

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

The success of the local economy is very important to its residents and businesses and is crucial to maintaining the private and public resources necessary for remaining a quality community. Lenox's economy has remained strong throughout periods of change in the area. The Town has many unique assets and enjoys certain advantages over other communities. With the presence of Tanglewood, vibrant resorts, the largest number of guest rooms in the County, and a key location between Pittsfield and the Mass Pike, Lenox has been and continues to be at the center of one of the healthier segments of the County's economy, tourism. This sector of the economy has been growing in importance in both Lenox and the County.

The Regional and Local Economy

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

As is the case with the County, the MSA is centered around the City, and is a fair approximation of the labor market area for Lenox. However, commuting patterns would indicate a stronger relationship between Lenox and parts of southern Berkshire County such as Great Barrington, which is not in the MSA, than between Lenox and Adams, which is in the MSA.

Despite its small size relative to the rest of the MSA, Lenox plays a significant role in 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.

Lenox is generally more affluent than other Berkshire towns, and its economic dependence on seasonal tourism/visitors is somewhat more marked and long-standing when compared to other towns in the County, save perhaps for neighboring Stockbridge. In addition, industrial development, a mainstay of the economies in adjacent Lee and Pittsfield, never really took off in Lenox. Instead, the economy of Lenox depended on attracting wealthy socialites, investors, and industrialists to the area for second homes, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. As a result, numerous so-called "Great Estates" dot the landscape of both Lenox and Stockbridge. These massive, sprawling estates covered about half of Lenox's territory, and have had an impact on the landscape that lasts until today.

Cultural and Resort Tourism Services

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.

After World War II, Lenox began to enjoy a resurgence of wealth based on tourism and numerous cultural attractions. These included Tanglewood, first started as the Berkshire Music Festival in the 1930's, which commenced operations as the summer home of another esteemed long-term visitor, the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Other attractions include the Wharton estate and its Theater component, and numerous spas and resorts. This era in Lenox's economic and cultural history continues up to the present time, and shows no sign of dwindling soon.

This wave of visitors to the area has been more numerous than the Great Estates era visitors were, and represent a broader cross-section of the population, although a large percentage still make their pilgrimages from the New York City area. However, contemporary visitors also tend to stay in town for shorter periods of several days, commonly weekends or weeks, although some continue the summer-long vacation tradition.

Cultural attractions, such as Tanglewood and Shakespeare & Company, place Lenox at the heart of a South County cultural belt that also includes the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge and an assortment of venues for performing arts. This setting makes Lenox an extremely attractive place in which to live and visit. In this sense, Lenox fits in quite well with the Berkshires as a whole. The region is at once synonymous with theater and musical performances, striking art collections, beautiful scenery and rugged landscape.

Once the vacation homes for business tycoons and socialites, the Great Estates present both a promise and a challenge to residents, who have needed to find creative ways to convert these behemoths into alternative uses. Today the leisure and recreational resorts at Canyon Ranch, Cranwell, and Eastover are significant local economic assets.

The primary market source of visitors is the New York City metro area and Southern New England, although there is certainly a national and international influence as well.

Table ECON1 Large Markets - Population and Distance

	1994 Population	Mileage
Albany, NY *	875,000	45
Springfield *	580,000	49
Boston **	3,240,000	138
New York City ***	19,796,000	145

Notes: * = Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), ** = Primary MSA, *** = Consolidated MSA
1994 Population Estimates from U.S. Census

Trade

Regionally, the Allendale/Coltsville area and the Berkshire Mall represent the largest concentrations of retail floor space within the Pittsfield MSA. Lenox has more than held its own in this sector, primarily due to visitor based trade. Trade includes the resident and market area customers in stores and centers located in the northern 7/20 commercial corridor area, Lenox Village, and Lenox Dale. Some of the businesses tap into the regional market while many, such as the Price Chopper Grocery, mainly serve Lenox and South Pittsfield, and secondarily Lee, Stockbridge and Richmond. According to the community survey, over 60% of residents purchase most of their groceries in Lenox, but only about 20% purchase household items and less than 10% most of their clothing in Town.

Public, Non Profit, and Education

This sector is a key element of the economy in terms of employment and payroll, providing a significant number of relatively high paying jobs. Some of the visitor service sector is non-profit. State employment is partially due to the large amount of publicly owned acreage and the need for Berkshire based regional headquarters in the area is also due to geographic separation from the state capital and Springfield. The Town of Lenox and the Lenox Public Schools are among the largest employers in Town. Non-profits and public entities do not contribute directly to the property tax base.

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. The film industry was a nascent presence in Lenox in the mid 1990's. Nate Winstanley & Associates, a public relations firm located in Lenox Village, is an example of the new breed of advanced services firm.

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 especially strong in Lenox. Edgecombe Nursing Home is one of the larger employers. The enlargement of Kimball Farms and Devonshire Estates are indicators of rapid growth in this sector. 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-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. The Lenox Economic Development Committee has identified this sector as an important growth area in Town.

Industry and Manufacturing

Regionally, this sector has declined drastically. By 1998, Pittsfield had lost 70% of the manufacturing jobs it had in 1986. Lenox still has a small but significant industrial base north of Lenox Dale, anchored by Beloit Corporation.

Employment

Overall, employment in Berkshire County has been decreasing in the last decade. Meanwhile employment in Lenox has generally been stable as Table ECON2 indicates.

Table ECON2 Employment in Lenox - Recent Trends

Total Employment	1990	1994	1996	# Change 1990-96	% Change 1990-96
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	15	20	21	6	40%
Construction	76	29	38	-38	-50%
Manufacturing	352	298	309	-43	-12%
Trans., Commun., & Public Utilities	8	4	39	31	388%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	78	76	84	6	8%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	898	1,015	970	72	8%
Services	1,831	1,973	1,744	-87	-5%
Government	246	242	253	7	3%
Total Employment	3,504	3,657	3,458	-46	-1%

Source: Mass. Dept. of Training and Employment

Employment in Lenox is heavily dependent upon services, leading to a large reliance upon employees who commute from Pittsfield (documented in Transportation section). Total employment exceeds the level of employed persons living in Lenox. The employment of Lenox *residents* is more tilted toward the professions and management, and many Lenox residents are employed elsewhere in the County, particularly in Pittsfield.

Table ECON3 Lenox Resident Occupations - 1990 Census

OCCUPATION	Persons
Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations	324
Professional specialty occupations	551
Technicians and related support occupations	90
Sales occupations	341
Administrative support occupations, including clerical	316
Protective service occupations	15
Service occupations, except protective and household	263
Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	55
Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	247
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	47
Transportation and material moving occupations	29
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	31
Total employed persons 16 years and over	2,309

Any 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, a great many Lenox residents continue to be employed in Pittsfield and with other large regional employers. Lenox businesses also compete for workers with these major employers.

Table ECON4 Major Employers In and Near Lenox, 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>	
Lenox	Canyon Ranch in the Berkshires
Dalton	Beloit Pulping
Lee	Mead Corp - Specialty Paper Division
Lee	Schweitzer-Mauduit International, Inc.
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>	
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
Lanesborough	Sears, Roebuck & Company
Pittsfield	Bank of Boston
Pittsfield	Berkshire County Savings Bank
Pittsfield	Berkshire Gas Company
Pittsfield	Berkshire Hilton Inn
Pittsfield	Big Y Supermarket
Pittsfield	Bradlees Department Store
Pittsfield	General Systems Company
Pittsfield	Lakewood Industries
Pittsfield	J. H. Maxymillian, Inc.
Pittsfield	New England Newspaper
Pittsfield	Petricca Industries, Inc.
Pittsfield	Wal-Mart
Stockbridge	Country Curtains at the Red Lion Inn
Stockbridge	Red Lion Inn

Source: Central Berkshire Chamber of Commerce

Income

Compared to the Metropolitan area, and compared to the national population, Lenox residents are generally higher skilled, more educated, and have greater financial resources due to income or savings. To some extent this may be due to internal sources, such as an excellent educational system; however, income levels are more directly related to the type of households that can afford to live in Lenox. The basic correlation of income for Lenox residents versus the Metropolitan area that is show below is still valid. Income levels are not extremely high overall, compared to the rest of the State, and this is due primarily to 1) lower incomes prevalent in the Berkshires and outside the Boston Area and eastern Massachusetts and 2) the high percentage of seniors in Lenox. Most accounts and recent statistics would indicate the regional income gap is widening.

Table ECON5 Income Levels - 1990 Census

	Lenox	Pittsfield Metropolitan Area	Massachusetts
Median Family Income	\$44,225	\$40,030	\$44,367
Median Household Income	\$34,500	\$31,900	\$36,952
Per Capita Income	\$16,822	\$15,848	\$17,224

The matrix below gives an indication of the demographic makeup of households which influences the local economy. The largest groups are bolded. Although the information is too dated to be of precise importance, it indicates that the dominant economic households were headed by those with incomes exceeding the median, aged 35-64. For further analysis, this information can be cross-referenced with data in the Population section.

Table ECON6 Lenox Household Profile - Income by Age (1990 Census)

Household Income	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & >	Total
< \$10,000		16	9	10	39	57	80	211
\$10,000-\$14,999	7	28	13		21	48	75	192
\$15,000-\$24,999	8	44	38	28	31	33	30	212
\$25,000-\$34,999	31	92	78	33	26	67	8	335
\$35,000-\$49,999		39	111	69	50	39	11	319
\$50,000-\$74,999		44	68	123	101	31		367
\$75,000-\$99,999		11	34	47	27	15		134
> 100,000		10	31	36	20	11		108
Total	46	284	382	346	315	301	204	1,878

As has been noted, since 1990 the proportion of households in the younger age groups has declined while senior households have increased. Beyond general demographic trends, this is apparently due to the cost of housing, and the form of new residential quarters. Information in

the Housing section would tend to support this conclusion. The emergence of a wealthier segment of seniors is another new trend. This was indicated in data collected in the community survey process.

Goals

In 1998, the Lenox Selectmen adopted the following Policy Statement:

A prime objective of the Town of Lenox is the protection and appreciation of the businesses now existing in Lenox. Fostering the growth of Lenox's current businesses is a primary concern of the town, including efforts to remove the seasonality from Lenox's tourist season.

In addition, Lenox seeks to attract businesses and concerns to the town which are in keeping with the historic, cultural, rural, and artistic characteristics of the town. Toward this end, the town is committed to implementing procedures and policies which will facilitate the establishment of such new businesses and will ease their location or relocation process.

The town will take a pro-active role in meeting these objectives.

Economic development, good employment opportunities, and goods and services to serve the resident population remain community priorities. Few residents wish to see radical change in Lenox, and community survey respondents generally favored minimizing environmental impacts and balancing community needs when considering and planning new development. Basic community economic goals are to:

- *Maintain the local business and employment base*
- *Maintain economic vitality and fiscal health, but direct new development and investment to meet resident and community needs*
- *Improve employment options for young professionals, preferably by adding advanced service jobs*
- *Support the continuation of significant non-residential sources of public revenues*

Future Economic Challenges and Strategy Alternatives

This section includes discussion and strategy alternatives that would address the goals listed above.

Regional Economy

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

Table ECON7 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: REMI

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 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, largely taken from the Berkshire Connect Assessment & Recommendation Report (1998), represent a short synopsis of economic opportunities related to advance 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, many positions increasingly require information based skills. According to the former director of the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, many available jobs require such additional skills, but pay less than the traditional manufacturing positions which have mainly 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, Lenox is at an economic disadvantage, having a dearth of nearby advanced educational and training facilities. This is a regional issue that will become more and more important as advanced training is increasingly valued in the workplace. Fortunately many skilled people are open to relocating in the Berkshires. The pool of former residents who have left the area and attained higher education and skills is an important resource to recapture.

There is currently relatively little sharing of resources between different municipalities. In order to preserve both its tremendous beauty, high quality of life, and cherished small town feel, Lenox residents will find it beneficial to reach outwards to other towns. Lenox should strive to balance the economic and community service needs of the town with environmental and aesthetic preservation and recreation needs. Collaborative arrangements and agreements with other towns and neighboring Pittsfield are necessary in order to ensure that open spaces, forests, parks, hillsides, and waterways are use wisely and preserved to the best of the community's ability, in conjunction with planning for the residents' economic livelihood and recreational needs.

The Local Economy and Business Areas

Lenox's strong historic and cultural assets remain an important defining characteristic for the town. Lenox is also changing in many ways: economically, demographically, environmentally, and socially.

Results of the community survey indicate that many community members shop outside the community to access a wider selection and better prices. Opportunities to add family oriented retail/entertainment services are unlikely to occur as demographics and market dynamics change. While overall the population is aging, many of the older newcomers have strong purchasing power and market opportunities exist there.

The community survey indicated that the community does not desire additional retail. Part of this feeling is probably due to the sense that additional retail services will serve visitors and not residents, as has been the general trend. Additional provision of goods and services need to serve local residents. 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.

In simplest terms Lenox continues to enjoy unique opportunities in cultural tourism and recreation services, commercial and professional development mainly based on the town's reputation for excellence, highway locational factors, and handsome large parcels of land with the potential for reuse. Revenue information shows the importance of tourism and commercial facilities to the towns' tax base.

However, there are also drawbacks to relying too much on a service-based economy, and the town will be wise to continue to nurture varied economic development. The town's position and desirability as a visitor destination point, as well as for retirees and vacation home owners, also necessitates dealing with intense demands placed on the land, economy, transportation system and year-round residents.

Since it is believed that in the near future there will be a growing market with advanced telecommunications capabilities present, it would be wise public policy to encourage future employment opportunities 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 northern commercial corridor. Both areas will need to be carefully accommodated within the capabilities of the regional transportation system. There are potential conflicts between residents' desire for more and better jobs without significant new development. Alternatives would include strategies discussed in the Land Use Section and:

- *Carefully guide the location and form of new commercial and business clusters*

The Route 7/20 Corridor

For the Route 7 and 20 commercial area, it is necessary to maintain the tourist and regional retail shopping market areas. As discussed in the Land Use Section, new and shifting retail such as The Berkshire Outlet Village in Lee has posed a challenge to Lenox retailers. In 1996, Lenox changed its commercial zoning to restrict use of some commercial areas by retail establishments, which generally entail jobs that are lower in pay scale and high in traffic impacts, instead choosing to encourage future office uses. The C-3A zone allows conversion or addition of space to accommodate advanced service, research firms, or corporate and professional offices, particularly those for which it is unfeasible or undesirable to locate downtown. Access management and aesthetic standards should be established to provide the best type development and at the same time to assure its prolonged economic viability.

Lenox Village Area

The Village should mainly continue to be preserved and kept vital. For the downtown area, the existing specialty stores of broad appeal to visitors will 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. According to *Fortune Magazine*, Lenox is one of the most desirable locations for upper income baby boomers to relocate to and open businesses. 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 Village 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 surrounding Lenox residential areas.

More of these types of uses will likely modify the mix of businesses; for instance, it might lead to restaurants for these workers (hopefully to serve residents as well), and other year-round goods and services. The cost of space and parking limitations in Lenox Village 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.

Alternatives would include:

- *Allow and Encourage Various Forms of Non-Residential Uses in desired locations/under desirable conditions*

Lenox Dale Area

The existing base of industry here provides significant employment for many persons, including those who have not attained a high level of advanced education. The Crystal Street reconstruction project and other initiatives are critical to upgrade this area and keep it economically viable. Public officials are investigating state funding for this need. A good possibility would be a Public Works Economic Development (PWED) grant. Stakeholders seem receptive to improving the physical infrastructure and upgrading the landscaping and building facades. The basic strategy would simply be:

- *Revitalize industrial and commercial areas, particularly in Lenox Dale, as necessary*

Open spaces and natural resources make the town aesthetically appealing, contribute to the economy, 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. Utilizing and developing the environmental potential of this area through enhancement funding with an eco-tourism theme could help maintain and revitalize the area.

Colvin (1991) described the “scientific” eco-tourist as: wanting an in-depth “authentic” experience that is a physical and mental challenge. He/she wishes interaction with locals and is interested in cultural learning, prefers rustic accommodations, and prefers to pay for the experience rather than for comfort.

Alternatives would include strategies discussed in the Open Space & Recreation Plan, and in other sections of this Plan, and to:

- *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 Lenox Dale*

Beyond the more obvious funding and organizational links, there is a need to coordinate activities with the Town of Lee, private landowners, businesses, and with other initiatives in

Town. For instance, attractions and experiences related to Lenox Dale can be linked to existing strengths and resources related to arts and culture.

Resorts, Estates, & Cultural Attractions

At present, the resorts of Lenox are a major town industry. They are some of the largest employers, and provide the largest sources of municipal revenue. Thanks to the thriving tourism industry, town revenue income from tourism and room sales taxes allows residents to enjoy high quality services at a level few municipalities experience. It is difficult to estimate their indirect contribution to area restaurants and shops, but this must be considerable. An obvious benefit to the local public and private sectors, and to the region, mandates that stakeholders will:

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

Due to its heritage, Lenox's challenges are a bit more complicated, since estates, resorts and cultural assets are intricately tied into an economy which, without proper and well-conceived planning, could destroy the aesthetic resources held dear by visitors and residents.

Even with a stable year-round population, Lenox is still strongly a summer resort. The noticeable increase in July and August population in Lenox is due 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 also the array of shops and galleries.

Although it is difficult to get exact information on the subject, it appears that the growth of tourism in Lenox is occurring in the small size Bed & Breakfasts and in the larger resorts. It remains largely short stay oriented, which was true as far back as 1975, when estimates of motel, summer camp and rooming house occupants put their number at 3,000, significantly more than the number of non-residents rooming in Lenox for an extended period of time.

Employment figures indicate that the extent of the seasonal increase in summer employment in Lenox service industries is much less pronounced than in the past. Year round tourism has added to the stability of the economy in Lenox.

The long-range future of Tanglewood is not entirely clear, but this venue and other attractions will likely result in further growth, with attendant pressures on roads, water supply, public accommodation, and other town facilities.

The links between history, culture, the environment, education, and a strong economy may create a synergy of resources and opportunities that is self maintaining. For instance Lenox will soon apply for a scenic byway designation linked to the Great Estates. Tourism development commonly related to cultural resources has already occurred in Lenox and is likely to continue in the form of historical sites, museums, galleries, research institutions, specialty restaurants, retail, resorts, educational and retirement facilities.

To the extent that these initiatives require public support or permission, such support should be linked to meeting the needs of the community. The community will be enhanced by maintaining resorts through continued historic renovation/preservation, specified forms of redevelopment with incentives to preserve open space, provide affordable housing, etc. Alternatives would include strategies discussed throughout this plan, in the Historic & Cultural Resource section, in the Natural Resource and Open Space section, and in the Housing, Transportation and Land Use sections.

Tourists today ask for active, more so than passive, forms of recreation; they 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 to longer stays. In order to adjust to this situation, Lenox could/should foster a whole range of actions involving a sophisticated recreation program. It is important that this program should also benefit permanent residents.

Guiding Lenox's Economic Future

The section points out four major conclusions regarding the Lenox economy: (1) The importance of the regional economy; (2) A lessened role of manufacturing regionally and the potential emergence of advanced services; (3) The seasonal character of the Lenox economy, and the potential growth of the year round tourist economy; (4) The residential retirement and relocation component. 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.

If there is a desire to mold the future course of economic investment in Lenox, there is a need for organizations to guide and secure both public and private investment. Lenox can achieve its own objectives and contribute to a healthy regional economy through cooperation with surrounding municipalities in regional economic development efforts. Compatible local economic development efforts can be linked more strongly to other existing efforts in the region such as the Chamber of Commerce of the Berkshires, the Berkshire Visitors Bureaus, the Lee CDC, Lee Economic Action for the Downtown (LEAD), the Southern Berkshire CDC, and the Berkshire Council on Growth. Other alternatives include:

- *Support the efforts and enhance the structures of quasi-public local business development organizations*
- *Create incentives, assistance programs, and preferential loans for businesses that will serve local resident needs, tie public support to adherence to community goals and policies*

A stronger local business development organization could help ensure smoother public-private communication in permitting, coordinate informational workshops, 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.

HOUSING

General Characteristics and Conditions

There is a variety of residential housing types and living arrangements in Lenox that generally provide for quality living experiences. Due to its unique characteristics, Lenox has a great deal to cherish and preserve and also some housing challenges that will need to be addressed to achieve many of the goals of this Plan that are related to housing issues.

Lenox's overall year round population declined in the last several decades 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 smaller household size, a demand for seasonal and second homes and a burgeoning popularity as a retirement mecca.

Housing growth spurts and change in the form of growth have occurred in the town throughout its history. Many residents have witnessed the changes in residential patterns as development sprouted outward from the Village areas. In the 1960's and 1970's a large number of single family homes were built throughout the valley, particularly in the eastern and northern sections of town. In recent years, several retirement and condominium developments have greatly increased the total number of units.

Table HOUS1 Age of Housing Units - 1990 Census

Period Housing Constructed	Lenox	% of Total Units in Lenox
1939 or earlier	685	28.4%
1940-1959	383	15.9%
1960's	438	18.2%
1970's	542	22.5%
1980's	362	15.0%
Total	2,410	100.0%

In recent times, new residences have been built along roads, through the subdivision process, and as institutional residences. New housing has generally been in a relatively higher priced category and has served the seasonal and retirement market. New condominium style attached seasonal housing with surrounding open space has been constructed around Cranwell. A new subdivision has been developed on Galaway and Dumore Courts and another on Cedar Street in the north of town.

