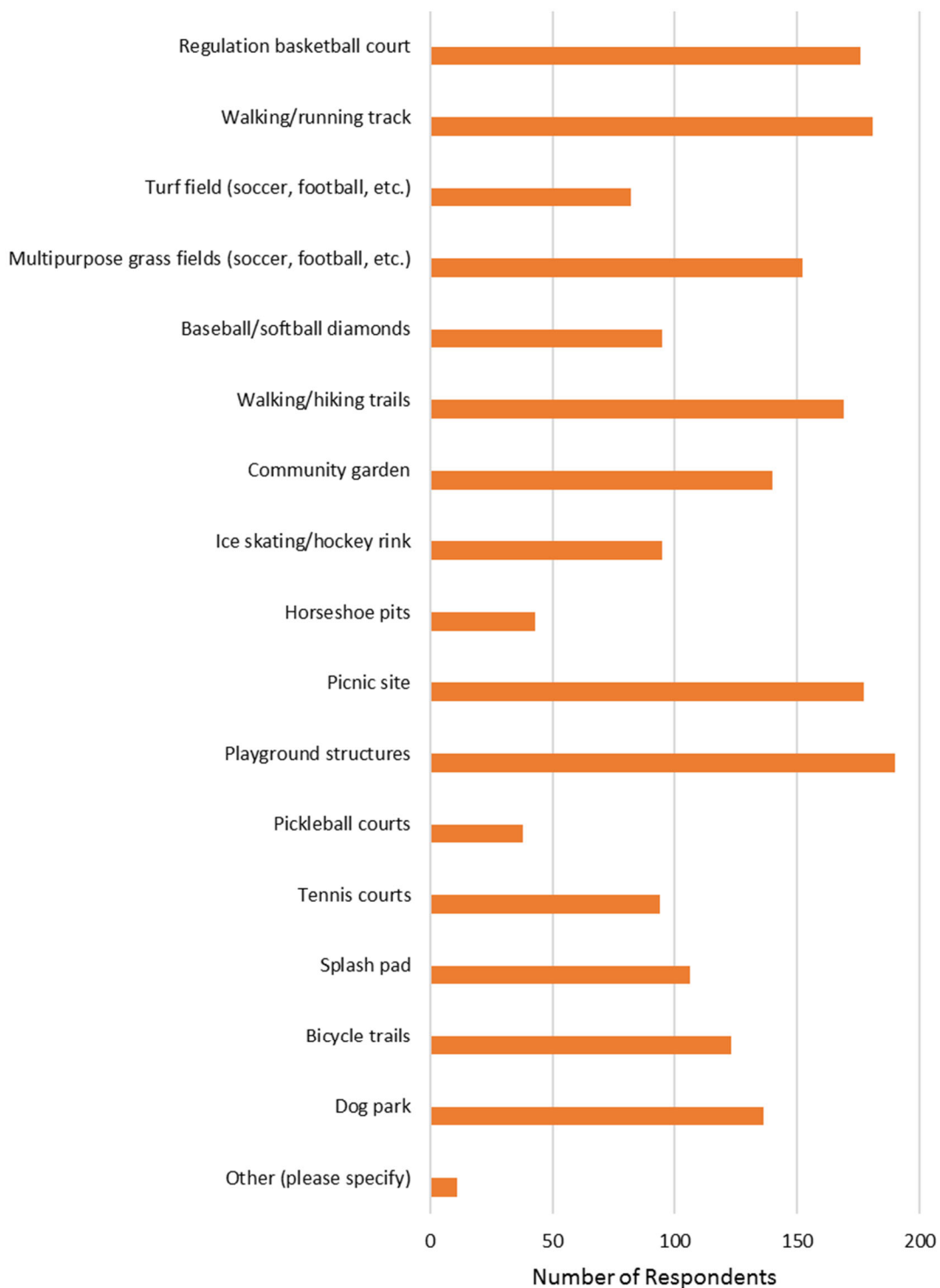
Indoor Amenities



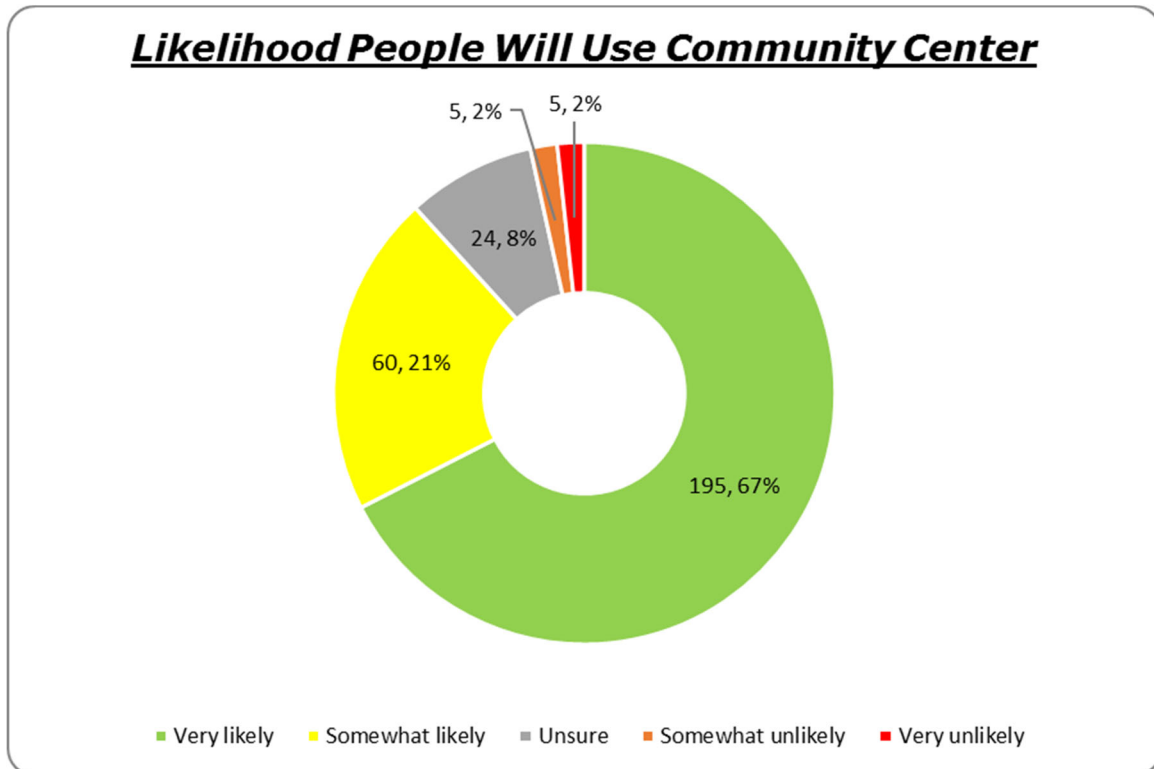
3. The third question presents the following possibilities for **outdoor** recreational amenities to see which ones the respondents would prioritize. The options presented were; regulation basketball court, walking/running track, turf field, multipurpose grass fields, baseball/softball diamonds, walking/hiking trails, community garden, ice skating/ice hockey rink, horseshoe pits, picnic site, playground structures, pickleball courts, tennis courts, splash pad, bicycle trails, and a dog park. Additionally, there was an option to enter a suggestion that was not included in this list. The questionnaire respondents were instructed to select up to 8 of the choices. The most popular selections for outdoor amenities were basketball courts, walking/running track, picnic site, and playground structure. All of those four proposed amenities were selected over 175 times out of the total 289 respondents. Additional suggestions which were submitted through the “other” category included a river walk, pavilion, beach volleyball court, skate park, outdoor swimming pool, and a small amphitheater. The following are details of the findings.

