

# URBAN DESIGN STUDY: LEE, MA

## Proposal teams comparison / Interscale Idea-Abstraction

- Proposals & ideas are from the 4 grad teams; represented & interpreted by author's cross-theoretical framework -

### A COMPARISON OF PROPOSALS' SUB-IDEAS FOR SIX PARTICULAR DOWNTOWN AREAS:

For a closer look, as follows is a description of the four proposed schemes, each itemized in regard to their six internal landuse-areas, in terms of what the proposals have in common and in difference to reach their respective human goals. All four proposals are similar: in that they sub-design downtown Lee into the original six basic landuse areas, as hinted at "as valid units" in the analysis of existing conditions: Park Place, Northend, Main Street, Eaton/Backside, Residential Hill, and River Park. In all proposals, each of these six areas is strengthened with a distinct physical/activity character, and play a special role, that distinguish them as desirable sub-places: 'Park Place' & 'Northend' as "primary and secondary gateway/centers". 'Main Street' and 'Eaton/Backside Area' as "cbd mix and movement/parking places"; 'Lee Riverpark valley' as "Berkshire recreation place"; 'Residential Hill' as "idyllic living place". And these six areas in conjunction (as an interrelated pattern), synergistically perform to create a unified Lee as a greater whole (goal-fulfilling) single place. What is different in each proposal: is the unique "great idea" it assigns to each of its six town areas (ie six "sub-themes" or "sub-ideas") to specifically organize them within. (These in turn synergistically add up to different, the VERY BIG IDEA for Lee as a whole-- thus achieving the chosen human goal regarding the milltown vs tourist town dilemma-- that distinguish the proposals so dramatically).

### PROPOSED AREA DESCRIPTION OF SHARED AND DIFFERENT AREA-IDEAS (SUBTHEMES)

A) **"PARK PLACE"**: in all schemes, the oval park area is enhanced as Lee's "HISTORIC TOWN CENTER" and "SOUTH GATEWAY", that is spatially unified and pedestrian-oriented. (Includes a new-formed, enlarged Town Common with lawn & great trees, thematic building-courtyards, walks; and (AS IN ALL 6 AREAS) special orn. trees, seating, lights, symbolic reference, & reorganized reduced on-site parking (except #4)-- integrated within the existing whole spatial quad of finer buildings). Also, is a new offstreet parking-courtyard behind the Congregational Church. The proposals chiefly vary by their great idea for organizing the overall town common area. \* (('Primary nodal/ soft-hard spatial character'))

Different Park Place sub-themes within the four proposals:

SCHEME ONE: "Many Different Spaces"  
SCHEME FOUR: "Return of the Romantic Oval"  
SCHEME THREE: "Reaching Vistas: inward to the church, or outward to the Berkshire Hills and sky"  
SCHEME FOUR: "Pedestrian-only Great Allee/ grand common"

B) **"NORTHEND"**: in all schemes, is strengthened as a "NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER" and "NORTH GATEWAY". (Includes the addition of the new north common, a new commercial/residential building complex, pedestrian walkway & nodes, the realigned road, on and off-street parking, great trees-- all in conjunction w existing buildings. Proposals chiefly vary in how they organize (separate or mix) the various public and private combinations of pedestrian space (green & hard) vs new buildings (resident or commercial), and parking uses for the vacant northend parcels. \* (('Subordinate nodal/hardsoft spatial character'))

Different Northend subthemes within the four proposals:

SCHEME ONE: "Serial: all components mixed"  
SCHEME TWO: "Public (green/bld) vs Private (green/bld)"  
SCHEME THREE: "Moderate Green Common vs Mixed Bld Complex"  
SCHEME FOUR: "Public Building (big interior space) vs Public North Common (big exterior space)"

C) **"MAIN STREET AREA"**: in all schemes, is reclaimed as Lee's "historic lineal place of commercial/residential/civic/ MIXED ACTIVITY" and "N/S CIRCULATION CORRIDOR" with auto and pedestrian functions that are brought to harmony. (Includes the redefined roadway width, desirable pattern of expanded walkway/nodal pedestrian space, reorganized on-street and off-street parking, a new building in the theater parcel, library provisions, wholistic street tree design added to the existing diversity of building types & uses in the overall lineal-ordered site). The proposals chiefly vary in the total Main St pattern of 'parallel parking space' vs removing the parking to get 'expanded pedestrian nodes': a total rhythm of subspaces. \* (('Primary corridor/hard spatial character'))

Different Main Street subthemes of the four proposals:

SCHEME ONE: "incremental small pedestrian nodes"  
SCHEME TWO: "alternating medium pedestrian nodes"  
SCHEME THREE: "triple pedestrian nodes S, N, & middle"  
SCHEME FOUR: "dichotomized with all-pedestrian South End"

D) **"EATON BACKSIDE AREA"**: in all schemes, is reorganized as valuable space for "BULK TOWN PARKING" (to reduce vehicle domination, and to instead create pedestrian space elsewhere in town) and as supplementary "place of commercial/civic/recreational MIXED ACTIVITY" consistent with Main Street. (Includes new pedestrian walkways and nodes, great trees, efficient bulk parking areas, the new Lee museum building, and upgraded Arobi Senior Center (as two municipal uses) -- all in conjunction with the existing buildings within the previously wasted expanse between Main Street and the Riverpark). The proposals chiefly vary in their logic for organizing the bulk parking, vis a vis important civic/commerc pedestrian space. \* (('Planal/hard spatial character'))

Different Eaton/Backside subthemes of the four proposals:

SCHEME ONE: "many smaller parking areas"  
SCHEME TWO: "relocate RR st/ result: extra space to efficiently use: with fingers of parking"  
SCHEME THREE: "promenade axis/ parking quadrant"  
SCHEME FOUR: "parking dual-space: big visitor parking area (with allee) vs local shopping parking area"

E) **"LEE RIVERPARK"**: in all schemes is created as important RECREATIONAL PARKLAND for rediscovering the natural/historic value and meaningful (and marketable) imagery of the Housatonic River and its relation to Lee. (Includes the Eaton Treminus & Riverside Spaces, with pathways and plantings; the river, contextual natural Berkshire ecosystem, wildlife & changing seasonal phenomena; Grendel, Arobi, & Sullivan riverside terrace-courts). The proposals vary by percent contact with the river and the type spaces and walks formally created. \* (('Corridor/soft spatial character'))

Different riverpark sub-themes from the four proposals:

SCHEME ONE: "One point contact" (25% river contact)"  
SCHEME TWO: "Romantic double node/corridor"; (50% contact)"  
SCHEME THREE: "Waterfall Park/ plus lineal; 100% contact"  
SCHEME FOUR: "Serial-noded ribbon of green"; (75% contact)"

F) **"RESIDENTIAL HILL"**: in all schemes, is to be protected for quality "NEIGHBORHOOD LIVING" (& some church activity) from commercial encroachment & non-local vehicle use-- with low budget yet significant upgrading. (Includes street repair, and completion of exiting sidewalks/curbs/walls/lawns/ ornament & street-tree planting as needed; enforce parking and driving policy for residents or visitor overflow). This area must always be a private to semi-public area for townspeople). \* (('Planal/ soft & semihard spatial character'))