The majority of the housing stock is comprised of single family detached units. Most of this single family 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 the elaborate, mammoth estates of the late nineteenth century to the prefabricated houses of today. The typical Lenox home is

relatively modest compared to the Great Estates, ranging in size from 1,200 to 2,000 square feet; however, homes being built in town today are generally on the larger side.

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

	Lenox	% of Total Units in Lenox
Single Family Detached Units	1,411	58.5%
Single Unit Attached	170	7.1%
Duplex to Quadraplex Units	272	11.3%
Multiple Family (5-9 Units/struct.)	96	4.0%
Multiple Family (>10 Units/struct.)	339	14.1%
Mobile Home and Trailer, Other	122	5.1%
Condominiums	488	20.2%
Number of Bedrooms		
0-1 bedroom	318	13.2%
2 bedrooms	727	30.2%
3 bedrooms	925	38.4%
4 or more bedrooms	440	18.3%

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	21			5	26
1991	10				10
1992	13				13
1993	7				7
1994	8	2			10
1995	10				10
1996	2	6		108	116
1997	9	4			13
Total Permits 1990-1997	80	12	0	113	205

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

	Lenox	% of Units in Lenox	% Units Berkshire County
Total Housing Units	2,410		
Seasonal Housing Units	395	16.4%	9.8%
Year Round Housing Units	2,015	83.6%	90.2%
Occupied Housing Units (% YR)	1,875	93.1%	89.6%
Owner Occupied (% of Occ.)	1,379	73.5%	65.2%

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

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, Turnure Terrace and the former Curtis Hotel, both managed by the Lenox Housing Authority. The Turnure Terrace complex, located south of Town Hall on Old Stockbridge Road, consists of some nice large congregated multi-story buildings. It primarily serves limited income Seniors. The Curtis Complex, located at the main intersection of Lenox Village, features businesses and services on the ground floor and individual, group and facility rooms on the upper floors of the four story structure.

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 any 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. Lenox and its surrounding towns have several facilities that have been developed over the last few years, or are currently under development. New residential quarters have been built at Devonshire Estates and a 48 unit addition is planned at Kimball Farms.

Existing senior population and amenities creates increasing demand for senior housing in both the affordable and upper price ranges. In the summer of 1998 the Baran Partners, LLC created a proposal to redevelop the former Cameron School into a 35 unit affordable assisted living residence, Cameron House. Under the proposal, the interior will include the individual units, a dining area and recreation. The development of the interior space will conform to the exterior facade rhythms in order to preserve the character of the historic facades of the school.

Housing Affordability

In Lenox, like most parts of the United States, there is a housing affordability problem, particularly for those living on limited incomes. Affordability is tied to several factors including income, and 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. While housing in Lenox is inexpensive compared to the Boston area, it is higher than many nearby communities. In the first six months of 1998, the median sales price for a home in Lenox was \$160,000 versus \$100,000 for the County.

Generally, existing home sale prices in Lenox currently range from \$100,000 for a small or worn home to \$250,000 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 Lenox and the southern part of the County tend to be higher than those of the rest of the County. Rent may reflect supply (the small number and variety of rental units) and demand in Lenox and nearby communities versus Pittsfield and north Berkshire. According to the 1990 Census, Lenox's median contract rent (\$441/month in 1990) was higher than most towns (\$365 for County), including some that had higher average home values.

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

Location	Median Sales Price of Home, 1998 (Jan-June)	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
Lenox	\$160,000	\$158,600	25.4%	46.5%	31.0%
Lee	\$93,000	\$117,300	21.1%	29.7%	32.2%
Stockbridge	\$187,500	\$184,000	23.6%	33.7%	31.5%
Pittsfield			19.3%	39.1%	
MSA					
Berkshire Cty	\$100,000	\$114,900	20.0%	40.0%	

Goals

The results of the Lenox Community Survey, administered in January 1998 to all residences in town, emphasize a desire to keep the town's population fairly stable, with 91.9% of respondents saying Lenox's population should either increase modestly or stay roughly the same. Nevertheless, local officials, groups, and individuals recognize that there is a need to do more to meet the housing requirements of various segments of the town's population. At a May 1998 Community Visioning Workshop, residents also expressed a desire for better linkages between

different areas of the community in order to foster more intimate relations between townspeople, who sometimes feel a lack of a sense of belonging within the town. Sidewalks in particular have been repeatedly mentioned as a tool for facilitating greater interaction between residents, and small neighborhood pocket parks could handily provide a return on their investment in recreational and social benefits. Good neighborhoods and an adequate supply of safe, suitable and affordable housing are crucial to Lenox if it wishes to continue to maintain a diverse population that includes a variety of household types from retirees to families.

Table HOUS6

Rank	# Responses	Please check the types of housing, if any, most needed in Lenox
1	238	Already-existing homes which can be purchased for under \$125,000
2	218	Year-round apartments for families such as 2 bedrooms for \$600/month
3	198	New homes which can be built for under \$150,000
4	133	Suitable housing options for seniors
5	119	None
6	79	New homes which can be built for over \$150,000
7	59	Suitable housing options for the handicapped

The responses to the Community Survey question above indicate that considerable support for promoting affordable housing in Lenox. In the Visioning Workshop, residents of Lenox 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, raise children of their own and retire.

Housing Goals will be achieved as:

- *An appropriate increased level of affordable housing for singles, young families and moderate income retirees is available within town boundaries, preferably in or near the pedestrian services and amenities of the Villages.*

Future Issues of Housing Supply and Affordability

Lenox will remain a community with high housing values and high average housing costs with limited accessibility to all income levels. The discussion here is intended to explore small ways in which some of the needs of the community may be met, because in Lenox, as in most parts of the United States, there is a housing affordability problem, particularly for those living on limited incomes. Affordability is tied to several factors including income, and 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. In the first six months of 1998, the median sales price for a home in Lenox was \$160,000 versus \$100,000 for the County. Existing home sales prices in Lenox currently range from \$100,000 for a small or worn home to \$250,000 for a large home in good to excellent condition, with the sales price reflecting 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.).

Lenox's desirability as a mecca for second homeowners and retirees benefits the town fiscal situation tremendously. However, this situation also drives up the cost of housing for young families, singles and retirees of moderate means, who often must move out of town in order to purchase or even rent a home within their means. Since a fair number of the retirement facilities in town are luxury units, lower-income elderly residents also find it difficult to pay for housing costs in town—although there are a number of town-owned affordable housing units (such as Turnure) that help alleviate this problem somewhat. Therefore, affordable housing policies must be pursued, or market forces will drive out many families and retirees.

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 Lenox, earning up to 80% or more of the area income, cannot access or afford safe and suitable rental housing in town. These same families and individuals are also unable to purchase such housing in Lenox. Even Lenox families and employees at or 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 also involves availability.

Lenox residents show an admirable preference for minimizing impacts to sensitive environmental areas; however, the scarcity of suitable buildable land in town exacerbates the market forces already driving the price of housing up in Lenox. Community leaders and townspeople need to define where development may occur, as well as where it absolutely should not occur. Attendees at the Visioning workshop favored a concentration of affordable housing near the Lenox Village, where they envisioned elderly residents and young families within walking distance of the town's economic and civic center. This is already partially achieved through retirement housing in the upper stories of the former Curtis Hotel.

Options for singles and younger families might be achieved by allowing accessory apartments in some of the larger homes in downtown and/or by constructing small apartment buildings. Developers could be encouraged to include a small number of smaller-scale, affordable housing units and/or communal open spaces in their plans in order to provide opportunities for greater community diversity and belonging. These steps will not be easily accomplished, but they are necessary in order to countermand/supplement current market trends to sufficiently provide for the varied housing needs of Lenox residents. Lack of available housing is an impediment to attracting new business employers. Provision of local affordable housing however, could help local employers retain their workers.

Downtown housing is already partially achieved through retirement housing in the upper stories of the former Curtis Hotel. It may be feasible to build mixed type/market housing within pedestrian distances of both Lenox Village and Lenox Dale. New buildings consistent with existing architectural styles, with shops or offices on the first floor, and apartments above could be constructed. Potentially buildable, more reasonably priced land for building is more likely to be

found near Lenox Dale, where opportunities may be greater for market based moderate priced housing.

Table HOUS7

RESIDENTIAL GROUP	COMMON RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS
1. Families of moderate income requiring yr round housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Family Dwell - low/med. size/price • Duplex • Small Apt Bldg/Townhouse
2. Families near median income - yr round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Med Size Single Family/large Townhouse
3. Families with greater than median income - yr round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large homes
4. Singles (non-Seniors) of moderate income requiring yr round housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplex or Small Apt Building • Accessory Apts
5. Singles (non-Seniors) near or above median income requiring yr round housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Family Dwell - small/med. size • Upscale Condos
6. Maturing couples with means (Empty nesters)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upscale Condos- Townhouses • Large Homes
7. Upper income independent seniors - yr round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement Townhouses • Upscale Apts
8. Independent seniors with more limited income - yr round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Apts • Non Age Spec. Apts, Accessory Apts
9. Seniors/Persons w Special Needs who require some daily assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted Living - various forms and costs • Shared housing • Home care
10. Non-Sr Adults seeking small, easy to maintain, upscale seasonal housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condos with/near cultural/recreational amenities
11. Others seeking seasonal housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessory Apts, Room Rentals

Many communities are skeptical of encouraging affordable housing and few small communities actively seek it. In Lenox's case however, an analysis of the desires of the community and the issues involved indicate this option should be taken seriously. Because this course would require public assistance to counteract the market, it can be controlled to avoid negative consequences and ensure positive results. Under any circumstances, it is unlikely for affordable housing to ever occur on a large scale in Lenox.

Developing Housing Strategies

Varied steps are necessary in order to countermand/supplement current market trends to sufficiently provide for the varied housing needs of Lenox residents. The goal of *'An appropriate increased level of affordable housing for singles, young families and moderate income retirees, within town boundaries, preferably in or near the pedestrian services and amenities of the villages'* will be promoted by strategies in the Neighborhoods section and by the following strategies:

POLICY & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- *Establish a town policy to actively promote an increased level of affordable housing for all ages and needs*
- *Support regulatory methods and public and private programs to counter/compensate for market pressures*
- *Allow reuse to include multi-family residential use under special permit*
- *Implement the existing special permit condition requiring the provision of up to 25 percent (25%) of the total housing units for persons of low or moderate income pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 40B and related regulations*

PUBLIC & PRIVATE SUPPORT & INVESTMENT

- *Continue to support and enhance special needs housing programs*
- *Provide encouragement to developers to include a mix of housing types within developments in order to ensure that at least some new housing is affordable young working families.*
- *Encourage provision of local employer sponsored affordable housing*
- *Explore and develop more proactive roles for the Town and the Housing Authority to address housing gaps in cooperation with other organizations such as the Berkshire Housing Development Corp.*

NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

A neighborhood area is basically an area of town that shares geographic location and often some level of service. Lenox Village, Lenox Dale, East Street, West Street, Under Mountain Road, Stockbridge Road and Kemble Street are all distinct areas.

There are also various spatial patterns of residential settlement and development that can be seen throughout the region. The ones that are particularly evident in Lenox are:

1. **Downtown/Village/Mixed Use Areas** - They are generally historic high to medium density, pedestrian accessible neighborhood centers that include a variety of housing types with public and commercial uses (Lenox Dale and the Lenox Village Business Districts and their immediate neighborhoods).
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **Clustered Residential** - 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).
5. **Residential/Semi Residential Compounds** - large estates, for profit and non-profit resort centers and institutions. Generally easily accessible, in the valley, surrounded by large lawns, pasture, croplands or woods. May have rural surroundings of non-contiguous low density homes. As discussed in previous sections, Lenox's historical estates are very special.

The following table, summarizes patterns for six Lenox neighborhood areas defined by the U.S. Census (Block Groups and Village Place). The boundaries of these areas are shown on the subsequent page.

Table NBR1 Neighborhood Areas and Residential Patterns

Neighborhood Area	Dominant spatial patterns of residential settlement and development
Lenox Village	Downtown/Village/Mixed Uses Residential/Semi Residential Compounds
New Lenox	Suburban Residential
East of 7/20	Suburban Residential
West of 7/20	Forest/Residential
Laurel Lake	Residential/Semi Residential Compounds
Lenox Dale	Downtown/Village/Mixed Uses Suburban Residential Clustered Residential Residential/Semi Residential Compounds

In our table below, Census information on neighborhood areas is shown. There are marked demographic differences in different areas of town. This information has implications for other community needs.

Table NBR2 Neighborhood Areas and Pop. & Housing Profile - 1990 Census

Neighborhood Area	Pop.	Median Persons Age per HH	Median HH Income	# of Median Yr Housing Units Structure Built	Median Value of Home		
Lenox Village	1,687	46.8	2.16	\$23,542	792	1952	\$157,100
New Lenox	930	38.7	2.51	\$36,250	465	1966	\$141,500
Lenox Dale	996	36.1	2.87	\$36,855	436	1977	\$149,000
East of 7/20	869	47.9	2.46	\$52,883	417	1968	\$176,700
West of 7/20	390	31.5	2.64	\$27,740	142	1941	\$176,000
Laurel Lake	197	27.9	2.40	\$36,380	158	1966	\$188,600
Total	5,069	40.9	2.45	\$34,500	2,410	1963	\$158,600

There are many nice homes and attractive residential areas. Median home prices are high relative to the Pittsfield Metropolitan area in each of the six neighborhood areas listed above. Homes generally have greater value due to the recognition of Lenox as a desirable 'location' in which to live.

Goals

- *Promote forms of residential development that include a variety of housing types, connected by an expanded network of sidewalks, trails, and open spaces that will encourage greater interaction between residents as members of the community.*
- *The housing stock is maintained to safe and suitable standards*

Sprawl and Nurturing Alternative Forms and Patterns

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.

To avoid or mitigate the negative impacts of sprawl, basic design guidelines can be applied for new residential developments. There may also be opportunities to apply these principles to enhance existing developed areas.

Ten Basic Design Principles to Create Better Communities - (From Nelessen's 'Visions for a New American Dream')

1. **Design for the Human Scale** and perceptions, creating a sense of neighborhood and community
2. **Ecological Responsibility** - design in harmony with nature, not against it
3. **Pedestrianism** - define the primary community by walking dimensions
4. **Open Spaces** - design for internal and peripheral open spaces
5. **Community Focus** - design for a neighborhood or community center
6. **Streetscapes** - design for streets internal to the community and highways on the periphery, incorporate complementary movement opportunities
7. **Variation** - design for buildings of smaller scale in a pattern of various footprints
8. **Mixed Use** - design for mixed and multiple land uses, housing types, incomes, and a horizontal and vertical mix
9. **Design Vocabulary** - specify an architectural style or styles for the community including facade treatment, walls and fences, streetscapes, materials, and colors
10. **Maintenance** - design community materials, and organizations that facilitate short term and long term maintenance and security

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.

The traditional neighborhood has the following physical attributes:

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. For more information see the Transportation/Circulation Section of this Plan.
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, which despite diversity are compatible in size and massing.
3. Civic buildings (meeting halls, theatres, churches, clubs, etc.) are often placed on squares and at the termination of street vistas and serve as landmarks.

While many in the community realize the benefits of housing with an emphasis on communities and pedestrian enhancing density, and this pattern is emerging for some market sectors, the crucial mixed use aspect is not emerging. Also, clustering of homes, while allowed under zoning, does not carry an incentive. If these forms are truly preferable, development proposals that incorporate it should be considered preferentially or be otherwise rewarded.

The following table shows some very general possible future development futures and their transportation and infrastructure impacts. This table is intended to illustrate the interconnection between the different aspects of the community, and to make clear that different futures call for different levels and types of investment.

Table NBR3 Development Patterns and & Related Impacts

	Controlled Growth with focus on Communities	Growth With Little Focus On Planning	Status Quo
How Lenox Might Develop in Twenty Years	Development that preserves differences between community centers, suburban & rural areas	Suburban, generic development at a higher level spread over a larger area	Mixed suburban and more traditional developments
Transportation Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for additional lanes is minimized • Some traffic congestion is considered acceptable • Greater use & safety of walking, bicycling, transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for significant additional lanes • Reduced potential for modes other than driving due to distances and lack of sidewalks, bicycling facilities, or transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some areas need additional lanes • Increased mixed uses on through roads cause safety & traffic problems • Access to recreation remains a problem
Infrastructure Cost	Medium-Low	High	Medium

For neighborhood areas, possible patterns for the future would include:

- More mixed uses and reuse of compounds in the Lenox Village area
- More mixed uses in Lenox Dale proper, and potentially clustered residential in the surroundings and other areas, although suburban residential may also emerge
- Potentially clustered residential rather than likely suburban residential East of 7/20
- Continued reuse of compounds near Laurel Lake

The list above does not imply that residential development should occur throughout these areas. In many places this would not be consistent with the essence of this Plan. More information on land use patterns, current and for the future, can be found in the section entitled Sustaining Wise Management of Land.

Developing Strategies

While most neighborhoods are very healthy, the goal of *Maintaining the housing stock to safe and suitable standards* would be assisted by Lenox's:

- *Participation in programs that allow owners of aging housing to access state and federal funds for housing repairs and rehabilitation. This could play a significant role in revitalizing Lenox Dale.*

Lenox should take advantage of existing infrastructure, and promote fuller use of the villages as true mixed-use centers. Retrofitting existing neighborhoods, and allowing flexible re-use mixed with targeted new development will help to promote the goal of ***'better forms of residential development that include a variety of housing types, connected by an expanded network of sidewalks, trails, and open spaces that will encourage greater interaction between residents as members of the community'***.

- *Encourage/require design of new development/redevelopment to have a pedestrian orientation to minimize dependence on individual motorized transportation.*
- *Guide development toward more efficient forms in appropriate places near existing settlement centers/services*
- *Encourage reuse/rehab of existing buildings over construction of additional ones.*
- *Adjust zoning, to allow compact housing with community parking, neo-traditional housing, accessory residences in businesses, and other regulatory mechanisms. Create the zoning framework that will encourage proposals for planned unit developments, clustered and neo traditional housing development*
- *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 and bicycling.*
- *Enhance the Village Center in downtown Lenox as a popular meeting and relaxation place for residents during the day and into the evening, with inviting benches and gathering areas, and a coffee shop or similar gathering place that stays open late.*
- *Improve connections between parks (such as between Kennedy Park, Veterans Memorial Park, and Woods Pond), and between parks and places where people come from (such as Downtown, Memorial High School, and Lenox Dale)*
- *Increase and improve other gathering places that have pedestrian connections, allowing residents of all ages to walk, meet and play safely in populated areas.*
- *Create a zoning framework that will encourage proposals for compact housing, neo traditional housing, community parking, accessory residences in businesses, etc.*
- *Create more alternatives to traditional development in zoning such as allowing back lot development and flexible frontage in exchange for open space easements or dedications*

To address gaps and trends in residential land uses that are significantly changing the character of the community, strategies involving the residential land use composition can be specifically applied so that they contribute overall benefits to the community.

- *Possibly consider apartment complex near downtown for mixed ages, incomes.*
- *Allow and encourage alternatives such as apartments in Lenox Village for mixed ages, incomes.*
- *Modify Estates Preservation Area criteria to allow reuse of Historical properties in R-1 that will include provisions to encourage affordable housing to meet the needs of the community. Allow inclusion of properties of less than 25 acres*

TRANSPORTATION

The purpose of a transportation system is to get people and goods to their destinations efficiently. Transportation in Lenox 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 by taking the bus, walking, car pooling, etc.

Lenox is a small but important part of the region's road network. Route 7/20 provides the main access between Pittsfield and points south of Lenox. It provides access to and from the Massachusetts Turnpike Exit 2, located in Lee 5 miles to the south. It carries the bulk of visitors who travel to Lenox and central and northern Berkshire destinations from the larger metropolitan areas to the south and east.

Inventory and Capacity

In several instances this section includes information about Lee as well as Lenox. The two towns are coordinating their planning efforts and are similar in geography, miles of roads and registered vehicles. The comparisons may provide further insight into what is unique about Lenox.

