

# EXISTING CONDITIONS SYNTHESIS

## HOUSATONIC RIVER AREA AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE ABANDONED

THE RIVER AREA OCCUPIES THE ENTIRE WEST EDGE OF NORTHAMPTON, CONSISTING OF ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES CONTAINED IN THE STATE. DURING LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES, THE RIVER CHANNEL ITSELF FORMED A STRONG TRAIL FOR POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND A FUTURE MAIN CORRIDOR FOR TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION.

PRESENTLY THE RIVER IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR ITS RECREATIONAL, VISUAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE. IT IS THE ONLY "UNDEVELOPED" RIVER IN AN IMPORTANT TOWN. THERE IS GREAT POTENTIAL TO "REDEVELOP" THE RIVER AS AN IMPORTANT TOWN SPACE AND TO USE IT AS A KEY TO TOWN REVITALIZATION.

GUIDE TO WATERBOROUGH POTENTIAL RECREATION (LIFE)

- REARWARD AND WOODS PLANTING (SHELL BARKED AND SPINNING SCENERY AND OFFER A POTENTIAL VARIETY OF WALKING TRAILS)
- CONCENTRATE WALKWAYS BY DIAMETER UP AND DOWN
- SCENERY (TYPICAL BUILDING ON THE RIVER - RESTRICTED SITE)
- UNDESIRABLE BUILDINGS (INSTEAD OF A ROOM)
- USE OF BARRIERS TO BLOCK OFF TRAFFIC (WALKWAYS - IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY)
- FUTURE TRAILS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME
- WALKWAYS TO BE INACCESSIBLE
- POTENTIAL WALKWAY POTENTIAL (EASTON STREET TERMINUS)

## EATON/BACKSIDE AREA VALUABLE URBAN SPACE WASTED

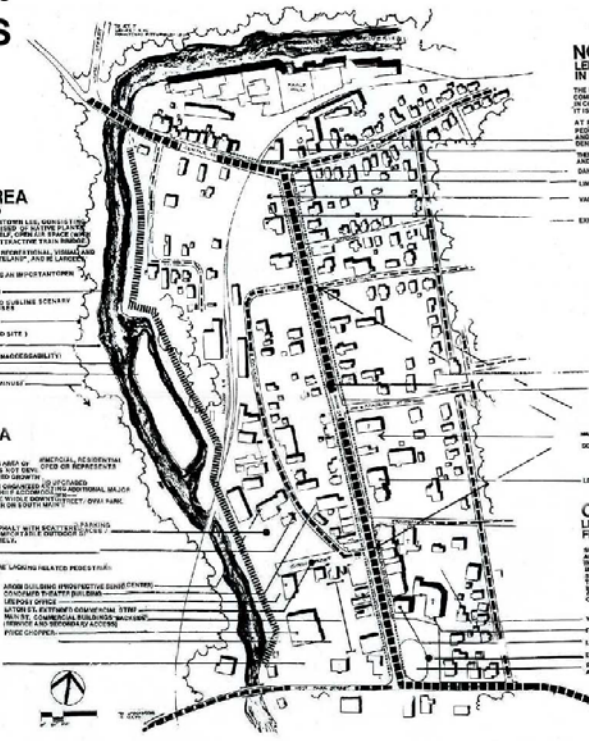
PRESENTLY THIS AREA REPRESENTS MAIN STREET AS AN AREA OF MEDICAL, RESIDENTIAL AND OFFICE USE. THE BUILDINGS ARE OF VARYING QUALITY AND THE AREA IS NOT BEING FULLY DEVELOPED. IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND OFFERING WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

THERE IS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR THIS AREA TO BE DEVELOPED INTO AN IMPORTANT TOWN SPACE AND TO USE IT AS A KEY TO TOWN REVITALIZATION.

LARGE UNDEVELOPED RESIDENTIAL SPACES OF DIFFERENT QUALITY WITH SCATTERED PARKING AND BROAD AVENUE. IN THE NORTH, THERE IS A LARGE COMMERCIAL BUILDING. WALKWAYS AND IS USUALLY BARRIERS, OFFERS AND IS WELL.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND OFFERING WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND OFFERING WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.



## NORTH END MILL AREA LEE'S NEIGHBORHOOD NODE AND SECONDARY GATEWAY: IN NEED OF STRENGTHENING

THE NORTH END MILL AREA IS HISTORICALLY A LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD - ORIENTED COMMERCIAL AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL WALKING AREA. IT IS A SMALLER SCALE AND MORE PRIVATE NODE TO COMPLEMENT THE BROADER LOCAL, MORE PUBLIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICT MAIN NODE. IT IS IMPORTANT ALSO AS A SECONDARY "GATEWAY" FOR ENTERING OR LEAVING TOWN.

AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, THE ROADWAY CORRELATES WITH POOR ALIGNMENT, THERE IS LITTLE PEDESTRIAN AREA RELATED TO IMPORTANT BUILDINGS, LACK OF STOPS, THE MILL, RESIDENCES AND NO ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE. THE OVERDEVELOPMENT OF OUTDOOR SPACE AND DENSITY OF BUILDINGS / ACTIVITIES IS WEAK.

THERE IS OPPORTUNITY TO TIGHTEN THE EXISTING ROAD WITH CONCRETE FINISH, CREATE PEDESTRIAN AREAS, AND INCORPORATE UNDEVELOPED PARCELS FOR A STRENGTHENED AND MORE ACCOMMODATING PLACE.

