

EXISTING UTILITIES

UTILITIES

WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Lee operates a secondary waste-water treatment plant, located on the Housatonic River at Route 102, south of route 2. Its connecting easement is 10 feet wide, runs north-south through Lee along the east of the river to 1 mile south of Lenox. (Note: This alignment offers possibilities of an open space pedestrian connection— for walking, hiking, cross-country skiing & snowshoe, biking, riding— in/outward from downtown or peripheral neighborhoods to regional trails nearby. The treatment plant' capacity is positive for any likely construction proposal. (See enclosed "River analysis" regarding current improving pollution-status).

SUB-GRADE UTILITIES DATA: (Water, drainage, sewerage; sub-electric)

There is no underground utilities map for downtown Lee at present, due to its construction history as an evolved New England milltown— although various utility companys have additional segmented information. It is evident by observation of surface and implied subgrade drainage that the river is the eventual outfall. Further subgrade data is not needed at this time for this study. For this study, Drainage problems are now only a concern in the Eaton/River area.

OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL: (* See photos)::

Main Street has (state installed) metal poles (125' oc +-) that alternatingly line both sides of street (curb side of sidewalks), supporting simple effective "swan" type streetlights and primary (n-s) electric lines, and lateral lines criss-crossing to each other and to feed the other town areas. All other streets (the Residential Hill, Eaton/RR area, Park street, Center Street etc) have older wood poles with primary and secondary lines, and often older but durable (and dignified) canister-shaped (thick glass w grill) street lights. These old wooden poles are regularly organized along residential streets and Center Street, but most chaotic in places as Eaton/ RR area in both pole placement, and their multiplicity of wire patterns (visually very obvious to all but the perhaps by now immune resident or totally confused driver). Eaton/chopper area uses floodlight. Architectural "feature" spot lighting of buildings and open spaces is overall lacking as well. * Saftey and initial cost are the first considerations of electrical utilities, and in that regard is now good in downtown's major areas. But wiring does seem problematic along the Eaton/Backside/RR area builidings—low, obstructive and not safely constructed an unsightly— and definately would conflict with any tree planting. Lighting in peripheral parts of town, the river, deep parts of vacant lots is presently inadequate. The oval park has several small pedestrian lights of good height poles but underscale residential heads. A new proposal, whether replacing or adding to existing primary electric and lighting, should include secondary lighting secondary system: so in all, there is a hierarchy of lighting scales to include a true human-scaled "pedestrian oriented" lighting of hard and soft spaces (especially along the river), as well as perhaps architectural feature-lighting of buildings, special signs and new bright and dim places— all now lacking and called for by townspeople and potential visitors. The devising of a comprehensive scheme, beautiful and efficient in its whole as well as details— (eg the choice of bulb tint and brightness (perhaps at times a low amber glow), the style of lighting)— offers designers a challenge— to bring to revitalization a most heartfelt, multi-mooded, night time dimension.

((Visual Impact of Electrical utilities: For this study, it is productive to ponder some aesthetic, perhaps, poetic considerations about Lees omnipresent electrical utilities: There is classic debate as to whether the existing poles, wiring, and streetlight types (and certain styles of lightable signage) would be an undesirable or a preferable aesthetic in the long term— or eg whether lines should be buried— (construction feasibility data pending); or should there be changes in at least some of the poling/wiring & street light types? These questions go to the issue of imaginability/ cost-priority strategy for revitalization. Some people protest that while Main Street's high primary lines and the new metal poles are relatively acceptable (even though these express the "interstate scale" through a small town), and the Residential Hill street poles are adequately harmonious among treetops and structures— but— most of the other lines, crossing streets everywhere (eg across Eaton street, and backside building, RR Street) with clustered transformers are an intolerable (though taken for granted by many) disruption of space, distracting, and a messy confused scribbling all over town, over the otherwise clear distant sky and landform views— and is possibly dangerous and certainly not "inviting". Others argue the opposite, and defend the evolved condition as "virtue-filled"— as a functional and aesthetic physical 'language' that is the most valid, most meritorious expression of those utilities— honest, practical, authentic historical signifiers, and with the most cost effectiveness for handling a utilitarian purpose— and most visually (and artifactually) nurturing to residents, and as especially inviting to potential visitors in the next century if Lee is to be a tourist town. Specifically, the metal poles are slender and strong, honest straightforward expression of support, consistent with the industrial ethic that honest craftsmanship, pragmatic inventiveness, steel machinery (while defining space with suggestive enclosure and syncopated punctuational rhythm). And, the poles are in perfect contrast to the lineal grid. In fact their "interstate scale" is a telling story— as they are marching through a local pedestrian scale town, singing up, in a dichotomy between them, and the artifactual aspects of the "old milltown" in a way that could attract tourists, and continuously celebrate the past for those who seek it. The spirited uplifting arch of the swan lamps have a special difference/ & affinity with the horizontal grid, the verticality of poles and buildings (with horizontal walls), and a harmony with the arching lines and surrounding landform). Even the clustered transformers have a certain phenomenology (a visual and audio sensationalism, coupled with an emotive feeling of "survival-huddling" that is poetically enticing. And, the arching of criss-crossing wires (of mountain/valley-like shape) symbolize the web of a community, literally and figuratively knitting the life of downtown, expressing historic-rooted bonds... ("one perhaps feels that a single union wire leaves town to join hands with Stockbridge & Lenox in one direction, and Pittsfield (GE) in the other— through the Berkshires into the world"). Arching wires also carry a proper festive sense (with or without the beloved seasonal lights and parade hangings over the Main Street). The wooden poles— among the wooded Berkshires— is expressive link between man and nature— of the earlier pioneering and perpetual urge toward "progress" in both the crafting of timber and the connections of wire that riddles rurality nationwide. This image stimulates our cultural memory, harkens back to days now remembered in the oldest of black and white photographs of both Lee and Americana. The older canister streetlights, sometimes half hidden in tree tops, with the old thick glass we find in fractured childhood memories of antique bottles and headlights— are enduring turn of the and mid century statement. Functionally, historically, and perhaps abstractly, the existing electrical utilities have a conservative permanent beauty in the marks of authenticity that seems eternally important))).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED

Subgrade information, including basic construction suitability data that is not enclosed here, will be necessary to implement any significant proposals, but is not relevant to the conceptual and preliminary level of design intentions of this study. See circulation map for hydrants, the one traffic light (at the south end) for rr tracks and all bridges. See topo map for drainage pattern base. See enclosed soils inventory for construction/utility suitability requirements per different area soils. SEE PHOTOS.