Outdoor Amenities	
Answer Choices	Responses
Regulation basketball court	176
Walking/running track	181
Turf field (soccer, football, etc.)	82
Multipurpose grass fields (soccer, football, etc.)	152
Baseball/softball diamonds	95
Walking/hiking trails	169
Community garden	140
Ice skating/hockey rink	95
Horseshoe pits	43
Picnic site	177
Playground structures	190
Pickleball courts	38
Tennis courts	94
Splash pad	106
Bicycle trails	123
Dog park	136
Other (please specify)	11
Total Respondents Answered	289
Total Respondents Skipped	0

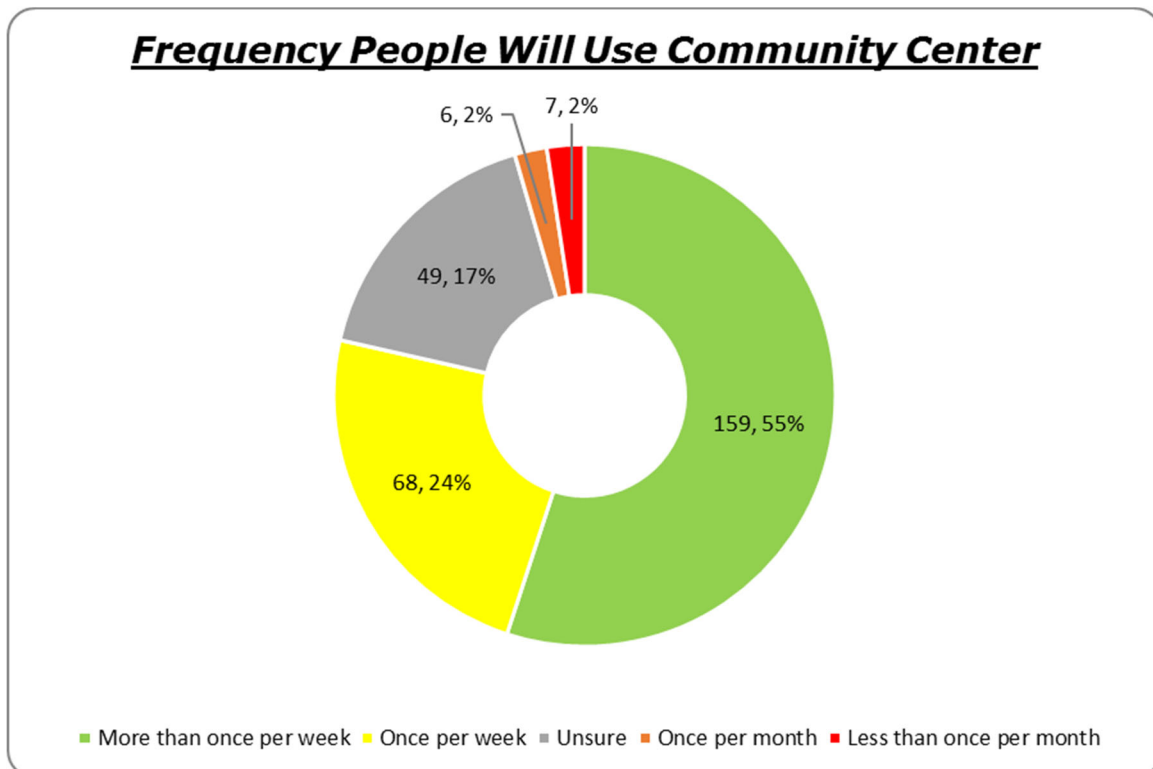
Outdoor Amenities



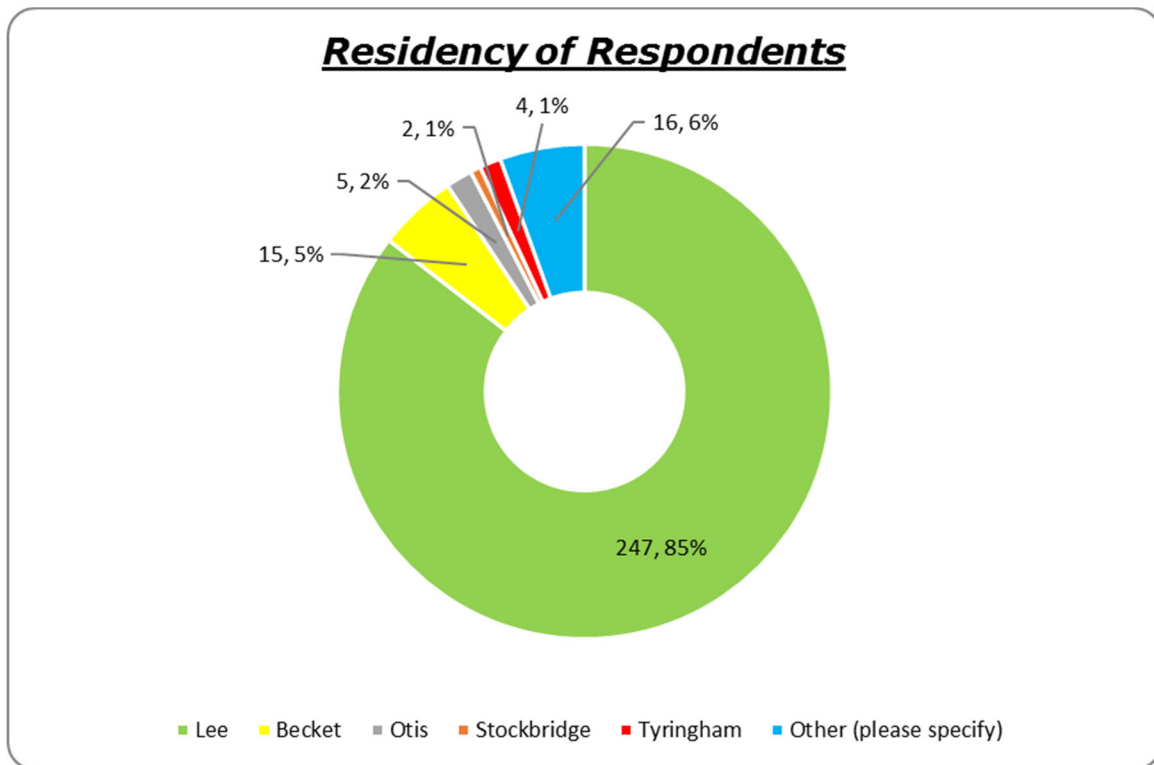
4. Question 4 asks “If the proposed Community Center was developed and included your preferred amenities, how likely would members of your household be to use the facility?” Two-thirds of the total respondents answered that they would be “very likely” to use the facility. Combining the answers for the “very likely” and “somewhat likely” categories comprises 88% of the total respondents.