LIMITED INTERSECTION - WEAK SPATIAL CHARACTER / LACK OF TREES

VACANT PARCEL OF LAND

EXISTING BUILDING SLATED FOR DEMOLITION

## MAIN STREET AREA LEE'S HISTORIC TOWN CORRIDOR: AUTO / PEDESTRIAN CONFLICT

MAIN STREET IS THE HISTORICALLY LEE'S MAIN TRADING AND WALKING ROUTE. TOWN STRUCTURAL SPINE, CENTRAL AND PLACE OF COMMERCIAL, LOCAL AND REGIONAL IMPORTANCE. THE STREET IS A KEY TO TOWN REVITALIZATION AND OFFERS A POTENTIAL VARIETY OF WALKING TRAILS.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND OFFERING WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

ALONG MAIN STREET TRAFFIC CONCENTRATED MAIN STREET, WALKWAYS TO BE DIVERGENT AND WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

## OVAL PARK AREA LEE'S HISTORIC TOWN CENTER AND PRIMARY GATEWAY: FRAGMENTED SPACE / AUTO DOMINATED

THE OVAL PARK AREA IS LEE'S BUSINESS MIX OF OFFICE, COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY. AND LEE'S MOST IMPORTANT ARCHITECTURE AND TOWN CENTER SPACE. PRESENTLY, THE OVAL PARK AREA IS A MIX OF BUILDINGS AND OFFICE SPACES. THE QUALITY OF BUILDINGS IS VARYING AND THE ARCHITECTURE IS OF VARYING QUALITY. THE QUALITY OF BUILDINGS IS VARYING AND THE ARCHITECTURE IS OF VARYING QUALITY.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND OFFERING WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

WALKWAYS TO BE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED AT THIS TIME.

LEE MASSACHUSETTS REVITALIZATION

## SYNTHESIS STATEMENTS

(See also the foldout *Synthesis Area-Map* following the analysis plans).

---

### SUMMARY

As will be further shown within this study, history leaves Lee today as a modified working milltown with many positive and negative attributes in natural, manmade physical and cultural domains, that translate into great opportunities for a variety of different proposals. To review some major points of assessment:

Negative aspects: The major problem of pedestrian/vehicular spatial organization continues. More than ever traffic and parking clutters and dominates downtown, making it noisy, unsafe, chaotic, unsightly, dangerous, prohibiting potential activities, displacing opportunities, eroding qualitative place(s), and dampening Lee's image. Reciprocally, more than ever is a lack of pedestrian space for walking, resting, playing, events, and providing a unifying pleasing setting-- ever needed for residents, workers, merchants, and different potential visitors. This compounds the second major problem of renewing an economic strategy. This pattern of change leaves Lee today physically chaotic, socially and functionally disrupted and economically vulnerable-- at a perfect time for this study.

Positive aspects: Lee has tremendous location geographically, transportationally, culturally as a beautiful and proximate setting, accessible to regional commercial and tourist markets and their traffic-- that can strengthen an already significant economic base to whatever degree desired. Most of the area is immensely rich in natural resources (excepting some easily correctable overrun areas of downtown that have unreaped the natural-related potentials) with plants, landform, climate, the hidden river. Much of Lee's physical manmade infrastructure is superb: the basic geometry, proportions, and scale of downtown, the generous reclaimable space in and about town; the valid circulation grid and coherent layout of buildings in reciprocation to the land and juxtaposition to the river; the architecture is rich and varied as utilitarian, much of which are fine 19th century buildings, with newer ones coexisting today in cohesive overall building layout (Memorial Hall, Lee Bank, the several churches, the commercial block, the residential victorian mansions and old worker homes).

Opportunity: remarkably, within Lee's downtown existing infrastructure there is already ample spatial dimension (between the buildings, and re-usable or unused land area) to reorganize and solve Lee's vehicular/ pedestrian problem-- for more efficient driving and increased parking, plus increased attractive meaningful green and hard pedestrian spaces for outdoor human activity, and even some additional downtown buildings (all the while revealing the existing positive resources). This would improve the quality of place and life in Lee, while taking advantage of the regional shopping or interstate tourist market to whatever degree is desired. Even as one stands in downtown today and squints ones eyes to focus only at the buildings and voids between, behind the layers of traffic, spatial and communal erosion an economic stress and modern pace-- one can sense the authentic beauty, utility, downtown social activity and sense of community so climatized in the golden afternoon of yesterday-- virtues ready to be revealed again and directed anew. The town revitalization committee continues work in the spirit of the old Ferncliff Club to carefully protect the past while exploiting said opportunity.

## CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

We have seen how Lee is wonderfully and deeply rooted in natural and human history: from geological & botanical genesis and evolution, to ethnic patterns of human settlement, agriculture, industry, "summit", fundamental physical/natural/ & human activity declines within modern progress, local economic development, and present interest in revitalization. This succession proclaims Lee as a genuine small New England working mill-town endowed with old and new factors and options at hand. Because Lee now has almost everything going for it in existing conditions and potentials in its own and contextual natural, manmade and cultural resources-- including the timely will of the town to seize the moment for forging design initiatives-- there is promise that future chapters of Lee history will tell that a special combination of conservative and progressive forces summoned a new kind of golden afternoon to best light Lee's passage through and beyond the next turn of the century.