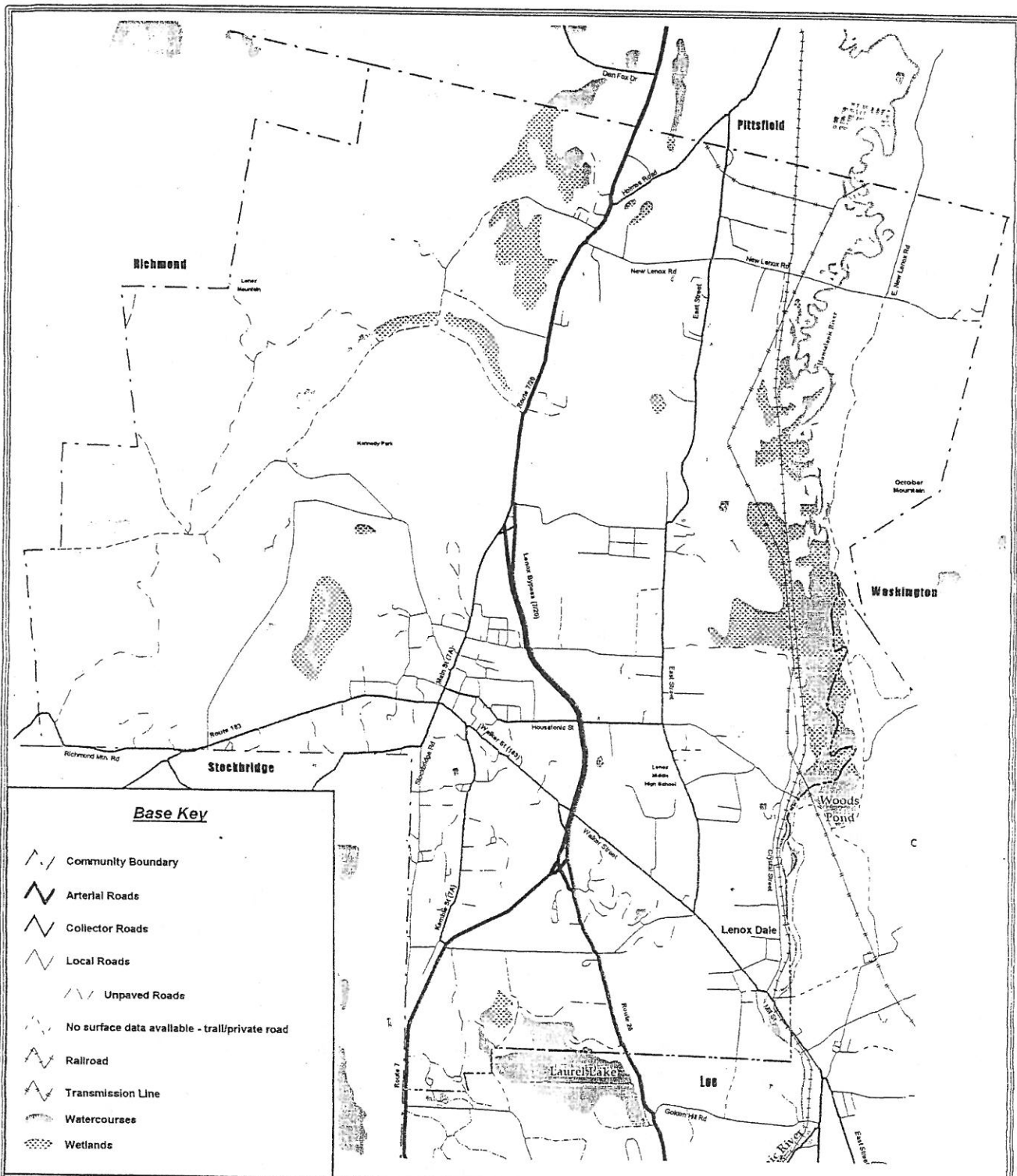
Transportation in motor vehicles includes cars, trucks, vans, motorcycles, etc. There were 4,048 vehicle registrations in Lenox in 1992, almost one per person, which is a relatively high ratio.

There were 65 miles of roads in Lenox in 1997. Roads are divided into functional classes. The highest classification, urban major arterial, carried 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 a major arterial road reduces the number of cars that can travel on it each day and increases accidents. In Lenox, Route 7/20 is such an arterial road where development on the northern section reduces the capacity and safety of the road as a highway. Corridor preservation and access management are tools for minimizing these problems. Lenox has started using these tools and continuing to implement them is a recommended strategy.

The number of vehicles using the existing road network is measured with traffic counters. A common measurement is Average Daily Traffic (ADT). The ADT is the average weekday count in Spring, Summer or Fall. A map showing road classification and ADT's is shown on the following page. Two related traffic terms are:

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

Anyone familiar with the southern Berkshire area knows that there are significant changes in the amount of traffic between summer and winter. The following figure illustrates data from the closest continuous traffic count station, which is located on Route 20 in East Lee.



LENOX MASTER PLAN: *Transportation Infrastructure*

This map created by:



Berkshire
Regional
Planning
Commission

This map is intended for general planning and educational purposes only. It shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes.

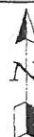
MASSHIGHWAY ROAD INVENTORY datalayer was created and provided by MassHighway as road inventory data Yearend 1998 (January 5, 1999).

SURFACE WATER (USGS) datalayer was created and provided by MassGIS. It was derived from USGS 1:25,000 and 1:100,000 Hydrography Digital Line Graph (DLG) quadrangle files (July 1987).

COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES datalayer was created and provided by MassGIS. It was derived from USGS 1:25,000 7.5' quadrangles (March 1991).

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

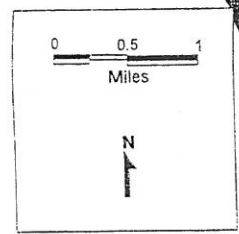
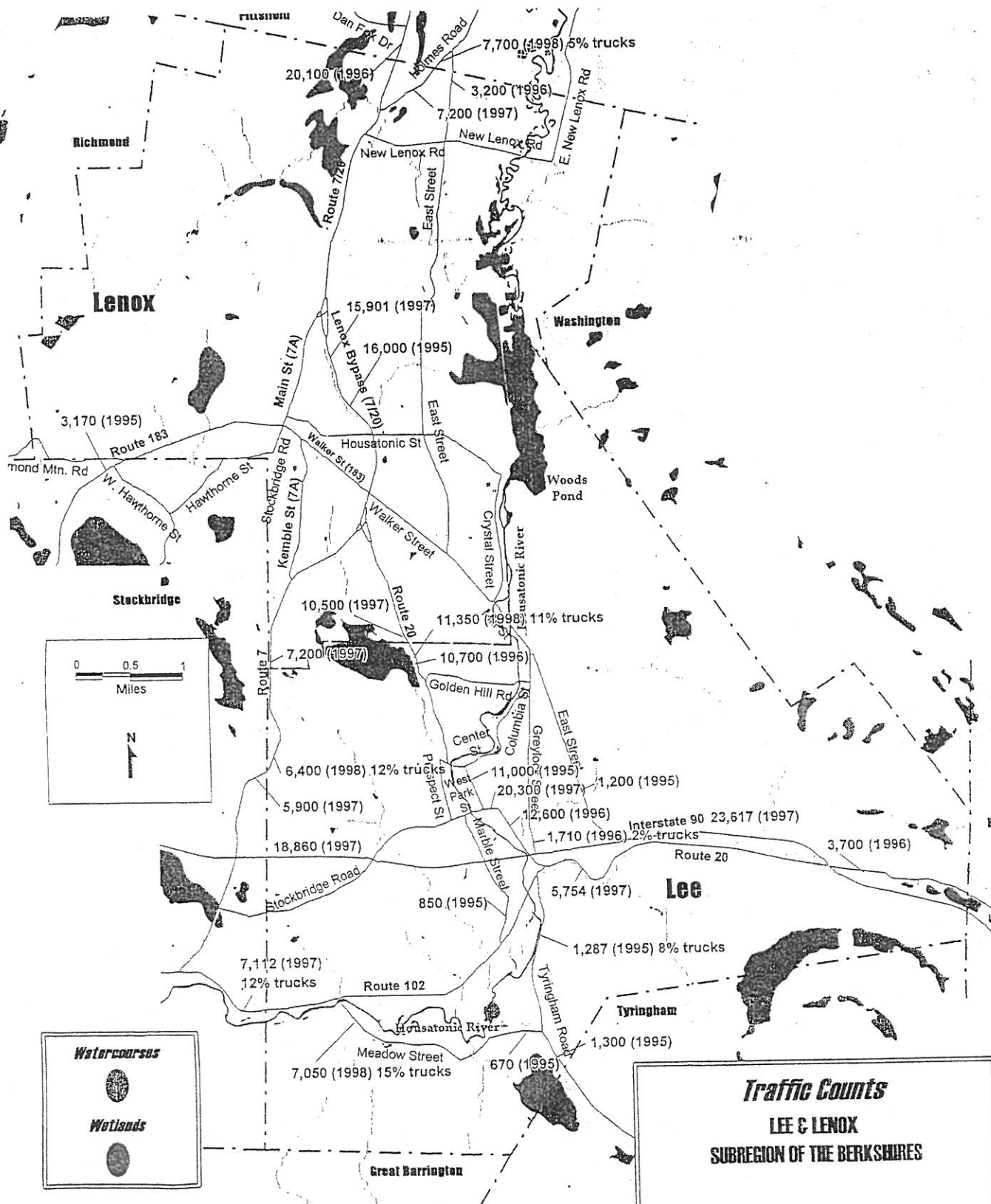
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MAP DATE: January 27, 1999

FILENAME:

LI_LEN_Basemap_B



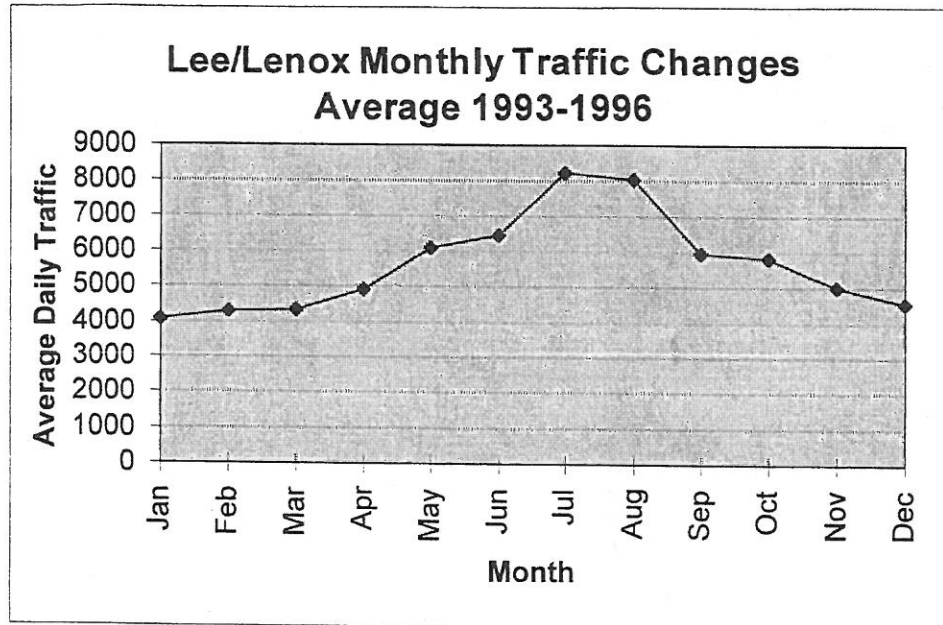
DATA SOURCES

This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC). It is intended for general regional planning purposes, and shall not be used for survey, engineering, legal, or regulatory purposes.

ROADWAY data was created and provided by MassHighway as Road Inventory Data Year-end 1997 (January 5, 1998). This map shows roadways that have been subclassified by BRPC staff.

COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES data was created and provided by MassGIS. It was derived from USGS 1:25,000 7.5 quadrangle (March, 1991).

SURFACE WATER (USGS) data was created and provided by MassGIS. It was derived from USGS 1:25,000 and 1:100,000 Hydrography Digital Line Graph (DLG) quadrangle (July 1997).

Chart TRAN1 Average Daily Traffic**Transit**

The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) provides fixed route bus service throughout Berkshire County. Generally it connects towns and cities, rather than being oriented to moving people around within towns although it does that too. The BRTA also provides para-transit service for elderly or handicapped people who would not be able to ride the bus otherwise. This is mostly supplied in the form of reduced price tickets for chaircar services. This supplements transportation services provided by various other organizations, such as the Lenox Council on Aging.

The two BRTA routes that currently serve Lenox are:

- Route 2 - Pittsfield-Lee (Pittsfield, Lenox, Lee with connections in Lee to Stockbridge and Great Barrington)
- Route 21 - Great Barrington (Great Barrington, Housatonic, Stockbridge, Lee, and "Express Service" or connections to Lenox and Pittsfield)

The Route 2 bus leaves Pittsfield to pass through Lenox Dale, and Lenox Village roughly a dozen times on weekdays and passes through again on the way back from Lee. There is slightly less service on Saturdays. The Route 21 bus with connection through to Lenox runs about five times to and from on both weekdays and Saturday.

BRTA provided information on ridership on Routes 2 and 21 as used specifically in Lenox. For the Fiscal Year 1998 (July 1, 1997 - June 30, 1998) ridership is shown in the next figure.

Table TRAN2 BRTA Ridership - FY 1998

Service	Ridership in Lenox only	Total Ridership
Route 2	12,109	53,517
Route 21	460	24,396
Paratransit (Chaircar, Taxi tickets, and ADA services)	3,107	65,223

Walking and Bicycling Routes

The Priority Walking & Bicycling Connections map for the town indicates the location of existing sidewalks. This is the start of an inventory recommended as a short term strategy. This map is also for planning purposes to help the community consider where there should be connections to complete a network for walking or bicycling. Initial thoughts on where it might be useful to add connections are shown as thick, unbroken lines. Note that well-maintained shoulders are an appropriate alternative to sidewalks in low density areas.

Other issues that can be further considered for the future are safety at intersections and desired amenities. Sidewalk amenities (already in place in some parts of Lenox) can include the following:

- Trees
- Plantings in the ground or containers
- Decorative paving, such as bricks
- Street lights in modern or historic styles
- Awnings, murals, interesting window displays
- Flags or other decorations
- Benches
- Public litter cans
- Signs with walking routes or cultural information
- Crosswalks painted, signed, or paved to remind drivers to watch for walkers and bicyclists
- Painted line separating space for bicyclists along road shoulders
- Maintenance of good pavement condition
- Snow removal

Commuting

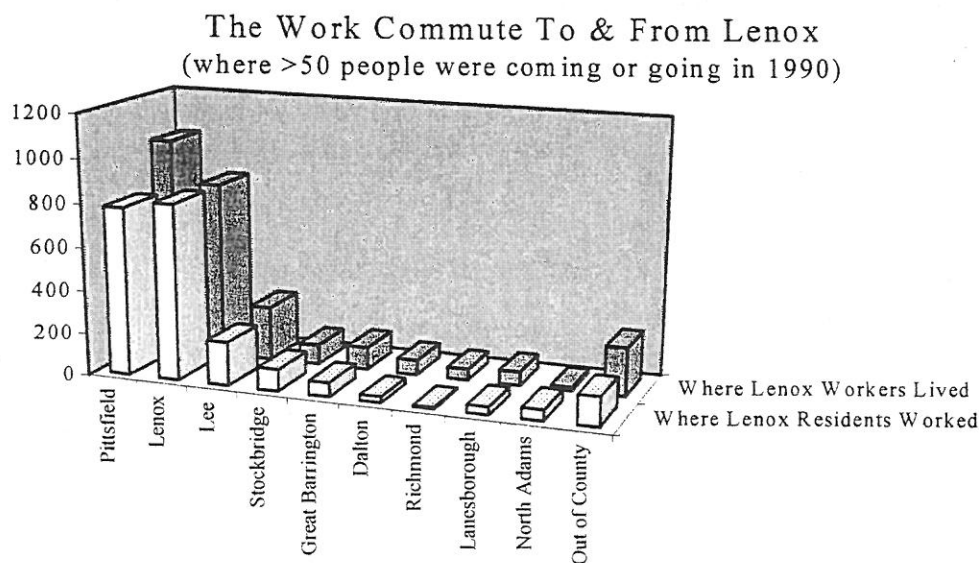
Going to work and returning is an important type of trip for many individuals and for the economy as a whole. It is one of the most regular types of trips in terms of people doing it the same way every day, and as a results it is also the most studied type of trip. For example, data is gathered about trips to work in the US Census. The 1990 Census provides information about both of the following questions:

- Where do people who work in Lenox live?
- In what towns or cities do residents of Lenox work?

Data on where people who worked in Lenox lived as of 1990 shows that 1,005 workers were from Pittsfield and 816 workers from Lenox. A much smaller number of commuters came from Lee (253) and then there were small numbers of commuters from many other places. Only places with more than fifty workers coming or going are shown below because they are less likely to have changed much since the census than smaller places.

In 1990, residents of Lenox were almost equally likely to work in town (816 worked in Lenox) or in Pittsfield (781 commuted to there). The number of people commuting to Pittsfield may have declined over time, as the employment base in that city has gotten smaller. From an overall standpoint however, this information reinforces the importance of the regional transportation network to the future sustainability of Lenox.

Chart TRAN3 Journey to Work



Safety

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. Between 1993 and 1997, 31 people were seriously injured in motor vehicle accidents in Lenox. The highest accident rate was for persons 20 to 24 years of age which is not uncommon in Massachusetts. In the past, the 7/20 route has been an identified problem area. Speeding is a common cause of accidents. Data about accidents is currently available by request from the Berkshire County Regional Community Traffic Safety Program.

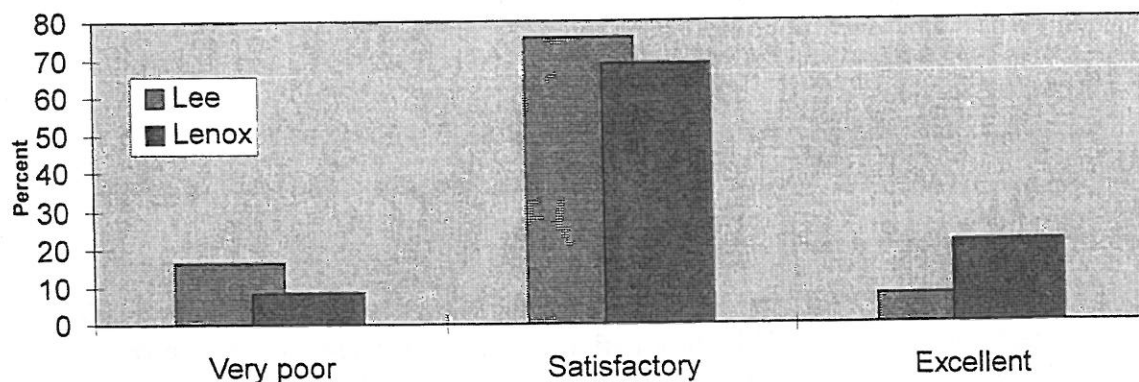
Transportation Goals

The transportation system should meet needs now and be sustainable in the future in terms of supporting communities, preserving the environment, and supporting the economy. This goes

beyond a focus on any one mode to fitting all the transportation pieces together and into the broader planning and development process.

Specific goals draw on the results of the Lenox & Lee community survey. For example, while the majority of respondents felt that town roads were "satisfactory", many rated roads as an important priority, pointing to the need for continuing attention and communication about work being done.

Satisfaction with Town Roads



Using the surveys, the comments from the visioning session held for this plan, published materials, and work with the Lenox Task Force, the following goals were formed:

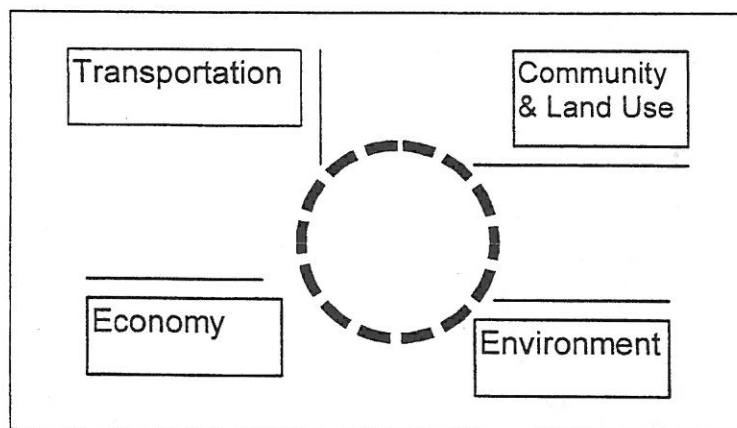
- *Promote walking, bicycling, and transit*
- *Maintain adequate parking downtown*
- *Maintain a safe flow of traffic throughout town*
- *Promote the retention of scenic and community qualities related to road corridors*

Connections, Scenarios, Issues and Improvements

Achieving the above mentioned goals depends on many factors. Essential among these factors are:

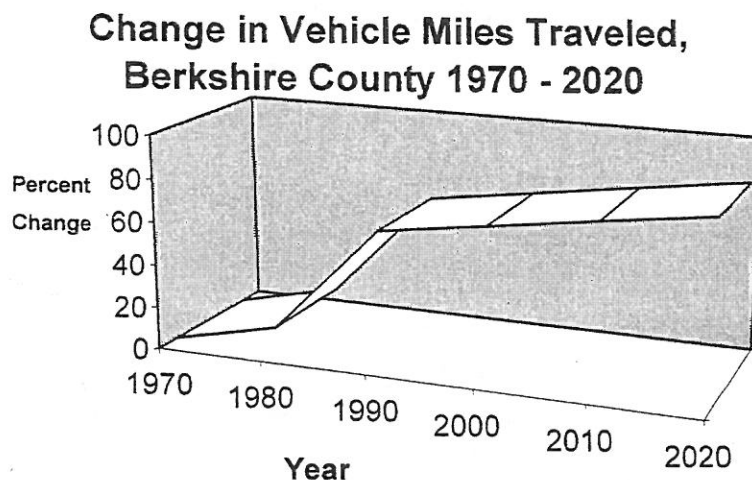
- level and type of development
- how environmental impacts are managed and what impacts are considered acceptable
- state of the economy over the next few years and the next decades

As with all aspects of this plan, it is important to pay attention to key interconnections between transportation, land use, the environment, and the local economy. From the transportation angle, for example, adding a lane makes the land on either side accessible to many more drivers. Increasing access tends to encourage different types of development, impact air and water quality, and alter land values. These changes can be positive or negative, and may change as the years pass.