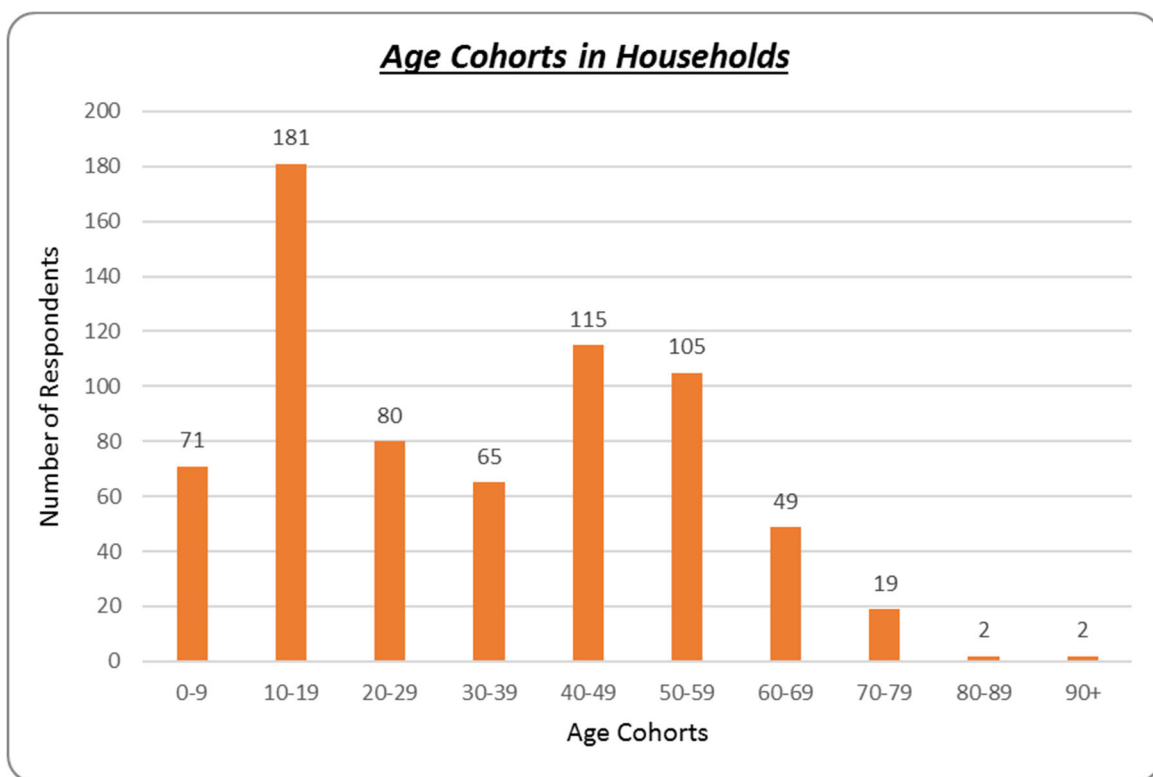
5. Question 5 asks “If the proposed Community Center was developed and included your preferred amenities, how frequently would members of your household use the facility?” Over half of the total respondents answered that they would use the facility more than once per week. Combining the answers for the “more than once per week” and “once per week” categories comprises 79% of the total respondents.



6. Question 6 asks where people live. Since this is a project proposed to happen in Lee, the residents of the Town were targeted for the scope of this questionnaire. However, there are neighboring towns which lack such a facility and residents of those neighboring towns would likely travel to Lee for use of the community center. As seen in the chart below, 85% of the total respondents live in Lee. Respondents who selected “other” live in Lenox (2), West Stockbridge (1), Pittsfield (8), Monterey (2), Middlefield (1), and (2) are in the process of moving to Lee.



7. Question 7 asks if people live in their home in Berkshire County year-round, if their home in Berkshire County is a second home, or if their home in Berkshire County is their primary home but they live elsewhere during the winter. The purpose of this question was to estimate if the proposed community center would receive relatively consistent, year-round use or if it would be vulnerable to seasonal changes. 287 (99.3%) of all respondents answered that they live in their home in Berkshire County year-round. Two people answered that their home in Berkshire County is their second home and zero respondents answered that they live elsewhere during the winter.
8. Question 8 asks the respondent to select an age group for each member of their household. The intent of the community center is to attract people of all ages. This question is intended to see which age cohorts would likely use the facility the most but also can give an idea of the frequency of children or teenagers visiting the community center with their parents, children or teenagers visiting with grandparents, etc. Out of the 289 people surveyed, their total households are comprised of 689 people, most of whom are between the ages of 10 and 19.



9. The suggested site for the proposed community center is 300 Stockbridge Road in Lee. It is a 171.5 acre parcel of town-owned land. It would be the largest available parcel in town which would allow for the greatest distance from the physical building of the community center to any neighbors.

Question 9 asks if respondents think this is a suitable location.