Figure TRAN4 The Interconnection of Transportation

When planning for the future, it is useful to understand what transportation capacity is available and what level of traffic is projected. This information is pertinent when considering proposed changes in land use generally and specifically. For example, if a development is proposed, it is standard practice to consider how that will change transportation.

Even without any changes in roads or development, the number of miles traveled is expected to continue to rise. The following figure shows historical and forecasted growth in vehicle miles traveled. Future years (2000 and on) are forecasts from the BRPC traffic model as reported in the 1997 *Transportation Plan*.

Exhibit TRAN5

The growth in vehicle miles traveled has a wide variety of implications. For example, it could lead to calls for continued road expansions, it could stimulate changes in land use or how we

travel, or it could result in increasingly longer delays due to traffic congestion. The most likely forecasts with no significant changes are that vehicle miles traveled will increase 17% by 2020 (BRPC *Transportation Plan*). This could have a variety of effects on Lenox, and the surrounding area.

Walking & Bicycling Improvements

While there are many places in Lenox where walking and bicycling are already safe, enjoyable, and convenient, there is also room for improvement. In particular, linking existing resources into a network will make walking and bicycling more reasonable for short trips and reduce vehicle traffic. Following are examples that Lenox may wish to adopt with or without modifications.

Priority Locations for Sidewalks*

based on MassHighway Pedestrian Transportation Plan (1998)

Agencies responsible for roadways should, where reasonable, construct sidewalks along sections where land uses would generate seasonal or year-round pedestrian traffic. Examples are:

- a) Connecting commercial uses and concentrations of employment (50 or more employees) to bus stops no more than .5 miles away.
- b) Connecting commercial establishments located within 200 feet of each other on the same side of the road.
- c) Connecting commercial establishments to residential concentrations (20 or more units) or employment concentrations located within .5 miles or 10 minute walk.
- d) Connecting residential concentrations within .5 miles or a 10 minute walk of school bus stops
- e) Filling walkway gaps less than .5 miles or a 10 minute walk
- f) Connecting schools to residential concentrations within 2 miles, where provision of the sidewalk will make the road an appropriate walking or bicycling route.
- g) Other areas where there is current evidence of frequent pedestrian use (such as a beaten path) or pedestrians observed walking or bicycling.

*The assumption is that sidewalks will increase safety for bicyclists, either for riding on (outside of business districts) or to alert drivers to watch for activity. Striping a bicycle lane or putting up signs should also be pursued where reasonable or necessary for safety.

Access to Housatonic River in Lenox

Access to the Housatonic River is an issue that relates to many sections of this master plan and the Lenox Open Space Plan. From a transportation viewpoint, a trail along the River could make walking and bicycling more 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. Currently the main access to the River is in the Woods Pond area.

Transportation Toolbox

Transportation as a technical field has broadened far beyond building roads. A major shift has been to focus on balancing mobility and accessibility. Mobility is being able to travel quickly, for example on a highway. Accessibility is about everyone being able to get to the specific places or services they desire.

Inexpensive Ways to Improve Accessibility

1. Link adjacent parking lots
2. Link cul-de-sacs, at least with a pedestrian cut through (sometimes called a "live end" as opposed to a dead end)
3. Orient buildings to the front of lots (with parking in back or to the side) so they fit in for walkers, bicyclists, bus riders, and also look attractive.
4. Permit on-street parking
5. Imagine walking proposed projects with a baby carriage.
6. Coordinate development projects with transit, highway, bicycling, and other groups that might be interested
7. Have trees, plantings, and places to sit down in central areas
8. Include clear directional signs and safety warnings where there may be questions
9. Consider centrally located bulletin boards or kiosks with information on the variety of ways to get around
10. Use paint, paving, curbs, barrels, or signs in areas where people cross traffic, including parking lots

Following are definitions for some of the newer concepts in trying to provide both mobility and accessibility:

Transportation System Management (TSM) - Programs to increase the efficiency of the existing transportation system. This can include traffic light timing, intersection improvements, making it safer to walk or bicycle for short trips

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) - Programs to reduce the demand for transportation, particularly the need for each person to travel many miles in their own car. This can include ride-sharing programs, transit, the pricing or convenience of parking, and changes to land use regulations.

Traffic Calming - Measures to reduce the negative effects of vehicles, and improve conditions for walking or bicycling. 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 people stepping down
- Changes in Pavement Texture are similar to rumble strips near toll plazas, to remind drivers to watch for pedestrians
- Bulb-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 in traffic

Regional Transportation Issues and the North-Central Berkshire Access Study

In September of 1997, construction on the 7/20 Improvement Project began in north Lenox. The planning for this project started at least ten years before that. The intent is to improve traffic flow and safety for the short term, as noted in many documents such as "Environmental Study Report, Route 7/20 Improvement Project" (1992). During the public participation stage for this project, the Town of Lenox voted against the street improvements proposed by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD). This was due to concern for potential local impacts. It may be several years before an evaluation can be made concerning effects from this project, be they positive or negative.

The need for a long term transportation planning effort had been acknowledged even before being noted in the study for the Route 7/20 project. The concerns generally focus on transportation access within and through the Berkshires north of the Massachusetts Turnpike. There is agreement that there is less transportation capacity in this region than there is in most others, although whether this calls for action and what would be desired are contentious issues. Such a planning effort is clearly regional in nature.

A regional long term planning study is finally underway. The initial discussions for the North-Central Berkshire Access Study started in 1998. The goal is to produce recommendations with strong public participation by the end of 1999. This is the first comprehensive, in-depth study of the problems and possible solutions. It is being conducted by MHD in association with the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO is the group that decides how federal transportation funds will be spent in this region. It consists of MHD, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Berkshire Regional Transit Authority, and the Executive Office of Transportation & Construction.

The steps of the North-Central Berkshire Access Study are to define the problems, gather information and ideas, and then evaluate a variety of ways to improve transportation access. It will include alternatives with different modes of transportation, and analysis comparing alternatives to doing nothing. It incorporates meaningful public participation at all important points in the process of making a recommendation.

In previous discussions, as noted in the Transportation Plan (1997), the point of view of the Lenox Planning Board has been that upgrading the existing highway is preferable to any new highways in town. It is important for the town to participate in the North-Central Berkshire Access Study for transportation and non-transportation related reasons.

Inter-town Cooperation

Transportation is an issue that naturally crosses town boundaries since most major transportation facilities are used by more than one town's residents. Cooperating with surrounding towns 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. This is further explored in the sub-regional plan being prepared in conjunction with the Lenox and Lee planning efforts.

Developing Strategies to Implement Transportation Goals

PROMOTE WALKING, BICYCLING, AND TRANSIT

Aesthetics & safety of existing facilities

- *Complete an inventory of existing sidewalks and their conditions, including safety features such as lighting and safe crossings*
- *Include funding in the Capital Plan for maintaining shoulders and sidewalks on a regular basis starting with the priority walking and bicycling network*

New connections

- *Build consensus on where additional sidewalks or safe shoulders are needed to form a more complete basic network, follow through to secure funding*
- *Adopt standards for when to install sidewalks and general design standards for width, street trees, lighting*
- *Investigate rail-trails - one possibility is the section of the old trolley right of way from Woods Pond to New Lenox Road if the land owners are willing to allow access*

MAINTAIN ADEQUATE PARKING DOWNTOWN

Continue to track parking needs of shoppers (short term) and employees (long term)

- *Follow up whether new signage improves use of municipal lot, especially for long-term parking and/or investigate other ways to increase its use*

Plan for future parking needs

- *Consider parking lot design for safety and aesthetics as part of site plan review*
- *Plan for where or how additional parking needs could be met in the future*

MAINTAIN A SAFE FLOW OF TRAFFIC THROUGHOUT TOWN

Seasonal, weekend traffic

- *If necessary, continue efforts to alleviate Tanglewood traffic by further use of one or more of the following: marking alternative routes out, making it more convenient to walk or bicycle to concerts, trolley or bus service to satellite parking and Downtown*

Regional Needs

- *Participate in North-Central Berkshire Access Study on a regular basis*

Long-term maintenance of roads

- *Seek and secure funding in tandem with the Capital Plan for long-term repair of road base, bridges, and culverts*

Further reduce accidents and manage incidents efficiently

- *Analyze accident reports to determine major accident causes and possible corrections*
- *Maintain and strengthen enforcement of speed limits, investigate further use of traffic calming ideas*

Minimize environmental impacts of road work and maintenance where possible

- *Review and revise road design standards in the Lenox Subdivision Regulations to ensure they are the minimum necessary to meet transportation needs.*

PROMOTE THE RETENTION OF SCENIC AND COMMUNITY QUALITIES RELATED TO ROAD CORRIDORSUse of existing transit & paratransit

- *Review community consensus on routes, frequency, and funding for BRTA and communicate through Lenox representative to BRTA Board of Advisors and/or through the BRTA Administrator*
- *Consider a local transit service such as a trolley-style bus for both resident and tourist use. This might be limited to summer months, might be a cooperative project with nearby towns, and might be oriented to linking cultural attractions.*
- *Review adequacy and coordination of existing services for people with limited access to transportation, such as children, elderly, low-income*
- *Continue efforts to extend access for and service by Berkshire Scenic Railway*

More closely integrate transportation and land use

- *Continue corridor management implementation (see Commercial Corridor Retail Build-Out Analysis, Berkshire County (BRPC, 1995), with focus on northern section of Route 7/20*
- *Develop Access management guidelines implementing Regional Congestion Management Program*
- *Review roads designated by the town as scenic and revise as needed; agree on recommendations for care of them, and communicate this information to those interested in exploring them and to inform landowners*

MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Introduction and Goals

Quality municipal utilities are important to Lenox. 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 advantageously located to cost effectively service the majority of the population of Lenox now and in the future in a sustainable manner. The town also has infrastructure that handles stormwater flows.

The following goals express general desired outcomes:

- *Maintain a viable system for cost effective delivery of high quality drinking water*
- *Maintain viable systems for the safe and effective collection and treatment of waste water*
- *Provide for the orderly extension of utility services where appropriate and necessary*
- *Maintain and enhance environmentally sensitive storm water and flood protection systems*

Water

The water system in Lenox is owned and operated by the Town. Portions of the system date back to the late 19th century with newer sections added later. Public water is supplied from two reservoirs (Upper and Lower Root) located on Lenox Mountain. The water in Lenox is of excellent quality and only minimal water treatment is necessary. Water is treated near the reservoirs, pumped to two storage tanks (located at Kennedy Park and near Washington Mountain), and distributed throughout most of town.

The town of Lenox is connected to the water systems in Pittsfield and Lee. The source and supply systems can, if necessary, be used alternately. A small number of users in the Lenox Dale area are serviced by the Lee Water Department. This supply emanates from Lee's reservoirs located on or below October Mountain. The northern part of Lenox, along Route 7 and 20 and east to New Lenox, is partly served by the Pittsfield municipal water system, whose supply emanates from the Sandwash and Farnham Reservoirs in the Town of Washington. A small number of users in north Lenox are permanently serviced by the Pittsfield Water Dept. The installation of the New Lenox Road water booster pump station allows Lenox to utilize Pittsfield water throughout its distribution system.

There is a clear seasonal variation in water usage. The summers characteristically result in monthly demand that is from 50 to 100 percent greater than other months of the year. When this demand occurs in dry summer periods, water supplies in the Reservoirs are drawn down. This normally leads to an internal water shortage. Water is purchased from Pittsfield to meet this seasonal demand. This water is of a different chemical composition.

The water storage tanks are in good general condition and are less than ten years old. The tanks have a storage capacity of 1.4 million gallons. Lenox has an average daily demand of

approximately 300,000 gallons and a peak demand of about 700,000 gallons during hot and dry summer days. In peak periods the primary pumps need to run constantly. This mode of operation allows the Town to maintain sufficient stored water.

The distribution system is composed mainly of 4", 6", 8" pipes located under the streets. The major feeder lines are of a larger diameter, often 16". The system includes original 4" cast iron water mains that date back to the 1870's. Much of the piping, installed during the 1950's to 1970's, is transite concrete. More recent piping is made of ductile iron.

The Lenox 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 supply, thereby improving fire protection. Pipe repairs also eliminate leakage of water sometimes caused by breakage in the lines. In 1997, the Town installed a new replacement water main on Crystal Street. This was the biggest replacement project undertaken in some time. Improvements have also recently been made to mains under Golden Hill Road, Old Town Way, Yokun Avenue, Pittsfield-Lenox Road and New Lenox Road.

Approximately 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. There is a fee of \$220 per bedroom for residences to tie into the water system. Commercial users are charged either per square foot or per seat. These charges go into the Enterprise funds which pay for the actual operating, salary and capital costs.

All water usage is metered. Metering guarantees that the rates charged for water are applied equitably. Water rates are \$3.85 for each 1,000 gallons. The average residential water bill is about \$270 per year. Metering contributes to water conservation by its accounting for actual usage. Meters are currently read twice a year. A long term goal of the water department is to increase the frequency of meter reading to provide a uniform cash flow and to spread out the costs to users.

Wastewater

The sanitary sewer system in Lenox 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, three pump stations, and a treatment plant located near the Housatonic River.

The collection system dates to the late 1800's, with many newer lines installed following World War II as development extended outward from the core of town. Although some sections of clay tile have been replaced with PVC piping due to problems with root infestation resulting in

leakage and blockage, many of the original lines are still in place. They are not generally in good condition.

The sewer system has grown gradually into a more modern and cohesive collection network. Historically the sewer system was divided into three separate and distinct sewage service areas - New Lenox, Lenox Center and Lenox Dale. Since the early 1980's, sewage from New Lenox has been pumped to the Pittsfield treatment plant. The town's sewage treatment plant utilizes extended aeration, and discharges into the Housatonic River. Sludge resulting from processing is now disposed of off-site.

In 1998, Lenox completed a three million dollar upgrade to the main wastewater treatment plant and conversion of the old Henry Avenue treatment plant to a new pump station. The upgrade consolidated nearly all wastewater treatment to the expanded main plant facilities north of Lenox Dale via a new connecting force main, while eliminating treatment at the old plant site. The new expanded plant, financed by the state's 0% interest revolving loan program and town funds, was completed in the fall of 1998. The upgraded plant has a capacity of 1.8 million gallons, double its previous capacity.

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. By 1990, 74% of residential units were connected to sewer.

The gravity flow collection system runs in a general south easterly direction, under the bypass to the northern Lenox Dale area. The system has an average daily flow of 600,000 gallons. 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 a five fold increase in flows. This load severely impacts the treatment plant's ability to process waste. The 1997-98 plant upgrade was intended to provide for these events and allow time to correct the I & I problems.

Usage and bills are tied directly to water usage through meters. Sewer rates are: \$3.00 for each 1,000 gallons. The average residential water bill is about \$210 per year. All users are metered. There is a fee of \$220 per bedroom for residences to tie into the sewer system.

A map indicating the general location of wastewater system facilities, lines and a general service area is shown on the following page.

Storm Drainage System

The origin of flows is normally rainfall which will often return to the ground water. Natural storm drainage flows are changed by the built environment. Difficulties with stormwater occur due to heavy volumes, the steep terrain that causes a high rate of runoff, and from existing impervious surfaces and poorly drained soils. Stormwater may often be best handled through adequate on-site drainage methods and areas. Modern building practices aim to mitigate changes to stormwater flows.

Historically however, systematic conveyance of storm or surface drainage water has often been from its origin, to an off-site destination. 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. Storm drainage can be defined as the entire system of streets, curb and gutter, ditches, ponds, culverts, catch basins, bridges, manholes and inlets. The destined location is normally a retention pond, a creek, river or lake.

Lenox is located in the valley of the Housatonic River which is the destination of this storm water from the land surface of the Town. Upstream tributaries, flowing generally to the east, 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 permeability of the soils. Storm drainage does not generally cause serious problems of flooding in Lenox as the patchwork system basically provides adequate drainage.

Future Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

The maintenance and improvement of the public utilities requires a constant effort on the part of the local government. Good utilities are essential to residents and businesses, and can be important to economic growth. In many ways, public utilities can be described as adequate. However, in some instances local and external financial resources may be necessary to implement improvement or installation of new infrastructure projects. The following information can be supplemented by the '1999 Lenox Infrastructure Committee Report'.

Water

The water supply is a valuable commodity that needs to continue to be protected. The water supply is limited due to the size of the reservoirs. This is a limiting factor in regard to development and expanded water use. At times of peak usage, the primary source is not sufficient and it is necessary to utilize water from Pittsfield. While this is currently an operational situation, the Pittsfield water has a different chemical composition. If usage, particularly seasonal usage, increases, the dependence upon water from outside the community will increase. This is not a problem of overall supply however, since Pittsfield has a great deal of excess capacity. Leaks are also a likely source of some lost water. Leaks can be isolated by comparing subsystem flows with metering totals.

Lenox's water distribution system, including cast iron mains is aging. Replacement of a main along Housatonic Street is planned in the near future. This work will 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, such as one near Schermerhorn Park, are beginning to deteriorate. Other lines, in particular those such as in the New Lenox area that are carrying different types of water and are more prone to corrosion, and 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. Lenox 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. Overall, the age of the original distribution system dictates that a conscientious program of repair and replacement be maintained if this system is to continue providing 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. Lenox Village and Lenox Dale are logical starting points.

Regular flushing of lines is a necessary on-going task, particularly in areas such as New Lenox.

The water storage facilities are in good general condition. It may be necessary to add storage capacity to help alleviate peak demand in summer dry periods.

Wastewater System

The recent wastewater facility improvements have addressed many needs. In many places original clay tile piping needs to be replaced with PVC piping. Several engineering studies of the wastewater system conducted for the Town in the last two decades identified this as the cause of inflow problems and produced reports that recommended replacement of bad sections and actions to reduce and prevent inflow. For the most part, this work was never begun. The DPW is currently investigating the problem and potential improvements.

Many residences that are currently not connected to the sewer, particularly those with aging septic systems, would like to tie into the sewer system. There is no set Town policy on extending sewer lines now or in the future. The service area shown on the wastewater system map provides an area where new users can tie in without greatly extending lines. New connections within proximity of existing sewer lines would be the most economically feasible alternatives. Gravity feeds are possible in many locations. Extending the lines in an unplanned manner beyond the service area might spur unwanted growth, not in keeping with the desires of the community. The method of paying for these improvements is also an issue that town officials, and possibly the voters, will need to consider.

In the 1998 Capital Plan, the major expense item was 2.5 million dollars for an extension of sewer along East Street, a bonded project slated for FY 2001. This extension, which has been considered in the past, would alleviate projected increasing incidences of failed septic systems. Without the extension, some homeowners in that area will face expensive replacement costs. Extension could open up the area, which apparently includes some large sections of potentially developable land, for additional growth.

There is a nucleus of residences on or near Laurel Lake that are currently on private septic systems. Extension of the sewer to serve this area might be a more environmentally sustainable solution.

Some lower elevation portions of the south side of town (including the Laurel Lake area) 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.

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 Lenox Conservation Commission should continue to fully enforce the Wetlands Bylaw and 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.

Additionally, the Housatonic Watershed Non-Point Pollution Assessment study is currently being undertaken. This study will potentially identify ways and areas in which storm drainage could be handled in a more environmentally sensitive manner.

Developing Strategies and Plans for Improvement

Ongoing capital improvement planning needs to remain focused on the goal to ***'Maintain viable systems for the safe and effective collection and treatment of waste water'***. If necessary this may entail the town:

- *Commission a detailed engineering analysis to formulate specific plans on wastewater system improvements.*

The goal to ***'Maintain and enhance environmentally sensitive storm water and flood protection systems'*** can be advanced by efforts to:

- *Install storm water drainage facilities as part of road improvements according to best management practices*
- *Maintain a current emergency/disaster management plan*

Lenox has recently become proactive in addressing municipal facility needs. By staying proactive the Town can avoid the degradation of these facilities and resulting reduced service levels. This must be done in an efficient manner, by prioritizing needs within limited budget constraints, and with outside assistance if possible.

Due to its fiscal resource base, Lenox is in a better financial position than most other towns of its size in Massachusetts. However, local government financial resources are restricted due to limitations of the local tax base, the cost of meeting state and federal mandates upon local government, the cost of local governmental operations, and property tax and debt limits.