It should be noted that the Lee Youth Commission decided this question should be removed from the questionnaires that were distributed to students of Lee Middle & High School. The total number of respondents who were asked this question was 163 people.

Of the 163 people asked this question, 131 (80.4%) were in favor of the proposed site. No one skipped this question so the remaining 32 people (19.6%) were opposed to building a community center on this parcel.

10. The final question was left open-ended. It asks “Do you have any additional comments, concerns, or suggestions?” The complete list of comments can be found in Appendix B. The overarching concerns regarding the community center are:
- a. Location
 - b. Accessibility (Will transit be provided for those who do not drive such as a shuttle?)
 - c. Inclusivity for all ages and all incomes
 - d. Competition (Will it negatively impact local businesses such as gyms?)

Appendices

Appendix A

Attached is a copy of the Town of Lee: Proposed Community Center Questionnaire.

Town of Lee: Proposed Community Center Questionnaire

The Lee Youth Commission has proposed building a community center for the benefit and enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. The facility would serve as a hub for community functions in addition to both indoor and outdoor recreational activities.

For one and half years, the Lee Youth Commission has been working on the notion of a Lee Community Center. A volunteer engineer and a volunteer architect have worked side by side with the Lee Youth Commission to ascertain if a community center would be possible to build in Lee.

In May of 2019, the Town of Lee appropriated \$30,000 for a feasibility study. As a preliminary step of the feasibility study, this questionnaire serves to ask residents of the Town of Lee, as well as some neighboring municipalities, which amenities they would like to see included in the facility. The thoughts of you and your family are a crucial part of the planning process for this proposed facility.

This questionnaire consists of 10 simple questions. Please take a moment and have an ***adult member of the household complete this questionnaire on behalf of the entire household.*** Please complete this questionnaire by **July 1st, 2020.**

Hard copies of the survey will be available at the Lee Library. Please call or email in advance and a folder with your name and the survey will be placed in the drop box outside. Upon completion, return the survey to the same drop box. Contact the Lee Library at (413)243-0385 or lee@cwmars.org

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please contact the Lee Youth Commission at communitycentersurvey@yahoo.com

Town of Lee: Proposed Community Center Questionnaire

1. Do you think the Town of Lee would benefit from a community center?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Please select up to **8 indoor amenities** that you think should be included in the Community Center.

☐ Two regulation basketball courts

☐ Squash courts

☐ Walking/running track

☐ Tennis courts

☐ Climbing walls

☐ Volleyball/badminton

☐ Swimming pool (25 yards long, used for swim meets, lessons, aqua therapy, etc.)

☐ Lounge area

☐ Ice skating/hockey rink

☐ Sauna facilities

☐ Community meeting room / all purpose room

☐ Small-scale weight training room

☐ Racquetball/handball/wallyball courts

☐ Senior dedicated space

☐ Gaming room (table tennis, billiards, etc.)

☐ Youth dedicated space

☐ Kitchen / eating facilities

☐ Arts & crafts space

☐ Other (please specify)

3. Please select up to **8 outdoor amenities** that you think should be included in the Community Center.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation basketball court | <input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe pits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/running track | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turf field (soccer, football, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Playground structures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multipurpose grass fields (soccer, football, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickleball courts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball/softball diamonds | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis courts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/hiking trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Splash pad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ice skating/hockey rink | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

4. If the proposed Community Center was developed and included your preferred amenities, how **likely** would members of your household use the facility?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Very unlikely

5. If the proposed Community Center was developed and included your preferred amenities, how **frequently would members of your household use the facility?**

- ☐ More than once per week
- ☐ Once per week
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Once per month
- ☐ Less than once per month

6. What town do you live in?

- ☐ Lee
- ☐ Stockbridge
- ☐ Becket
- ☐ Tyringham
- ☐ Otis

Other (please specify)

7. Please select the following option that best applies to you:

- ☐ You live in your house year round
- ☐ Your house in Berkshire County is your second home
- ☐ Your house in Berkshire County is your primary home but you live elsewhere in winter.

8. Please check an age group for every member of your household from the choices below.

☐ 0-9

☐ 50-59

☐ 10-19

☐ 60-69

☐ 20-29

☐ 70-79

☐ 30-39

☐ 80-89

☐ 40-49

☐ 90+

9. One potential site of a community center is a 171.5 acre parcel of town-owned land located at 300 Stockbridge Road. Do you think this is a suitable location?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Do you have any additional comments, concerns, or suggestions? (limit of 500 characters)

Appendix B

The following is a bulleted list of all of the submitted comments that were submitted in response to Question 10. Please excuse grammatical and spelling errors.

- If this is to be a true community center, transport must be provided for those w/o cars or means of driving. Otherwise it's not a center for everyone.
- It's a shame that the space just outside of a playground/picnic area/ grass field/skate park is being used as a liquor store. It would have been nice to have the whole area allocated as a safe family friendly area. I'd also like answers as to how the space will be maintained- will there be adult supervision, as a means to ensure the property is used appropriately?
- If you can find a location not so close to Rt. 90 it would be preferable but I know land is hard to come by. Near West Rd?
- Handicapped accessible changing areas for pool.
- Community Room should be convertible to small theater/concert venue. Lee is lacking any reasonable venues of this kind.
- Maybe a dance facility or gymnastics.
- Parking area more important than fields we now have in town, although if we are in any need of additional fields, please include them. Biking/walking trails would be a plus.
- If a company determines there is a reasonable profit to be made or a not-for-profit would like to procure land, design, construct, and manage a community center serving the town with the taxpayers determining if there is a value to be had by paying for the services through subscription, then please engage firms and consider a Lansdale.
- We need a community center that is affordable and easily accessible. I'm thrilled to hear that this is being seriously considered. Our youth especially needs a safe place to congregate while getting some physical activity.
- This is a great concept. I personally do not believe that the outdoor playing fields should be necessary with all of the current fields that are available in town.
- I think the space should serve people of all ages, children to senior.
- Location should be closer to town so people without transportation can get there.
- I think we should find a bigger space.
- Dog park or off leash area should require a special tag for usage and no aggressive dogs allowed, not breed specific, behavior specific. Also possible smaller section for puppies and/or small dogs (not as a requirement but for more timid ones if needed).

- I would love to see this land used. We have discussed community soccer fields there as well. The few Lee residents that live near there have a very NIMBY perspective. We need a lot of room for a facility like this and it would be so nice to not have to travel to other towns because we have nothing in Lee.
- The town should have bought The Rink. Perfect location to downtown and the athletic field. Make the guy an offer. If you can buy the old Bullseye is a sweetheart deal that the town has done Zero with for 10 years to the tune of \$375K you can find \$ for the Rink.
- It would be nice/better if the location were closer to the center of town. Would help strengthen the downtown and reinforce community spirit by not being separate
- I think a community center for kids is what the town needs. I do not think that it needs an exercise facility. The town has two exercise facilities that are very family oriented.
- This is a visionary effort and the folks behind it are to be commended! I'd like to see any potential center be accessible from downtown by foot or bike, i.e., don't need to have a car. Thank you!
- It would be nice for our town to have amenities that we don't currently have. The town has fields, tennis courts (school), play grounds, baseball.
- Too expensive.
- If it is located outside of town will there be a free shuttle service for kids and seniors to get there to use it?
- This is long overdue, and our youth, families, and older residents need an affordable community gathering spot like Lenox and Dalton have.
- Adapted for needs of visually impaired.
- I love the idea of a community center. I think this would help Lee tremendously. However, I do have some major concerns on how this would negatively affect Soules fitness and snap fitness. This is a family that has been ingrained in this community for as long as some of the other names that seem to run the town. Justin and Ashley are active members of the town's chamber of commerce and continually supporting the town's youth and adults by hosting Fundraisers like the 5k glow run. They also raised money for the new calisthenics park. Plus, during the pandemic they offered free classes for the community even when they couldn't get help from the government themselves. They did this because they live the town and the people. So it feels wrong to offer the same things as they do and hurt a family that already tries to give back to the community. We should support the local businesses if we want them to support us.
- I'd really love to see something pop up that's for the community so I hope sought people sign.