All infrastructure goals discussed in this Plan, the goals above, and other goals to ***'Maintain a viable system for cost effective delivery of high quality drinking water'*** and ***'Provide for the orderly extension of utility services where appropriate and necessary'*** can be met in a manner consistent with community desires by efforts to:

- *Maintain an adequate operational budget and staff*
- *Continue to Plan and budget for all short and mid term capital infrastructure improvements on a fiscally responsible timetable that does not significantly increase total debt, and access external funding sources where possible*
- *Begin to plan and provide for gradual long term replacement of water mains*
- *Consider the imposition of impact fees*
- *Carefully incorporate neighborhood and community consensus on all improvement projects. Promote public understanding and support for necessary utility repairs, improvements and funding through public meetings and information releases. Publicize results to residents so they are aware of what is accomplished.*
- *Formulate Infrastructure Policy Standards that include:*
 - *Development of new infrastructure shall only occur after an analysis of the impacts of this infrastructure with regard to land use, traffic, water quality and community services.*
 - *Public investments, including, but not limited to, construction or expansion of infrastructure and facilities related to water supply and distribution, sewage*

collection and treatment should reinforce the traditional character and desired land use patterns of Lenox.

- *No development or redevelopment which significantly increases usage should occur unless the existing infrastructure has adequate capacity to support the development or redevelopment.*
- *Installation of necessary infrastructure shall be timed to meet the need generated by the development or a contribution of funds toward the necessary improvements shall be provided.*

NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACE & RECREATION AREAS

The Town of Lenox enjoys wonderful aesthetic and environmental resources, which must be used and conserved wisely. Three important natural elements are: two mountain ridges to the east and west, where altitude reaches about 2,000 feet, and the Housatonic River which runs north-south along the eastern border on a high plateau of approximately 1,000 feet. The Town already has an extensive inventory of permanent protected open space, including several thousand acres under State, Town or non-profit Conservation ownership. However, many treasured spots remain unprotected or in temporary protection (Chapter lands). In addition, many of the factors involved in resource preservation and habitat protection cross municipal borders, necessitating that Lenox work in cooperation with other communities. For example, all of the areas where Lenox borders other towns are in the Housatonic River Watershed.

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

Goals

Survey respondents generally indicated a high level of support for both conservation and recreation. Goals expressed as a vision are:

- *All water resource areas that relate to public health and safety are preserved and protected*
- *The valuable diversity of plant and wildlife habitat and other ecologically sensitive areas is protected*
- *Agricultural lands are preserved*
- *Lenox's outstanding historical, cultural, and visual resources are preserved*
- *The Housatonic River is easily accessible to canoeists, wildlife observers, and pedestrian traffic*
- *Kennedy Park and Post Farm are well preserved and utilized as multi-use recreation/conservation areas*
- *When development does occur, strong efforts are made to protect the environment from adverse impacts*

Natural Features

Lenox is well endowed, in the aggregate, with public open-space reservations. The mountains provide a wide "green-belt" on both the east and west borders of the town, the ridge of Kennedy Park breaks up and provides a similar feature near the central area, and the Housatonic and water resource lands provide other open spaces.

Water Habitat Protection: Key Priorities

As reflected in the 1998 Community Survey, Lenox residents already place a high priority on the protection of water resources, reflecting a wise appreciation for the importance of clean drinking water supplies and recreational waters, intact wetlands for wildlife diversity, and the economic usefulness of area waterways. Lenox draws its public water supply primarily from town reservoirs located on Lenox Mountain, and also purchases water from the Pittsfield public water supply during its busy summer season. The watershed area for the reservoirs is town-owned, and the land is permanently protected. However, protection for surrounding lands that might be used for water supplies in the future is somewhat spotty, and Lenox should examine additional acquisitions in order to protect these areas should additional water supplies be necessary in the future.

Chemical pollutants from area industries have contaminated the Housatonic River, rendering the fish inedible and making the river undesirable for swimming. New methods of wastewater treatment were instituted starting in the 1960s by local industries that still use the river, including several paper mills in the Lenox Dale area, abating the further deterioration of the river. In the last few years local and regional environmental groups have worked to ensure cleanup of the river and plan for its enhanced recreational and scenic use. These efforts will be expanded even further over the next few years as Housatonic River communities benefit from a settlement by General Electric that is designated for the clean-up of the River, and Lenox officials and residents should endeavor to play a large part in the process.

One of the most significant of the town's ponds and lakes is Laurel Lake, which is shared with the Town of Lee. Facilities at the lake include Lenox Town Beach, and the Lake is a popular site for cottages, whose septic systems can contribute to 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. Lenox and Lee should work together to ensure that steps are taken to minimize pollution to the Lake, and provide resources/encouragement to abutting landowners to mitigate pollution.

Wetlands in their natural state have historically been considered undesirable and are indeed unsuitable for many types of development. Although draining and filling of wetlands were common in the past, these practices are both expensive and damaging to the environment, making this sort of development ill-advised in general. The value of wetlands has been formally recognized by the State Wetland Protection Act and Lenox Bylaws that protect wetlands in order to ensure wildlife diversity, outdoor recreation, purification of aquifer recharge areas, flood control (stabilization of runoff), reduction and prevention of erosion, and scenic qualities.

Soils and Slopes: Limits to Development

Lenox's population, economic development, and recreational areas are restricted due to the town's steep slopes, erosion-susceptible soils and extensive floodplain. Steep slopes are the largest single physical element affecting the future development of the community; approximately 25% of the town's 13,862 land acres are on steep slopes. October Mountain on the east and Lenox Mountain on the west occupy many square miles of these upland acres. Most of these steep slopes are under permanent protection, are already developed, or are very difficult

to develop due to their highly erosive soils. A number of hills punctuate the plateau between the mountain ranges. In flatter areas of town, the scarcity of land available for new development will likely lead to future projects being proposed on marginal lands. Lenox will continue to face the challenge of redirecting development from unsuitable lands to more suitable areas or modes.

Farmlands: Historic and Cultural Resources in Jeopardy

Ideal farmlands have been reduced to a scattering of relatively small parcels by development, and are limited due to topographical and soil quality reasons. Agricultural lands, though difficult to farm profitably, are nonetheless a valuable open space and historical resource. Remaining farmlands are most abundant in the northeastern part of town. The largest of the region's few remaining dairy farms, High Lawn Farms (nearly 3,000 acres in Stockbridge and Lee) is located on a hilltop overlooking Laurel Lake. Although the bulk of the farm is located in Lee and Stockbridge, Lenox officials recognize its importance within town and as a sub-regional gem to be preserved, and are willing to work with the current owners and the other towns in order to ensure the farm's preservation. The conversion of remaining farmlands now protected temporarily under Chapter 61A, along with increased housing development, could threaten the rural landscape and scenic views. Many of these lands are actually well-suited for development, and Lenox officials and residents, and groups such as the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, will need to work cooperatively with land owners in order to preserve them for the enjoyment of future generations. Possibilities for doing so include everything from the direct acquisition of land to a more comprehensive and coordinated use of the state agricultural preservation restriction program. Participation in a proposed scenic byway program could help draw attention and even support to the aesthetic and historic appeal of agricultural fields.

Scenic Resources

Pastoral lands, ridges and viewsheds should continue to serve as assets for the town as development is limited and key permanent acquisitions occur. Lenox's water resources, rolling terrain, extensive farmland and pastures, parks and thriving downtown and residential areas are aesthetically pleasing to resident and visitor alike. These assets are important for both aesthetic and economic reasons, and need to be protected from degradation. Care should be taken in planning recreational activities to ensure that allowed uses do not threaten the environmental integrity of the natural habitat or the scenic quality of these lands. Although the town is quite handsome, it faces potential threats from over-development, traffic congestion and pollution due to pressures from tourism, residential housing pressures, industry and other key components of the local and regional economy. In addition, 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 efforts to improve entrances to the town and protect these scenic resources through initiatives and by-law changes. These must be continued and expanded, or the town will lose the beauty that makes it so attractive currently.

Climate

The climate of Berkshire County is considered humid, with annual temperatures that are characteristic of the North Temperate Zone. Winds are predominantly from the Northwest. Weather patterns change often, and there are many variations between the higher elevations and the valley areas. The growing season varies from 120 to 140 days, with the frost-free period

running from mid or late May until late September. The county lies in plant hardiness zone 4. The Berkshires experience the variety and beauty of four distinct seasons, with corresponding variations in temperature and precipitation.

The normal average daily temperature in January is 21 degrees (F), which is quite cold. Average snowfall totals approximately 70 inches per year. The normal average daily temperature in July is 68 degrees (F), which is quite pleasant. Annual precipitation averages 43 inches.

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Recreation Areas

Parks

Kennedy, Lilac, Ore Bed, Tillotson, and Edith Wharton are town parks that appear to be well kept by the community. Bridle paths, trails, picnic tables and benches can be found there to enhance the natural beauty of the places. In terms of existing resources, the town beach, located across the border in Lee along Laurel Lake, provides the primary opportunity for outdoor water-based recreation. Ownership was recently passed to the town. In addition, the sizeable watershed holdings, conservation property, and the October Mountain State Forest are invaluable complements to the local park system.

Playgrounds

Lenox has one major playground, the War Memorial Athletic Field. This facility is well maintained and used. A playground might be a welcome addition in New Lenox, and the town should give thought to developing playground nodes in conjunction with its network of parks and trails as appropriate.

Trails

There are numerous opportunities for hiking, biking and horseback riding in Lenox at Kennedy Park, Post Farm, near the Housatonic River, in the October Mountain State Forest, and at the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary (hiking-only on designated trails).

Development Constraints and Open Space and Recreation Opportunities

According to 1997 land use information 2,967 acres or 21.4% of total land area in Lenox could be classified as developed, including institutional/recreational lands. The following map 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 40% of land is considered undevelopable, 20% is considered to have significant moderate constraints, while 10% is considered to have concern factors. The remaining land, less than 10%, 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, Lenox has a shrinking amount of potentially buildable land. The western portion of town is comprised mostly of land with sensitive natural features and constraints. The southern and east central portions of town would appear to have some large acreage either with only moderate concerns or identified environmental constraints or none.

Lenox 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. This natural greenbelt will continue to limit the pattern of a monotonous, continuous suburban development and enhance the livability of the town. Still, the far-sighted land procurement of the past offers Lenox a rare chance to generously provide not only for today's residents but also for future generations.

The sensible development and management of acquired property and a full range of free time activities must accompany the acquisition of space. Lenox has already established an imaginative core of community sponsored activities responsive to the needs of different age groups: the presence of picnic tables, benches, and baseball diamonds speak for town-wide interest in existing parks.

Lenox's need in open space is for linkages, either for active recreation or for preservation of open land as park areas or for future public use. Lenox is a town with ample resources, however, it must be cognizant not only of the initial costs of park-land acquisition and recreational facility development, but also of the long-term costs of maintenance, repair and replacement.

It should also be pointed out that development of both active and passive recreation facilities is one of the major instruments for influencing the economic future of the town. From an economic standpoint Lenox relies rather heavily on tourism factors centered on Tanglewood and resorts in town and these in turn thrive on scenic beauty and recreational opportunities. The town could stand to offer more for younger visitors to enjoy for an afternoon or evening. Modern technology and professional office industries also cherish a pleasant environment. A short analysis of the benefits of Open Space is contained in the Open Space & Recreation Plan.

Active recreation-oriented parks are concentrated near downtown and Lenox Dale. Ideally, these facilities should be scattered throughout town so children can walk to them and so they provide intermittent community gathering spots in areas such as New Lenox, which lacks a neighborhood park to conveniently serve residents. School lands and facilities are used as indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, but access to the school buildings is limited. The community lacks adequate

playing fields and, with the exception of Kennedy Park, there are no well-utilized large parks. Demographics are also a factor in determining need.

There is a large and growing number of residents who are retired or near retirement with grown children, a factor that seems to call for limited investment in new neighborhood park facilities and equipment targeted at younger age groups. With the exception of New Lenox, existing parks serving developed residential areas, including the downtown, with expanded facilities for older age groups may serve a greater need.

More outdoor swimming opportunities are seen as needed. Although the beach is designated for resident use, it also receives heavy usage from the many tourists who visit the Berkshires in the summer. Many other privately owned beach areas are also utilized, and there is often a lack of understanding of what areas can be utilized and under what conditions.

Community interaction could be facilitated through increasing sidewalk and trail mileage and connectivity. Well-located pocket parks and additional benches at natural gathering points would also facilitate interaction. These are discussed in the Neighborhood Areas section.

Post Farm may provide an opportunity for fuller utilization. However, an appropriate balance between conservation and recreation must also be achieved. There is a need to encourage greater use of the town's conservation lands for passive recreation where appropriate. This could be pursued by: 1) developing and maintaining hiking trails, improving access, and providing open space linkages between the various town, state and other protected properties, and 2) efforts to emphasize their value through environmental education and other programs both in the schools and elsewhere.

Stewarding Strategies

Overall, the protection and management of Lenox's open spaces should be enhanced to protect wildlife habitat and natural resources, provide recreational activities which respect their natural surroundings, maintain scenic views and preserve Lenox's rural character. The areas recommended for linkage development and further conservation are shown on the Open Space & Recreation Action map. Generally, the guiding factors, besides the overriding one of limiting residential sprawl, for proposed actions have been social, economic, topographic, and functional. Areas which have outstanding scenic or ecological values are recommended for acquisition or increased protection.

The following strategies will help to 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:

Strategies for Water Resource and Habitat Preservation

It is of the utmost importance that all water resource areas relating to public health and safety are preserved and protected.

- *Work with property owners, and organizations to improve water quality in the Housatonic River and Laurel Lake*

- *When necessary, where feasible, enhance protections to natural habitats and water resources.*
 - *Ideally, the Yokun Brook wildlife corridor running through the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary and surrounding areas would be extended to the Housatonic via protection and acquisition of land.*

Strategies for Preventing Development on Mountains and in Areas Prone to Erosion

- *Adopt, utilize and employ regulatory protections such as the Scenic Mountains Act or hillside zoning protections to discourage or prevent development in areas with unsuitable soils and slopes.*

Strategies for Preserving Farmlands and Pastures

- *Agricultural lands should be preserved through cooperative efforts between state and local preservation organizations and agencies to provide the means to permanently farm appropriate parcels.*
 - *Chapter 61A designation, or Chapter 61 designation for forested parcels, could be used to provide tax relief for owners of farmed or pastured parcels, and delay development for an extended period of time.*
- *Encourage local participation in cooperatives and suppliers and support nearby subregional farm producers and farmers by "buying local."*

Strategies for preserving Scenic Resources:

- *Continue to employ various means such as State Chapter programs, donations or outright purchase, or creative methods like transfer of development rights to preserve open space that has great aesthetic value.*
- *Preserve corridor lands and scenic roads such as East Street and Under Mountain Road through a variety of mechanisms, such as securing easements, the declaration of Scenic Roads, and the Forest Legacy program.*
- *Consider zoning overlays or other changes to combat the visual impacts of sprawl, such as allowing flexible lot frontage, or providing enticements for developers to set aside open space for recreation and/or conservation in their projects.*

Outdoor Recreation & Trails

Make portions of the Housatonic River easily accessible to canoeists, wildlife observers, and pedestrian traffic

- *Ensure that public and private initiatives include improvements to make River areas that are near existing neighborhoods and are not highly environmentally sensitive more accessible for canoeists, wildlife observers, walkers, and bikes.*
- *Improve or create new connection to Woods Pond and the Housatonic River at New Lenox Road based on public consensus and available funding*

A major goal of Lenox's Open Space and Recreation Plan is to expand trails - and linkages between them - where appropriate in order to maximize their enjoyment and usage by residents

and visitors alike. Please refer to this Plan for greater detail about accomplishing the strategies listed below.

- *Design and enhance the trails network to connect with similar trail systems in neighboring municipalities*
 - *Form a committee to guide the development of a trails and recreation network*
 - *Investigate rail-trails - one possibility is the section of the old trolley right of way from Woods Pond to New Lenox Road if the land owners are willing to allow access*
- *Publicize trail network and encourage use of bicycle, hiking paths and sidewalks that connect neighborhoods and parks in town*

Provide a variety of recreational opportunities that serve all ages, physical conditions, and interests of year-round and summer residents

- *Create/secure access to more playing fields, and increase outdoor recreational opportunities, potentially through joint ventures*

Preserve and utilize Kennedy Park and Post Farm as multi-use recreation/conservation areas

- *Carefully maintain a balance based upon cooperation and compromise between conservation, passive, and active recreational activities which are designed to minimize impacts to the environment*

When development does occur, strong efforts should be made to protect the environment from adverse impacts:

- *Continue to vigilantly review proposed development and enforce regulations that direct construction away from environmentally sensitive resource areas*
- *Consider expanding requirements that proposed developments include an Environmental Impact Analysis to cover all larger developments and those on marginally developable lands*

SUSTAINING LENOX THROUGH WISE MANAGEMENT OF LAND

Building upon previous sections of this document, this section represents a basic plan for the usage of land, a fundamental element of the Master Plan. Information herein and throughout this Plan details present uses, outlines the historical and recent patterns of development, and identifies current land use issues and problems which may emerge such as incompatible and inappropriate uses. 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 prescriptive land use analysis can help to effectively guide and integrate appropriate new development within the existing community.

The development of Lenox, as of most communities, has been largely influenced by a combination of physical and economic factors. Lenox lies at the center of the Berkshire Hills, between Pittsfield and Lee. The landscape features, described in the Natural Resources and Open Space section, have determined two of the major land uses in Lenox: the extensive woodlands on the east and west, and the wetlands and floodplain along the river.

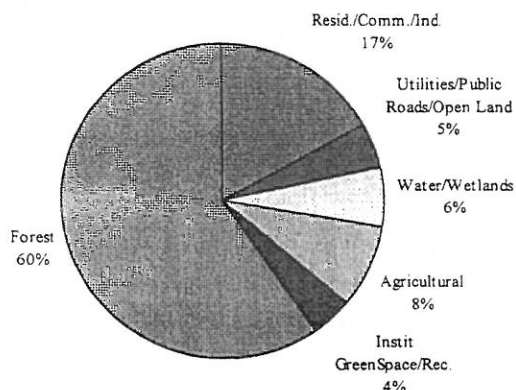
The major artery of travel, Route 7/20, runs north-south through the flatter land between the mountains. Physical elements and other factors described in this Plan such as sociological habits and preferences and larger economic trends have shaped the land use patterns existing in the town.

Existing Land Uses and Trends

Due primarily to its topography, Lenox is fortunate to still have a great deal of land in a natural or passive state with nearly 80% of all land either not developed or used for recreational/open space and agricultural purposes according to BRPC's 1997 survey of land use. Approximately 60% of total acreage is area is forested. A majority of the developed area is comprised of single family residential uses.

Chart LU1

Land Use in Lenox - 1998



All land is divided into ownership parcels. The following table shows a diversity of uses although the common pattern of lots with single family structures is present.

Table LU2 Use Classification of Property Parcels

Category	Sub-category	Parcel Total
Multiple Use		48
Residential	Single Family	1509
Residential	Condominium	271
Residential	Two/Three Family	83
Residential	Other	18
Residential	MF 4 or more units	16
Residential	Vacant Developable	111
Residential	Vacant Potentially Developable	28
Residential	Vacant Undevelopable	105
Commercial	Motels	8
Commercial	Inns, Resorts	22
Commercial	Nursing Home	1
Commercial	Warehouses and Distribution	11
Commercial	Retail Trade	35
Commercial	Retail Automotive/Vehicular	9
Commercial	Office	13
Commercial	Public Service	3
Commercial	Cultural/Entertainment	2
Commercial	Recreational	3
Commercial	Vacant	18
Industrial	Manufacturing/Processing	14
Industrial	Mining and Quarrying	1
Industrial	Public Utility	5
Industrial	Vacant	2
Forest Property	Chapter 61	16
Agricultural	Chapter 61A	18
Recreational	Hiking	7
Exempt	Public Service - Fed., State, County	32
Exempt	Public Service Municipal	49
Exempt	Public Service Other	43

Source: Lenox Tax Assessment Rolls

Land Use Trends

According to published estimates, in 1959, only 340 acres of land in Lenox were developed for residential, business or industrial use. In the 1960's, the pattern of sprawling consumption of land took hold and accelerated. By 1985, over 2,200 acres of land were in residential, commercial or industrial use, and approximately 2,769 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 impacted the environment greatly. Continued conversion of most of the traditional farmlands and forested areas in Lenox to medium and low density residential development will threaten the rural landscape and scenic views.

Despite a stable population, conversion of undeveloped land for new residences has continued in recent times, although at a much lower rate than in the 1960's and 1970's. Lenox's attractiveness as a cultural, resort and retirement location has contributed to a stream of related development and changes in land use. Lenox is no longer in a pattern of high volume low-density sprawl. This is actually a positive situation, since the high costs of low-density sprawl development can over-stress public infrastructure and local fiscal capacity, affecting natural resources such as aquifers and waterways, increasing traffic congestion and changing community character. Recent patterns of new residential uses, including special housing for seniors, have been more compact, and have also occurred through development along the commercial corridors and the reuse of large institutional properties. Overall, the volume of land involved in this trend is not overwhelming; approximately 200 acres of land were converted to developed lands from 1985 to 1998.

Table LU3 Land Use Change in Lenox

Land Category Definition	1985 Acres	1998 Acres	Change in Acres 1985-1998	% Change 1985-1998
Agriculture	1,243	1,151	-92	-7.4%
Forest	8,635	8,466	-139	-1.6%
Water	224	224	0.0	0.0%
Wetland	603	594	-9	-1.4%
Open Land	383	425	42	10.8%
Institutional Greenspace and Recreation	503	546	43	8.5%
Residential < 1/2 Acre	784	875	91	11.6%
Residential > 1/2 Acre	1,181	1,227	46	3.9%
Commercial	229	245	16	7.0%
Industrial/Trans./Mining/ Waste Disposal	72	72	0	0.0%

Source: UMass MacConnell classification 1985, 1997 BRPC update

Notes: This Land Use classification is based partly on vegetative cover. Open Land includes abandoned agriculture, power lines and areas with no vegetation. Institutional Greenspace includes developed parks (not Kennedy), cemeteries, schools, resorts, vacant developed land, and Participation and Spectator Recreation. Residential < 1/2 Acre would include clustered developments.

Development is still occurring; however, resulting in the permanent loss of farmlands, open space, scenic resources - some of the very qualities that give Lenox its distinctive character. The trends of concern are increasingly related to the location, pattern, and in some cases the type of development - such as conversion of land along scenic roads to single family residential use. There are harmful effects of commercial and residential sprawl on tourism, the main source of revenue for Lenox's economy. These potential trends could, over the long term, make Lenox a less attractive tourist destination.

Sprawl and a consumptive pattern of land development remains a significant problem for the Berkshires. Residents and visitors alike have expressed concern about the loss of community character. Frontage lot development, subdivisions and commercial strip development along major roads have blurred the boundaries between village and town centers and outlying rural areas. In short, contemporary development patterns continue to slowly but steadily threaten the very quality of life which makes Lenox a desirable place to live and to visit.

It should be noted that some of the trends can be considered positive. There has been a shift away from low density residential development. Re-investment has physically preserved many of the great estates and helped to keep the tax base of Lenox robust. 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. In response to the actual and threatened harm to the environment, conservation organizations also have been acquiring large amounts of land for protection.

Current Land Uses and Zoning

Table LU4 summarizes residential zoning by district. As discussed in the Neighborhoods section, recent patterns of new residential uses, including special housing for seniors, have been more compact, and have also occurred through development along the commercial corridors and reuse of large institutional properties.

The highest density allowed under zoning in Lenox is 10,000 square feet per housing unit. There is a limit of four units per structure under special permitting in the commercial zones and in the R-15 zone. Institutional buildings, such as assisted living complexes, nursing homes, and retirement condominiums, are considered separately in zoning, with higher densities allowed.

In the R-20, R-30, R-40 zone, density is determined by utility coverage. In some towns, this form of zoning has been an incentive leading to vast unplanned utility extensions. Thus far, this has generally not been the case in Lenox. However, roadside development continues to whittle away at the quality of some of Lenox's scenic roads.

Table LU4

Residential District	Zone Location, Current Land Uses Description	Zone Min. Lot Size	Min. Frontage	Types of Residential Allowed in Zone
Residential R-15	central Lenox Med. density res., institutional, rec., commercial	15,000 SF	85	Single Family, Multi Family
	west Lenox Village Med. density res., commercial, institutional			
Residential R-20-30-40	New Lenox, north of Walker St with sewer & water Med, high density res., forest, schools, recreation	20,000 SF	100	Single Family
	New Lenox or east of 7/20 w sewer or water Med. density res., recreation, forest,	30,000 SF	125	
	New Lenox or east of 7/20 no sewer/water Forest, med. density res., agr., wetlands, recreation, open land	40,000 SF	150	
	south of Lenox Dale proper Med, high density res., forest, agr.,	20-40,000 SF	100-150	
Residential R-30	west Lenox Village Estates, med., low density res.	30,000 SF	125	Single Family
Residential R-1A	west of 7/20 Forest, agr., med. density res., wetlands, estates	43,560 SF	200	Single Family Estate Reuse
	south of 183 Estates, resorts, med. density res., agr/pasture			
Residential R-3A	northeast Forest, med. density res.	3 Acres	300	Single Family
	west Forest, institutional, agr., med., low density res.			

Land uses in differing zoning districts may be inconsistent simply because the desired use of land has yet to occur.

In 1996, zoning was revised to restrict commercial development uses, particularly in the northern part of Lenox along Route 7/20, to try to contain sprawling commercial strip development and to encourage more of the corridor to be used for offices. The core of Lenox Village is zoned for business. Office-research uses are allowed by-right throughout most parts of town.

Table LU5 Zoned Land Allowing Differing Forms of Economic Development By Right or By Permit

Zoning District	Location	Acres	Heavy Ind.	Light Ind.	Distribution	Research & Development	Information Technology/ Offices
C	Lenox Village	29				Right+	Right/Permit+
C	Lenox Dale	21				Right+	Right/Permit+
C-1A	North Lenox	116		Right+/Permit		Permit+	Permit+
C-1A	Housatonic St & 7/20	19		Right+/Permit		Permit+	Permit+
C-3A	7/20 N. of 7A	398				Permit+	Permit+
I	Lenox Dale, S. of Woods Pond	81	Permit	Permit	Permit		Right
I	Lenox Dale, N. of Woods Pond Lenox	39	Permit	Permit	Permit		Right
I	South Lenox Dale	7	Permit	Permit	Permit		Right

Notes: Table contains general information only. Does not include primary residential zones.
 + Special requirements or site plan approval may apply

A Vision of Preserving and Adapting

Lenox is a community that respects its heritage and the natural environment, and also wants to provide social and economic opportunities for its citizens. The overall long term goal is to sustain this balance over time. One major element of sustainability is land and its use. Land use and investment decisions of governmental officials, private organizations, and individuals shape the future.

Overall residents would like to retain and enhance the quality of life, the attractiveness of the town, the natural endowment, and the high quality of services and cultural events. Town leaders are cognizant of the need to sustain a robust local economy in order to maintain the fiscal base to support services and facilities. In addition to goals already discussed, responses to the community-wide survey and at a community visioning session indicate residents would like to:

Preserve sensitive environments and open space

- Minimize impacts to the environment from development when it does occur
- Effectively guide and integrate appropriate new development and changes in land uses within the existing community context

Preserve communal qualities and enrich opportunities for social diversity and interaction among the populace and with nature

- Preserve the historical heritage and the steward cultural assets
- Maintain a diversity of housing opportunities for people of different household sizes, age groups and incomes

Maintain economic vitality and fiscal health, but target new development

- *Modify existing commercial trends by increasing the availability of goods and services for residents. Residents do not appear to support additional retail development that will serve visitors.*
- *Add professional employment opportunities*

Potential Land Uses and Zoning

Today, the supply of undeveloped land in Lenox, though large, is heavily limited by legal and physical development constraints. The future is always difficult to predict; however by projecting past and present trends we can estimate potential and likely scenarios. There is a potential for continuation of recent trends of land conversion, and of the effects that development pressures are having on the land. These trends, combined with the amount of potentially developable land, help us to forecast likely future patterns.

Commercial and Non-Residential Uses

Trends would indicate potentially harmful effects of commercial and residential sprawl on tourism, the main source of revenue for Lenox's economy. Though it is hard to document, sprawl may already be impacting the county's tourist industry, since this type of development often impacts rural landscapes and creates more pronounced traffic congestion. This could, over the long term, make Lenox less attractive as a tourist destination.

Lenox and the County are likely to experience the continued loss of the local "mom and pop" stores that not only support neighborhood proprietors and retain dollars in the region, but also provide the local "flavor" that is essential to the Berkshires. This loss may not be as visually apparent as the past trends toward uniform chain stores however.

Shifting retail from one site to another within the same market is somewhat of a detrimental Zero Sum Game. Recent vacancies at the Lenox County Shops are an example of the effects of shifting retail. Given the sophisticated market analysis that goes into corporate retail development of large scale development projects, many new projects are likely to be quite successful.

It is likely that Lenox's population will grow slowly or remain basically the same, a pattern designated as desirable by respondents to the community survey. It is likely that Lenox will continue to experience periods of population gains and losses, especially due to changing local and regional conditions, but also due to state and national conditions. However, the volume of tourism may continue to increase steadily. Tourism has continually become a greater proportion of an otherwise shrinking economic base in the Central Berkshires.

Residents do not appear to support additional development that will serve non-residents. They would like to modify existing commercial patterns somewhat, in order to target more goods and services toward residents rather than visitors. More information on non-residential uses can be found in the Business and Economics section.

There has been a reduction of land available for future economic development. Although this may not be a clear community concern at the present time, there may be a need at some point in the future for sites with adequate access to an existing highway, sewer and water availability, and manageable site conditions. Currently there exists very little readily developable land of reasonable size with easy access, zoned for economic development. This has been an issue with local firms that wish to expand, and may preclude a desirable future employer from locating in Lenox.

There are still some pieces of potentially developable land however, many off the road fronts, that may be more intensely developed or redeveloped in the future. This could theoretically lead to hundreds of thousands of additional non-residential square footage of building space (reference Appendix 3 - EOEa Buildout Report).

Lenox's need in open space is for select areas, either for active recreation or for preservation of open land as park areas or for future public use. Generally, the guiding rationale for acquisition of parcels of land should be to protect environmental and community resources, promote recreational linkages, limit residential sprawl, and promote a healthy economy.

Sophisticated land use management is important to preserving Open Space. The Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, the Selectmen and other boards and commissions, in conjunction with conservation organizations, have made much progress in preserving community assets. One major instrument to achieve conservation is a continuation of long-range planning and pro-active land acquisition and conservation. Still, the community needs to realize that the supply of developable land is finite. It needs to be used and conserved wisely and to serve community needs over the long term.

Residential

The increasingly scarce availability of land for development has been a factor leading to higher land values. These values are also leading developers to build higher value homes on smaller lots. As detailed in the Housing section, there are gaps in availability and affordability of housing that need to be addressed.

Zoning may need to be modified in the future to respond to all these conditions mentioned above. However, the current trends do have several advantages. The rate of development and change in most parts of Lenox is not high, and this is consistent with the expressed desires of residents. Overall, the trend of consumption of land for residential uses is also not high. Factors limiting residential development help to preserve the environment. The addition of senior housing does not increase the cost of providing educational services.

Most land in Lenox is zoned for low to medium density residential use and development. Development has been greatly restricted by steep slopes, and the presence of wetlands. There is a strong belief in town that the supply of buildable land is very limited. According to information from the Assessor's office, over 100 developable residential parcels exist. Parcels in this category totaled about 700 acres in 1997.

The amount of growth that can be accommodated will depend in a large part on natural resource constraints, and preferences of the marketplace. Thus, the potential for continuation of development patterns impacted by shrinking supply remains strong.

However, potentially developable or redevelopable parcels could theoretically lead to thousands of more housing units. This land would include portions of the 1,200 plus acres in the state Chapter programs, under temporary protection, and other partially developed large parcels that could be further subdivided. In terms of potential residential buildout, the estimated total of developable land can be derived using a combination of information on development constraints, combined with zoning, to produce a buildout scenario (reference Appendix 3 - EOEA Buildout Report).

Actual experience appears to indicate that the supply of unconstrained or minimally constrained acreage has been disappearing fast, due to conservation as well as development. Any realistic growth projection needs to incorporate this information. Regardless of the specific model used, the conclusion will be that Lenox will continue to slowly progress toward buildout and the rate of land consumption will continue to decline as large developable parcels become more scarce.

There is a potential for continuation of the level and types of land conversion recently occurring. Reuse of larger parcels has been a positive for the most part. There is certainly more potential for this to occur, enabled but guided by wise regulatory oversight.

One area where significant single family development may occur is the central eastern portion of town. If utilities, namely sewer, are extended along East Street, this will probably encourage further development, particularly through subdivision of back land areas currently without roads. Since this land is zoned for medium density residential use (20,000 square feet with utilities), proposals are likely to be made to develop this land.

General patterns for future land uses are shown on the map on the following page. This information builds on information from throughout the plan. Places where the General Patterns for Future Land Uses map is in conflict with zoning should be carefully reviewed. In some cases, zoning that was appropriate when the original zoning districts were set up may now be obsolete. This Plan is an opportunity for the community to determine what its future land uses should be, and lay the groundwork to modify zoning if necessary, and to continue to tailor regulations to guide development to preferred forms.

Strategies To Sustain Lenox Over the Long Term

To help maintain an overall high quality of life, it will be necessary to jointly accommodate both socio-economic and environmentally beneficial land uses. Fulfillment of Lenox 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. Communities and the conditions affecting them change over time. Over the long term, the community will need to maintain and renew itself. This can best be accomplished through a strategy of sustainable growth management.

Residents of Lenox have an important role to play in guiding the future of their town and 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 future generations. Sustainable development contributes to a community that 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 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 currents. 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

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.

The recommended strategy is to encourage sustainable growth and development to help maintain an overall high quality of life. This will require jointly accommodating both socio-economic and environmentally beneficial uses. Land, and its different uses, 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 prescriptive strategy can help to effectively guide and integrate appropriate new development within the existing context of development in Lenox. This can be accomplished through:

- *regulatory protections aimed at preservation of outstanding natural assets*
- *keeping the historic Lenox 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*

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 land 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.

Consistent with other strategies, make strong efforts to expand the open space network, improve connections between people and places, support affordable housing and the economy, all within the context of preserving community character and precious natural resources. When economic conditions are good, the community should be prepared (through its regulatory system) to deny permits for projects simply because they do not promote the economic diversification, affordable housing, or environmental preservation that is crucial to preserving the character of the community. The strategies can best be achieved through a continuation of long-range planning and pro-active land acquisition and conservation. This track would promote spatial efficiency in land use development and management involving actions to promote full appropriate utilization of the village centers, existing developed areas and infrastructure. In addition to strategies mentioned previously, the community should consider:

- *Support the formation of sub-regional cooperative efforts and organizations involved in growth management, including educational endeavors*
- *Select and monitor indicators of sustainability*
- *Continue on-going planning by monitoring progress of plan recommended actions, new development conditions and trends, and by updating action plans*
- *Strengthen the importance of meeting community needs as a criteria for granting Special Permits and waivers for subdivision requirements*

- *Modify zoning to limit residential development in areas where it would not be in keeping with the character of the community or negatively impact the environment*
- *Consider zoning density changes, particularly in and near villages with transit or pedestrian areas*
- *Expand design guidelines for certain zones such as the 7/20 commercial strip area and tie to Site Plan Review*

SUMMARY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The general purpose of this Plan is to help Lenox manage growth and development in order to comprehensively minimize negative fiscal, environmental, social and other impacts, while guiding allowed development and re-development to meet the needs of the community, and when possible the region. This Plan has explored some of the linkages between different aspects of the community and how certain actions can have predictable direct and indirect affects on the community. The Summary of Goals & Future Strategies directly following this section was produced as a stand alone document and distributed at public forums. It restates and highlights portions of this Plan.

It is important to promote overall understanding of these factors, and to refine and implement a planning framework within the limits of the town's authority and its means. Participation in implementing strategies contained in this Plan is a powerful way for stakeholders to contribute to the future quality of life in Lenox.

Lenox's extensive forested areas, mountainous topography, pastoral lands and wetlands lend the town a distinctly vibrant aesthetic and natural beauty that is treasured highly by residents. Residents of Lenox take great pride in their town's environmental resources and beauty, its small town social fabric, its world class culture and its economic resourcefulness, while remaining concerned that these important strengths are preserved and continue to provide for its citizens. Lenox also has excellent schools, solid utilities, and on the whole, good town roads. Lenox's base of cultural tourism has helped continually enhance the tax base that provides for quality community services. This base is a major reason why visitors, new residents, institutions and businesses have been attracted to Lenox.

There are many organizations and persons already working hard to maintain these existing qualities. The town government has an active budgeting and capital planning process. The established Capital Planning Program is included as Appendix 2.

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. While the market drives continued building of this base, Lenox may be better off using its advantageous position to promote diversification of the mix of development and redevelopment as it grants special permits.

Growth management is a state and regional challenge. In some states a stronger framework exists to support public investment and regulation within a growth management approach. In Massachusetts, there is much to be done to build upon actions such as Executive Order 385 - which directs state agencies to communicate with each other and to strive for consistency involving differing spheres. There is also much to be done to build a regional growth management framework. Lenox can aid state and regional efforts, and cooperate with the City of Pittsfield and other surrounding towns that also have Planning frameworks.

The strategy objectives listed in this Plan provide the base ideas for implementing the goals in this Plan. The breadth of this list is much greater than the existing pool of resources to accomplish it. The Lenox Planning Board is the organization that is required by Massachusetts Law to update the Master Plan.

Implementation measures will require cooperative efforts among many parties, with opportunities for input from all the residents, landowners and businesses in the community. To achieve the goals of this Plan, actions and other important community decisions need to be applied in a balanced and flexible manner.

Appendix 4 lists general and specific tools, techniques and actions that can be implemented to promote growth management over the medium or long time. This list, with modifications, can be pursued on a prioritized basis as resources and commitments can be secured.

The following table highlights activities to promote growth management that will begin in the short term. These activities have leadership commitments indicated.

TABLE IMPI

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY ACTION		SUGGESTED LEADERSHIP COMMITMENTS	TIME	POTENTIAL RESOURCES, FUNDING, PARTICIPATION
Update a detailed 5 yr Capital Plan to continue to plan for large infrastructure and facility expenses		Infrastructure, Building, Financial Committee	Annually	Town Manager, DPW Director, Selectmen, others
Seek external funding for community supported improvements. Identify and actively apply/lobby for state or federal grants		Town Manager, Selectmen	On-going	Depending on specific need programs of MassHighway, DHCD, EOE, DEM, DEP and other State and Federal agencies.
Work at implementing the Open Space/Recreation 5 year Action Plan including the adoption of a Scenic Mountain Area for Lenox Mountain and developing regulations for protection of it.		Conservation Commission Planning Board Selectmen	On-going	Legal and environmental experts from Lenox and surrounding communities of Richmond and Stockbridge
Investigate reducing the density allowed by zoning in the general area along and near East Street		Planning Board	1999	BRPC
Revise Subdivision Regulations w general conditions and guidelines for developers to incorporate better design and community benefits tied to flexible requirements. Also set expiration time for unbuilt subdivisions.		Planning Board	2000	
Adopt regulations to implement the Scenic Mountain Act		Conservation Commission	Directly following adoption of area	
File an update to this Plan every three years at a minimum. Update data tables with information from the 2000 Census, conduct a general evaluation, modify strategies as necessary		Planning Board	2002	
Work at implementing other strategies in the Master Plan by maintaining awareness of key strategies and seeking leadership commitments		Planning Board, Others	On-going	
Provide input, guide and support the development and implementation of a Regional Plan for the Berkshires		Planning Board BRPC Delegate & Alternate	1999 and Beyond	
Participate in regional and state growth management initiatives thru official decrees, lobbying for land banking, ANR reform, etc.		Planning Board Selectmen	On-going	

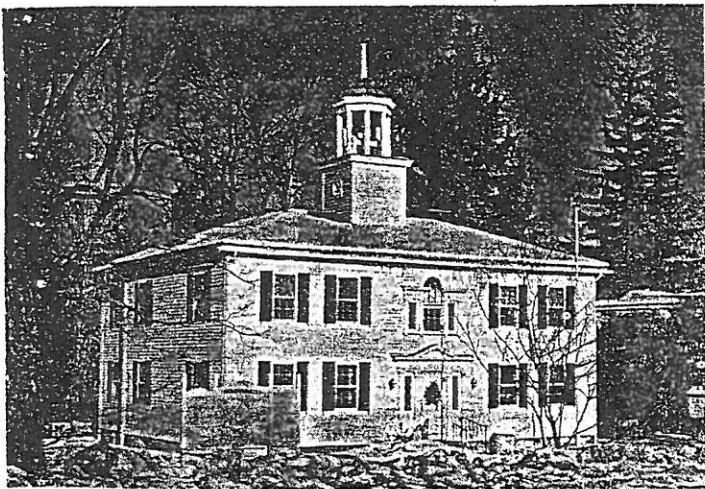
*A Summary of
Goals & Future Strategies
From the Town of Lenox
Comprehensive Master Plan
And Open Space/Recreation Plan*



The Lenox Planning Task Force and the Lenox Planning Board, in conjunction with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, have worked together on the town's updated 1999 Master and Open Space/Recreation Plans, prepared with financial assistance from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

Introduction

Lenox is a community with Much to be Proud of. Residents of Lenox take great pride in their town's environmental resources, economic resourcefulness, and small town social fabric, while remaining concerned that these important strengths are preserved and continue to provide for future generations of children and grandchildren. The extensive forested areas, mountainous topography, pastoral lands and wetlands lend the town a distinctly vibrant aesthetic and natural beauty that is treasured highly by residents. Historic Lenox Village is truly a showcase of interesting architecture, public buildings such as the Town Hall and the Library, social points such as prominent churches and the Lenox Community Center.



Historical, cultural and tourist attractions continue to provide a source of income for many residents of Lenox and surrounding towns. Former 'Great Estate' resorts and guest accommodations also contribute to the financial well being of the town, providing substantial public funds to maintain a high level of quality public services. Restaurants, inns and shops are particularly attractive to the many visitors who frequent town to enjoy cultural opportunities, such as the world-renowned Tanglewood music center.