- Support local small business owners for the fitness portion and allow them to coordinate some activities such as water aerobics and classes.
- Community center with things for our youth would be amazing. Basketball, splash pad, hiking and bike trails all awesome. However, a fitness center will ruin our local owned gym who does so much for this community and our youth already. We don't want to take that away. Please keep that in mind.
- Please don't include a gym when there are two in town that support the community and could use your support!
- If placed on Stockbridge road would need some sort of snack shop or vending machines. If not placed on Stockbridge road just within walking distance from the schools.
- The site should be accessible by walking from downtown if possible.
- I live on Stockbridge road and know it's not a very safe walking road for anyone. It's over a mile to town which doesn't make sense if people want to go to Dunkin' donuts or grab a quick snack from a gas station or the grocery store. I would love a youth center but the proposed site isn't a safe walk or close to anything really.
- Thank you for all of your work. This is long overdue in town. Such a shame that the LYA is not involved also. Having the child care facility on the premises would encourage use and make it more access to families.
- I don't think it's appropriate. If heard from the people who live next door to their how it would impact them and if it were my house right next to this, I would not want it there. The traffic in and out all the time. I don't know why is wouldn't be placed at the athletic field or somewhere such as that, with better walking access to the town.
- 300 Stock Rd preserve open space- trails. Center in town best, 2nd choice Pleasant St. Center inside needs large multipurpose room - acoustically sound for meetings, gatherings, dancing, theater, music performances, must have wooden floor. Center needs outdoor space and indoor space. Please have public meeting for more input in a real way. Done surveys many times before - the old rink was a good spot. Lee residents get to go free or big discount - open for fee to other towns.
- Community Center needs to be accessible - in town!
- Stockbridge Rd isn't meant for a lot of traffic. No sidewalks, way out of town.
- I think a walking/running track would be great...for years I would travel to the Newell street park in Pittsfield.... I would run and the kids would play on the playground and field and I always noticed so many different people utilizing the track.... runners, elderly walking, moms with strollers.... all ages!

- If this were to happen for people to use it should be affordable. Student/family/senior discounts.
- Stockbridge Road is not the place for a community center. Too far out of town. Dangerous road.
- Should be in the area of town center.
- I would like a pool so the swim team could use it so 25 yards and 8 lanes with blocks.
- Multiple full size basketball courts with spectator seating are a must.
- Is this going to be a free thing for Lee residents?? Because the Otis rec center is free for Otis residents.
- I would like to see a park/center be for use for all 4 seasons. Other ideas include festivals, summer markets. Our kids desperately need more indoor basketball courts.
- it shouldn't cost money because some people won't be able to afford it.
- It wouldn't be as great if it cost money for the poor family's that would love and really benefit from it.
- Do not only make it another place for athletic members of the community to go we need more opportunities for people that do not enjoy those things. Maybe even do cooking classes or meeting to see what the youth want to do to help out the community. Try to open it up to the people that do not have as many places for them and their interests.
- I'm a volleyball player for Lee and if they have volleyball courts indoors and outdoors I would go there to practice on my spare time away from practice.
- Better skate park, bowls, more rails, more ledges, make it near a lake or pond for fishing.
- Lee needs a hangout area, a restaurant, arcade, something for kids in school to go after school to hang out with friends and family.
- This is such a good idea and I truly believe that this would bring our community much closer together.
- My family and I would DEFINITELY be interested in going to a community center, especially if there is a place for us to do some sort of activity together. For example, ice skating, tennis, roller skating, and more.
- My dad manages an ice rink so he would love to help out with the ice rink if included.