Although the town has experienced a declining birthrate and increase in retirees, there is still a strong presence of families and long-time residents. One of the joys of frequenting Lenox Village is the pedestrian accessibility that serves residents as well as visitors. The Village of Lenox Dale retains its genuine residential character, continues today to be a place where families can afford to live, and provides links to key industrial and river recreation points. These factors help make Lenox a neighborly place in which to live, where residents feel safe and

welcomed. A variety of organizations and associations have traditionally contributed to making the town work and Lenox's very strong cultural connections appear to be self-sustaining.

Lenox has a high standard of quality and community characteristics that attract newcomers, visitors and businesses. The influence of tourism and Lenox's status as a quality community are both unlikely to change. This will help to sustain the community. The main issue is simply whether the community will make special efforts to redirect, and compensate for, some of the market forces that are changing the community. The demand for developable land and for affordable housing will continue to be a challenge. Difficult choices regarding development, redevelopment and reuse will continue to surface.

The purpose of the Open Space & Recreation Plan is to protect, preserve and enhance its open space holdings and recreational facilities. The Master Plan can be valuable for shaping the type of development in Lenox's future. In the future, as changes in the community are proposed, the following questions should be asked: What is the relationship of this change to existing conditions? Would the change be in conformance with established goals, policies and plans? Active residents, town leaders and organizations should continue to foster adaptation that will be in keeping with the general vision to:

Guide the development, enhancement and conservation of the town to create a more diverse yet tightly woven community that pridefully sustains its rich cultural base and excellent amenities as it meets the economic and social needs of present and future residents.

To accomplish the vision the community must balance social, economic, and environmental needs to preserve overall quality of life and community character. This will be promoted by: ***Implementing the Master and Open Space/Recreation Plans.***

For brevity this summary focuses on key segments of the Master and Open Space/Recreation Plans that were prepared by BRPC with a great deal of public input including the direct involvement of a broad based Lenox Planning Task Force. The Plans will be presented to the community for further input, and reviewed and approved by the Lenox Planning Board. Consult the actual documents for more detailed information.

Topics Covered in Lenox's Open Space/ Recreation and Master Plans

Open Space and Recreation	Master Plan
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Open Space? • Statement of Purpose • Planning Process and Public Participation <p>Community Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Context • History of the Community • Population Characteristics • Growth and Development Patterns <p>Environmental Inventory and Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geology, Soils and Topography • Landscape Character • Water Resources • Vegetation • Fisheries and Wildlife • Scenic Resources & Unique Environments • Environmental Problems <p>Inventory of Open Space & Recreation Lands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected and Unprotected Parcels • Chapter Lands • Public Lands • Private Lands • Non-Profit Lands • Inventory of Recreation Facilities <p>Community Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of Process • Open Space & Recreation Goals <p>Analysis of Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of Resource Protection Needs • Summary of Community Needs • Management Needs <p>Goals and Objectives</p> <p>Five-Year Action Plan</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>History and Cultural Resources</p> <p>Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population Trends • Demographic Characteristics • Population Projections <p>Community Services, Facilities & Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Learning • Town Hall and Public Safety • Other Municipal Facilities and Services • Government and Fiscal Conditions <p>Economics and Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regional and Local Economy • Employment and Income <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Characteristics and Conditions • Issues of Supply and Affordability <p>Neighborhood Areas & Development Patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprawl and Nurturing Alternatives <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory and Capacity • Transportation Goals • Connections, Scenarios & Issues <p>Municipal Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and Wastewater • Storm Drainage System <p>Natural Resources, Open Space & Recreation Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Features and Recreation Areas • Development Constraints and Open Space and Recreation Opportunities <p>Wise Land Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Land Uses and Trends • Current Land Uses and Zoning • A Vision of Preserving and Adapting • Potential Land Uses and Zoning

Goals to Dynamically Preserve Community Character

The community seeks a balance between social diversity, economic prosperity, and environmental and aesthetic protection. Overall, residents would like to retain and enhance the quality of life, the attractiveness of the town, the natural endowment, and the high quality of services and cultural events. Town leaders are cognizant of the need to sustain a robust local economy in order to maintain the fiscal base to support services and facilities. However, residents do not appear to support additional retail development that will serve only visitors. Responses to the community-wide survey (sent to all household addresses), at a community visioning session, and input throughout the process indicate residents would like to:

- *Keep community size stable and rate of growth low. Generally preserve community composition but become a bit more diverse and inclusive of younger people and families.*
- *Preserve Lenox's outstanding historical, cultural, and visual resources. Promote the retention of scenic and community qualities related to road corridors.*
- *Continue to provide high quality public and educational services.*
- *Provide a variety of recreational opportunities that serve all ages, physical conditions, and interests of year-round and summer residents. Ensure Kennedy Park and Post Farm are well preserved and utilized as multi-use recreation/conservation areas. Make the Housatonic River easily accessible to canoeists, wildlife observers, and pedestrian traffic.*
- *Maintain the local business and employment base. Improve employment options for young professionals, preferably by adding advanced service jobs.*
- *Support the continuation of significant non-residential sources of public revenues. Maintain economic vitality and fiscal health, but direct new development and investment to meet resident and community needs. Promote cultural tourism as a vital part of the economy.*
- *Maintain a safe flow of traffic throughout town. Maintain adequate parking downtown.*
- *Maintain the housing stock to safe and suitable standards. Have an appropriate increased level of affordable housing for singles, young families and moderate income retirees available within town boundaries, preferably in or near the pedestrian services and amenities of the Villages.*
- *Preserve communal qualities and enrich opportunities for social diversity and interaction among the population and with nature. Promote walking, bicycling, and transit. Promote better forms of residential development that include a variety of housing types, connected by an expanded network of sidewalks, trails, and open spaces that will encourage greater interaction between residents as members of the community.*
- *Maintain a viable system for cost effective delivery of high quality drinking water. Maintain viable systems for the safe and effective collection and treatment of waste water. Maintain and enhance environmentally sensitive storm water and flood protection systems. Provide for the orderly extension of utility services where appropriate and necessary.*
- *Environmental goals will be met as all water resource areas that relate to public health and safety are preserved and protected. The valuable diversity of plant and wildlife habitat and other ecologically sensitive areas is protected. Agricultural lands are preserved. When development does occur, strong efforts are made to protect the environment from adverse impacts.*

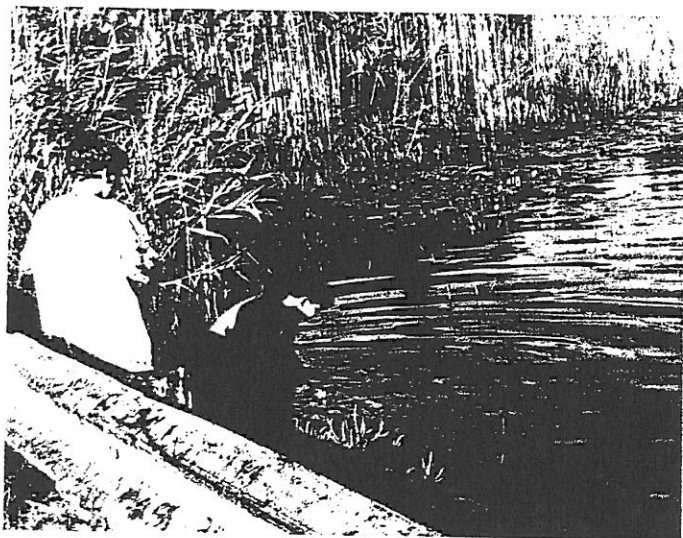
A Great Start in Resource Protection Laying the Foundation for Future Efforts

The Town of Lenox enjoys wonderful aesthetic and environmental resources, which must be used and conserved wisely. The Town already has an extensive inventory of permanent protected open space, including several

thousand acres under State, Federal, Town or non-profit Conservation ownership. However, many treasured spots remain unprotected or in temporary protection (Chapter lands). Overall, the protection and management of Lenox's open spaces should be enhanced to protect wildlife habitat, protect natural resources, provide recreational activities which respect their natural surroundings, maintain scenic views and preserve Lenox's rural character. Many of the factors involved cross municipal borders, necessitating that Lenox work in cooperation with other communities.

Water Resources

Lenox draws its public water supply primarily from town reservoirs located on Lenox Mountain, and also purchases water from the Pittsfield public water supply during its busy summer season. The watershed area for the reservoirs is town owned and the land is permanently protected. The town also owns land and water rights on October Mountain, should additional water supplies be necessary in the future.



Chemical pollutants from area industries contaminated the Housatonic River, rendering the fish inedible and making the river undesirable for swimming. In the last few years local and regional environmental groups, including the Housatonic River Restoration (HRR), have worked to ensure cleanup of the river and plan for its enhanced recreational and scenic use. These efforts will be expanded even further over the next few years as Housatonic River communities benefit from a settlement by

General Electric that is designated for the clean-up of the River, and Lenox officials and residents should endeavor to play a large part in the process.

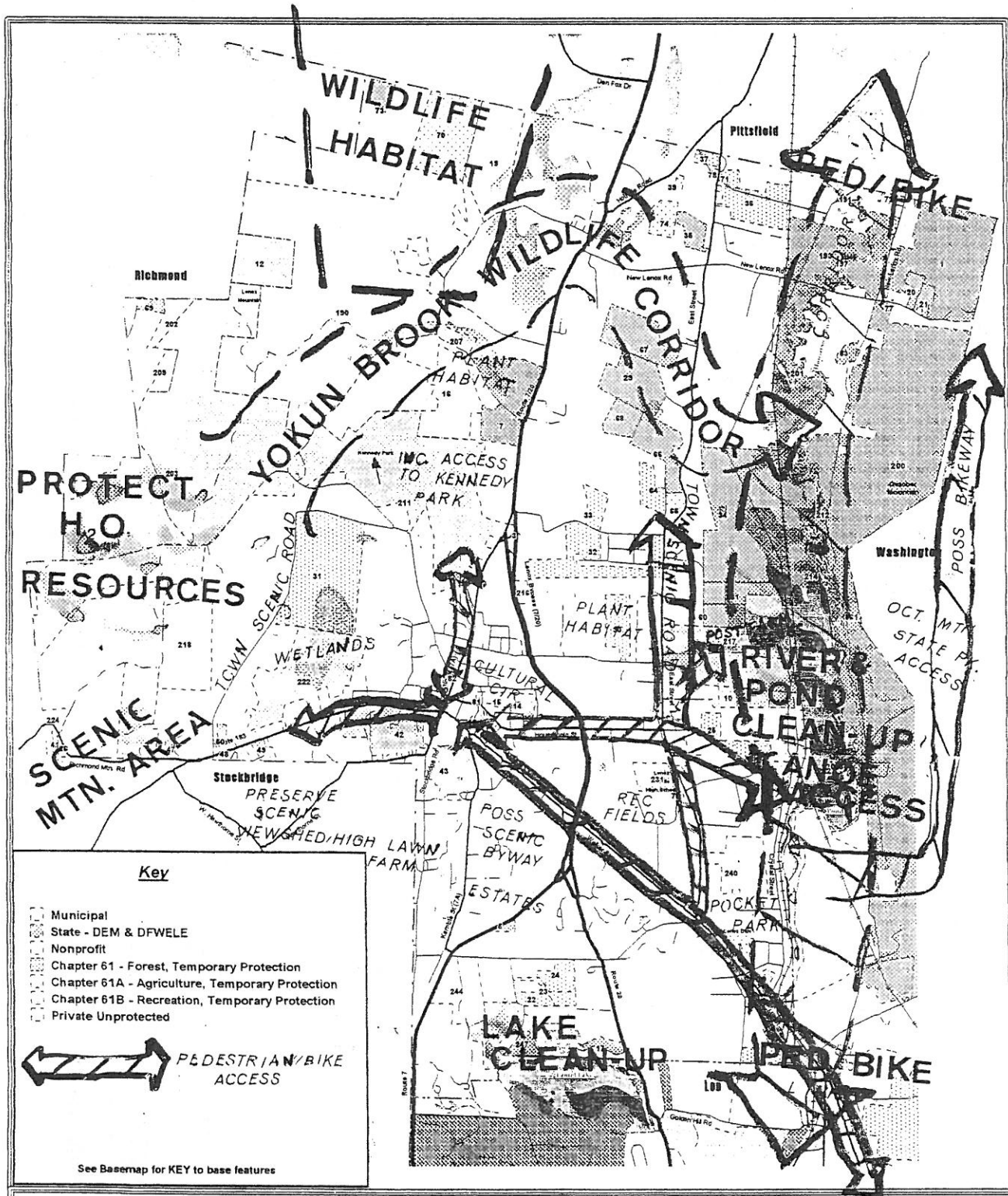
One of the most significant of the town's ponds and lakes is Laurel Lake, which is shared with the Town of Lee. Facilities at the lake include Lenox Town Beach. Laurel Lake is a popular site for cottages, whose septic systems can contribute nutrients to the Lake. Nitrates and phosphorus are possible 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. Lenox and Lee should work together to ensure that steps are taken to minimize pollution to the Lake, and provide resources/encouragement to abutting landowners to mitigate pollution.

Wetlands in their natural state have historically been considered undesirable and are indeed unsuitable for many types of development. Although draining and filling of wetlands were common in the past, these practices are both expensive and damaging to the environment, making this sort of development ill-advised in general. The value of wetlands has been formally recognized by the State Wetland Protection Act and Lenox Bylaws that protect wetlands in order to ensure wildlife diversity, outdoor recreation, purification of aquifer recharge areas, flood control (stabilization of runoff), reduction and prevention of erosion, and scenic qualities. Strategies for Water Resource Preservation include:

- *Town officials, residents and organizations should also cooperate to clean up water bodies such as the Housatonic River, Woods Pond and Laurel.*
- *Ideally, the Yokun Brook wildlife corridor running through the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary and surrounding areas should be extended to the Housatonic via protection and acquisition of land.*

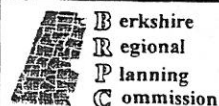
Soils and Slopes: Limits to Development

Lenox's development is restricted due to the town's steep slopes, erosion-susceptible soils and extensive floodplain. Steep slopes,



LENOX: OPEN SPACE & RECREATION ACTION MAP

This map created by:



This map is provided for general planning and educational purposes only. It shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes.

MASSHIGHWAY ROAD INVENTORY data was created and provided by MassHighway as road inventory data Year-end 1990 (January 5, 1999).

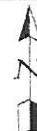
SURFACE WATER (USGS) data was created and provided by MassGIS. It was derived from USGS 1:25,000 and 1:100,000 Hydrography Digital Line Graph (DLG) quadrangle files (July 1997).

COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES data was created and provided by MassGIS. It was derived from USGS 1:25,000 7.5' quadrangles (March 1991).

OPEN SPACE data was created and provided by MassGIS (March 1991). It was edited and updated by BRPC.

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.

0 0.25 0.5
Miles



MAP DATE: February 1, 1999

* Colored parcels of land are protected to varying degrees through a number of different means (refer to key). Gray parcels are those of importance to the town and region that are not in fact protected. Numbers on the parcels correspond to charts in the Open Space and Recreation Plan that detail ownership, usage and protected status.

comprising approximately 25% of the town's 13,862 acres, are the largest single physical element affecting future development. October Mountain and Lenox Mountain occupy many square miles of these upland acres. Most of these steep slopes are under permanent protection, are already developed, or are very difficult to develop due to their highly erosive soils. In flatter areas of town, the scarcity of land available for new development will likely lead to future projects being proposed on marginal lots. Lenox will continue to face the challenge of redirecting development from unsuitable lands to more suitable areas or modes. Strategies for preventing development in areas prone to erosion include:

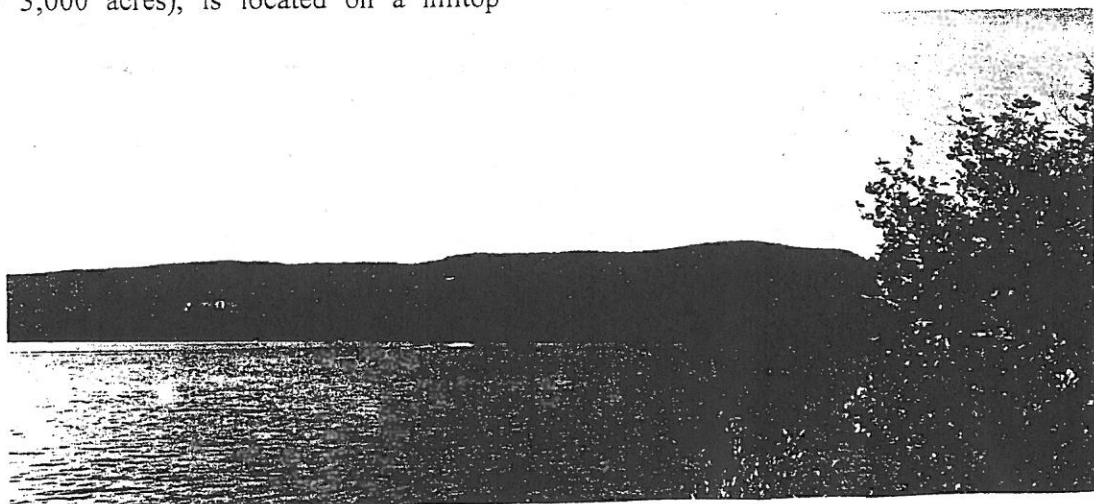
- *The town Planning Board, Conservation Commission should direct more intensive growth and development away from natural resource and habitat areas through regulatory methods such as hillside zoning or by adopting regulations for the Scenic Mountains Act.*
- *The town should consider extending requirements Environmental Impact Analysis, particularly in larger developments and on marginally developable lands.*

Farmlands: Historic and Cultural Resources in Jeopardy

Agricultural lands, though difficult to farm profitably, are nonetheless a valuable open space and historical resource. Remaining farmlands are most abundant in the northeastern part of town. The largest of the region's few remaining dairy farms, High Lawn Farms (nearly 3,000 acres), is located on a hilltop

overlooking Laurel Lake. Although the farm is located in Lee and Stockbridge, Lenox officials recognize its importance as a sub-regional gem to be preserved, and are willing to work with the current owners and the other towns in order to ensure the farm's preservation. A large amount of remaining farmlands are under Chapter 61A (temporary protection). The conversion of these lands for increased housing development could threaten the rural landscape and scenic views that still exist throughout town. Many of these lands are actually well-suited for development, and Lenox officials and residents, and groups such as the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, will need to work cooperatively with land owners in order to preserve them for the enjoyment of future generations. Possibilities for doing so include everything from the direct acquisition of land through donations or outright purchase to use of the state agricultural preservation restriction program. Strategies for preserving farmlands and pastures include:

- *Continue to provide tax relief for owners of farmed or pastured parcels and delay development for an extended period of time through Chapter 61A designation, or Chapter 61 designation for forested parts of farms.*
- *The designation of town scenic roads and/or participation in a proposed scenic byway program could help draw attention and even support to the aesthetic and historic appeal of agricultural fields.*
- *Encouraging local participation in cooperatives and suppliers and support nearby sub-regional farm producers and farmers by "buying local."*



Scenic Resources and Open Space

Pastoral lands, ridges and viewsheds should continue to serve as assets for the town as development is limited and key permanent acquisitions occur. Lenox's water resources, rolling terrain, extensive farmland and pastures, parks and thriving downtown and residential areas are aesthetically pleasing to resident and visitor alike. They are important to maintain the quality of life desired by residents, as well as to attract tourist revenues, and thus need to be protected from degradation. Care should be taken in planning recreational activities to ensure that allowed uses do not threaten the environmental integrity of the natural habitat or the scenic quality of these lands.

Although the town is quite handsome, it faces potential threats from over-development, traffic congestion and pollution due to pressures from tourism, residential housing pressures, industry and other key components of the local and regional economy. Strip commercial and residential development along scenic roadsides and hilltops is a potential degradation that can and should be minimized.

Sophisticated land use management is important to preserving Open Space. The Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, the Selectmen and other boards and commissions have made much progress in preserving community assets. The town has already made numerous efforts to improve entrances to the town and protect these scenic resources through initiatives and by-law changes. These must be continued and expanded, or the town will lose the beauty that makes it so attractive currently.

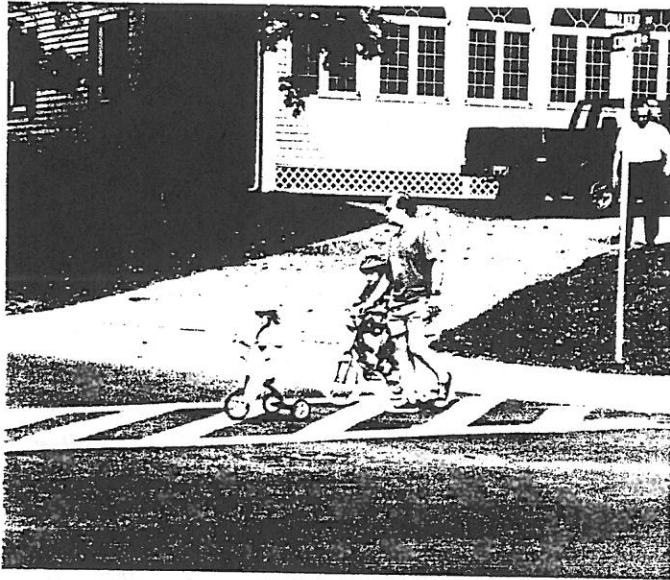
Lenox's need in open space is for select areas, either for active recreation or for preservation of open land. Generally, the guiding factors for acquisition of parcels of land should be to protect environmental and community resources, promote recreational linkages, limit residential sprawl, and promote a healthy economy. A high level of public & private participation and cooperation is key to sustaining conservation and cultural endeavors. Strategies for preserving scenic resources include:

- *Corridor lands and scenic roads such as East Street and Under Mountain Road should be protected through a variety of mechanisms, such as securing easements, the declaration of Scenic Roads and/or Mountains designations, and the Forest Legacy program.*
- *Consider zoning changes to allow back lot development through flexible lot frontages and provide enticements for developers to set aside open space for scenic preservation, recreation and/or conservation in their projects through easements or dedications.*
- *Redevelopment of existing sites should be deemed a priority in order to benefit from already extant infrastructure in town and to minimize the visual and environmental impacts of continuing sprawl.*

Connections: A Multi-Faceted Approach to Transportation, Circulation and Community Interaction

The basic purpose of a transportation system is to get people where they want to go and to deliver goods in a timely, inexpensive manner. In addition, the system should meet current needs *and* be sustainable in the future in terms of supporting communities, preserving the environment, and supporting the economy. This requires going beyond on any one transportation mode to a broader focus that fits all of the interlocking pieces together into the overall planning and development process.

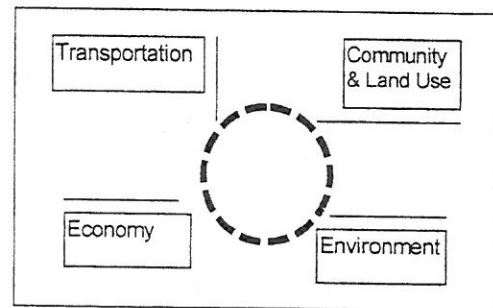
In the Community Survey and Visioning process, Lenox residents indicated their desire for access to the Housatonic River, and to parks. Residents voiced a desire for better roads, improved and additional sidewalks and trails that would facilitate greater interaction between residents. Scattered neighborhood "pocket" parks also would likely provide a return on their investment in the form of recreational and social benefits. Enhanced walkways linked to town centers would encourage residents to use these as gathering places.



A sidewalk/trail network was envisioned that would connect the Village Center and Lenox Dale with each other and in turn with the Housatonic River, Woods Pond, and various other natural and cultural attractions within town. Limited water-based recreation and hiking trails exist at Woods Pond and have been recently expanded, although public accessibility remains somewhat limited. This natural greenway area could be linked to Lenox Dale, Post Farm and the state forests, and thus be better utilized by bicyclists, hikers, canoeists, and nature lovers. The River-based trail would connect Lenox to Pittsfield, Lee and beyond.

Traffic congestion, particularly in the summer tourist season, has long been an issue for Lenox residents, and is likely to remain so in the future, although numerous road improvements and initiatives that might encourage tourists to forego their autos while in town could alleviate matters somewhat. Vehicle miles traveled in Berkshire County in 1990 increased by over 60% from 1970, even as the population decreased. Traffic counts at the nearest continuous count station on Route 20 in Lee double their January levels during the peak summer travel months of July and August. Given this situation, safety concerns must also play heavily into transportation planning in town, so that the various modes of transport - from foot power to cars - can co-exist without undue conflict.

Connections can also be promoted through design with a pedestrian orientation to minimize dependence on individual motorized transportation. By linking development and redevelopment to existing centers, the traditional neighborhood pattern is enhanced. Most of the activities of daily living are within walking distance, everyone, but especially the elderly and the young, gain independence of movement. Pedestrian streets and squares invite neighbors to come to know each other and to watch over their collective well being. The expenses of road construction are limited. Parking is designed to avoid massive expanses of driveways and parking lots. Public transit becomes a viable alternative to the automobile. This form begins to address the relationship shown below.



Strategies for improving Lenox's pedestrian and transportation network include:

- *Lenox officials and the Department of Public Works should coordinate, using citizen input, efforts to improve and increase existing sidewalks and road shoulders for bikes in a network that is safe and efficient. The sidewalk improvements map in the Transportation section of the Master Plan provides a sense of where to begin on this task with destinations that include the Village Center, schools, town parks and other gathering places for residents of all ages to walk, meet and play.*
- *Enhance the Village Center in downtown Lenox as a popular meeting and relaxation place for residents during the day and into the evening, with inviting benches and gathering areas, and a coffee shop or*

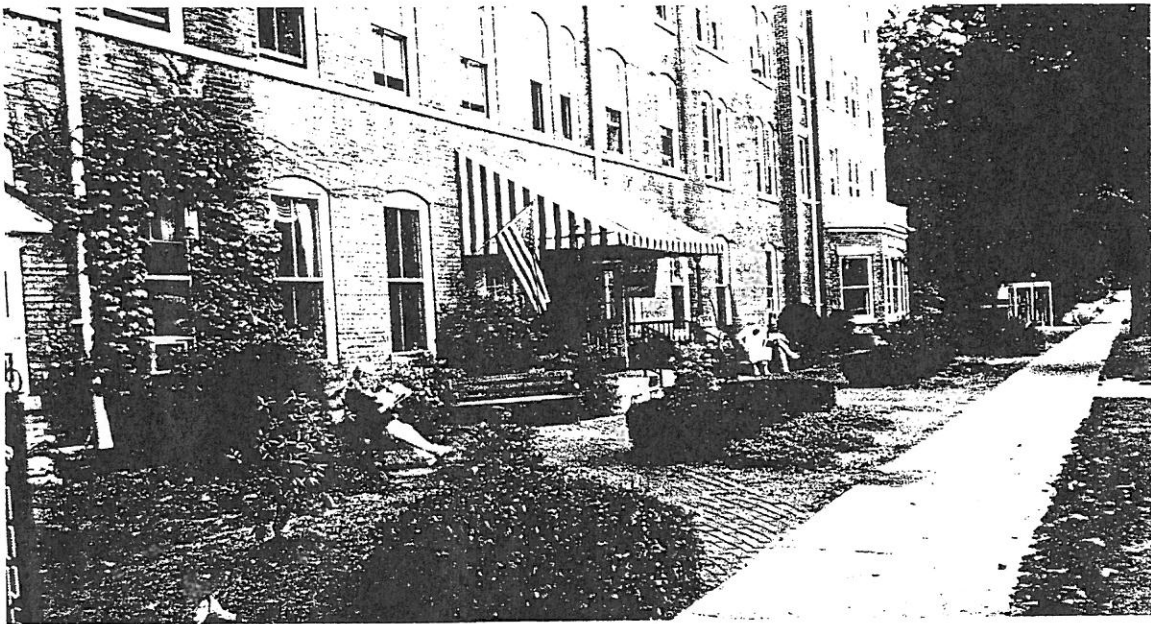
similar gathering place that stays open late.

- *The Conservation Commission, Planning Board and others should work together with HRR and other organizations to guide the development of a trails and recreation network. Specifically, the Housatonic River corridor should be made more accessible for canoeists, wildlife observers, walkers, and bikers where appropriate. Kennedy Park and Post Farm should be an integral part of this network, with connections to Lenox Dale, the Village Center, and New Lenox. Biking trails should also link state-owned lands on October and Lenox Mountains with links to the pedestrian-only trails system at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary. The Open Space and Recreation Plan Action Map provides a sense of how to connect these*

areas. The trails network should also be designed to connect with similar trail systems in neighboring municipalities.

Providing Housing for the Community

There is a variety of residential housing types and living arrangements in Lenox that provide for quality living experiences. Although Lenox's year round population has declined in recent decades to its present level of 5,594, the number of residential units in town continues to grow in response to factors such as a demand for seasonal and second homes and the town's burgeoning popularity as a retirement mecca. Population projections for the year 2020 generally range from 5,300 to 6,300.



The two town-controlled senior (and special needs) residences have a combined total of over 100 units for elders of limited income. Although there is sometimes a waiting period of upwards of six months to get into these facilities, the Curtis Hotel and Turnure Terrace generally serve the needs of Lenox's elder population. In recent years, several retirement and condominium developments have greatly increased the total number of units. These are generally in a relatively higher-priced category and serve the seasonal and retirement market. Numerous retirement and assisted living

complexes have sprung up in the last decade or so. New residential retirement quarters have been built at Devonshire Estates, and a 48 unit addition is planned at Kimball Farms. A proposed assisted living project at the former Cameron School will help fill a gap in the provision of *affordable* assisted living units. Assisted living residences are designed to promote residents' independence and dignity, and fill a critical gap in attending to elders who require personal care but who do not have any intensive medical needs.

Issues of Housing Supply and Affordability

Lenox will remain a community with high housing values and high average housing costs with limited accessibility. It is important to explore small ways in which some of the housing needs of the community may be met. In Lenox, as in most parts of the United States, there is an affordability problem, particularly for those living on limited incomes. Housing affordability is tied to several factors including income, and 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. In the first six months of 1998, the median sales price for a home in Lenox was \$160,000 versus \$100,000 for the County.

Lenox's desirability as a mecca for second homeowners and retirees benefits the town fiscal situation tremendously. However, this situation also drives up the cost of housing for young families, singles and retirees of moderate means, who often must move out of town in order to purchase or even rent a home within their means. 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 Lenox, earning up to 80% or more of the area income, cannot afford safe and suitable rental housing in town. These same families and individuals are also unable to purchase such housing in Lenox. Even Lenox families and employees at or 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 also involves availability.

It is unlikely for large scale affordable housing to occur in Lenox. Many communities are skeptical of encouraging affordable housing and few small communities actually actively seek it. In Lenox's case however, an analysis of the desires of the community and the issues involved indicate this option should be taken seriously. Because this course would require public assistance to counteract the market, it can be controlled to avoid negative consequences. Provision of local affordable housing could help

local employers retain their workers. Affordable housing can occur seamlessly through apartments for mixed ages and incomes.

Downtown retirement housing is present in the upper stories of the former Curtis Hotel. It may be feasible to build mixed type/market housing within pedestrian distances of both Lenox Village and Lenox Dale. New buildings consistent with existing architectural styles, with shops or offices on the first floor, and apartments above could be constructed. Reasonably priced, potentially buildable land, is more likely to be found near Lenox Dale, where opportunities may be greater for market based semi affordable housing.

Options for singles and younger families might be achieved by allowing accessory apartments in some of the larger homes near the downtown and/or by constructing small apartment buildings. Developers could be encouraged to include a small number of smaller-scale, affordable housing units and/or communal open spaces in their plans in order to provide opportunities for greater community diversity. Clustering of homes is allowed under zoning, but does not carry an incentive. If this form is truly preferable, development proposals that incorporate it should be considered preferentially or be otherwise rewarded.

Programs to counter/compensate for market pressures may be necessary. To sufficiently provide for the varied housing needs of Lenox residents, and address gaps and trends in residential land uses that are significantly changing the character of the community, strategies should be specifically applied so that they contribute overall benefits to the community.

- *Adjust zoning to allow compact housing with community parking, neo-traditional housing, accessory residences in businesses, and other regulatory mechanisms. Create the zoning framework that will encourage proposals for clustered and neo-traditional housing development.*
- *Modify Estates Preservation Area criteria to allow reuse of historical properties in R-1 that will include provisions to encourage*

affordable housing to meet the needs of the community. Allow inclusion of properties of less than 25 acres.

- *Encourage reuse/rehab. of existing buildings over construction of additional ones. Allow reuse to include multi-family residential use under special permitting.*
- *Participate in programs that allow owners of aging housing to gain access to state and federal funds for housing repairs and rehabilitation. This could play a significant role in revitalizing Lenox Dale.*
- *Establish a town policy to actively promote an increased level of affordable housing for all ages and needs and form a working group to consider ways:*
 - *The Town and its Housing Authority could work closely to address housing gaps with other organizations such as the Berkshire Housing Development Corp;*
 - *To encourage developers to include a mix of housing types within developments in order to ensure that at least some new housing is affordable to young working families;*
 - *To encourage and allow local employer sponsored affordable housing.*
- *Implement the existing special permit condition requiring the provision of up to 25 percent (25%) of additional project housing units for persons of low or moderate income.*

Sub-Regional Cooperation

Many of the factors involved in resource preservation and habitat protection cross municipal borders, necessitating that Lenox work in cooperation with other communities particularly Lee, Stockbridge and Pittsfield. All of the areas where Lenox borders other towns are in the Housatonic River Watershed.

Transportation is an issue that naturally crosses town boundaries since most major transportation facilities are used by more than one town's residents.

Lenox can achieve its own objectives and contribute to a healthy regional economy through cooperation with surrounding

municipalities in regional economic development efforts.

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 various alternatives in the future.

An indoor recreation center facility could be a shared facility for multiple uses that would serve diverse segments of the community. One important opportunity is the possibility of sharing recreation facilities (particularly new ones) with other towns. The planned school auditorium will also be available for cultural activities, including theater. Lee is also interested in an indoor pool and there may be opportunities for joint efforts. These options would allow needs to be met at a lower cost.

When trying to reduce cost, or when it is necessary to improve existing services or develop new ones, the town needs to continue reaching outwards to surrounding communities. Tri-Town Health is a good example of resource sharing that is currently working. 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. There is potential to share equipment, buy supplies in bulk, and explore other ways to cooperate.

Sustaining Lenox through Wise Management of Land

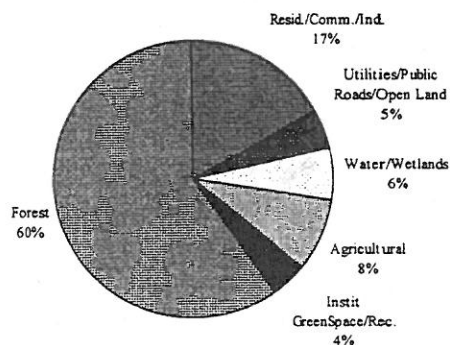
Lenox is a community that respects its heritage and the natural environment, and also wants to provide social and economic opportunities for its citizens. The overall long-term goal is to sustain this balance over time. One major element of sustainability is land and its use. Land use and investment decisions of governmental officials, private organizations, and individuals shape the future.

The development of Lenox, as with most communities, has been and continues to be

influenced by a combination of physical, economic, and sociological factors. According to published estimates, in 1959, only 340 acres of land in Lenox were developed for residential, business or industrial use. In the 1960's, the pattern of sprawling consumption of land took hold and accelerated. By 1985, over 2,200 acres of land were in residential, commercial or industrial use, and approximately 2,769 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 impacted the environment greatly. Continued conversion of most of the traditional farmlands and forested areas in Lenox to medium and low density residential development would threaten the rural landscape and scenic views.

Due primarily to its topography, Lenox 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 1998 survey of land use. Approximately 60% of total acreage is forested. A majority of the developed area is comprised of single family residential uses.

Land Use in Lenox - 1998



Despite a stable population, conversion of undeveloped land for new residences has continued in recent times, although at a much lower rate than in the 1960's and 1970's. Lenox's attractiveness as a cultural, resort and retirement location has contributed to a predominant trend of related development and changes in land use. Recent patterns of new residential uses, including special housing for seniors, have been more compact, and have also occurred through development along the commercial corridors and the reuse of large institutional properties. Overall, the volume of land involved in this trend is not overwhelming: approximately 200 acres of land were converted to development from 1985 to 1998.

LAND USES IN LENOX - UMass MacConnell classification 1985, 1998 BRPC update

Land Category	1985 Acres	1998 Acres	Change in Acres 1985-1998	% Change 1985-1998
Agriculture	1,243	1,151	-92	-7.4%
Forest	8,635	8,466	-169	-1.6%
Water	224	224	0	0.0%
Wetland	603	594	-9	-1.4%
Open Land	383	425	42	10.8%
Institut. Greenspace and Recreation	503	546	43	8.5%
Residential < 1/2 Acre	784	875	91	11.6%
Residential > 1/2 Acre	1,181	1,227	46	3.9%
Commercial	229	245	16	7.0%
Industrial/Trans/Mining/Waste	72	72	0	0.0%

Issues To Consider

The trend of consumption of land for residential uses is not high. Lenox should never return to a pattern of high volume low-density sprawl. This

is a positive situation, since the high costs of low-density sprawl development can over-stress public infrastructure and local fiscal capacity, affecting natural resources such as aquifers and

waterways, increasing traffic congestion and changing community character. Development is still occurring however, resulting in the permanent loss of farmlands, open space, and scenic resources - some of the very qualities that give Lenox its distinctive character. Overall the trends of concern are more related to the location, pattern, and impacts such as the potential harmful affects of commercial and residential sprawl on tourism, the main source of revenue for Lenox's economy; trends that could over the long term, make Lenox a less attractive destination.

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. In response to the actual and threatened harm to the environment, conservation organizations also have been acquiring large amounts of land for protection. The combined effect of both sprawl and preservation is that there has been a reduction of land available for future economic development. Although this may not be a clear community concern at the present time, there may be a need at some point in the future for sites with adequate access off an existing highway, sewer and water availability, and manageable site conditions. Currently there exists very little readily developable land of reasonable size. This has been an issue with local firms that wished to expand and may preclude a desirable future employer from locating in Lenox.

Trends, combined with the amount of potential developable land, help us to forecast likely future patterns. According to information from the Assessor's office, over 100 developable residential parcels exist. Parcels in this category totaled about 700 acres in 1996-97. Recent actual experience appears to indicate that the supply of unconstrained or minimally constrained acreage has been disappearing fast. The amount of growth that can be accommodated will depend in a large part on natural resource constraints, and preferences of the marketplace. Today, the finite supply of undeveloped land in Lenox, though large, is heavily limited by legal and physical development constraints including existing development, protected open space, known

wetlands, steep slopes, and other constraints. Thus, the potential for continuation of development patterns impacted by shrinking supply remains strong. Over the long term, it is likely that Lenox will continue to slowly progress toward buildout and the rate of land consumption will continue to decline as large developable parcels become more scarce.

Other potentially developable or redevelopable parcels also exist, namely portions of the 1,200 plus acres in the state Chapter programs, under temporary protection, and other partially developed large parcels that could be further subdivided. There is a potential for continuation of the level and types of land conversion recently occurring. Reuse of larger parcels has been a positive for the most part. There is certainly more potential for this to occur, enabled but guided by wise regulatory oversight. One area where significant single family development may occur is the central eastern portion of town. If utilities, namely sewer, are extended along East Street, this will probably encourage further development, particularly through subdivision of back land areas currently without roads. This land is zoned for medium density residential use (20,000 square feet with utilities). Proposals will then be made to develop this land.

Growth Management Strategies

The recommended strategy is to encourage sustainable growth and development to help maintain an overall high quality of life. This will require jointly accommodating both socio-economic and environmentally beneficial uses. Land, and its different uses, 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 prescriptive strategy can help to effectively guide and integrate appropriate new development within the existing context of development in Lenox.

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 land 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.

Strategies for maintaining economic vitality and fiscal health, and targeting new development include:

- *Revitalize the Lenox Dale industrial/commercial areas and other non-residential areas as necessary and feasible.*
- *Carefully guide the location and form of new commercial and business development. Consider expanding Site Plan Review.*
- *Continue to promote and support a strong local and regional base of tourism.*
- *Support the efforts of quasi public local business development organizations.*
- *Target development assistance programs, tie public support to adherence to community goals and policies.*
- *Create incentives and preferential loans for businesses that will serve local resident needs.*
- *Establish a formal Infrastructure Policy that strongly discourages unnecessary and inefficient costs including long term costs, and is consistent with other strategies.*
- *Require Financial Impact Analysis for large projects and consider the imposition of impact fees.*
- *Strengthen the importance of meeting community needs as a criteria for granting Special Permits and as a criteria for granting waivers for subdivision requirements.*

The above strategies need to be achieved within a framework for sustainability and spatial efficiency in land use management. These strategies involve actions to promote full

appropriate utilization of the villages centers, existing developed areas and infrastructure, including:

- *Preserve the historical qualities of Lenox Village and the estate areas by continuing to allow and expand options for reuse.*
- *Generally enhance Lenox Dale by directing appropriate investment opportunities there.*
- *Allow flexible alternatives for residential development with incentives if necessary such as cluster zoning, planned unit developments, neo-traditional neighborhood development.*
- *Consider zoning changes to increase density in and near villages with transit or pedestrian services.*
- *Consider zoning changes to reduce 'suburban' density and discourage sprawl to undeveloped areas where it would not be in keeping with community character.*
- *Promote sustainable growth management through a continuation of long-range planning and pro-active land acquisition and conservation. Select and monitor basic indicators of sustainability, such as the volume of land conversion, the level of local employment, average household consumption of water, etc.*
- *Support the formation of sub-regional cooperative efforts and organizations involved in growth management, including educational endeavors.*
- *Continue on-going planning by monitoring progress of plan recommended actions, new development conditions and trends, and by updating action and implementation plans.*

Acknowledgments

In addition to thoughtful input from members of the public, the Lenox Citizen Task Force put in many hours of work identifying and exploring the issues and needs of their town, and identifying ways to address these actively. The assistance of all Task Force members is deeply appreciated.

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Town of Lenox Staff

The staff of Town Hall and various town departments, including the Department of Public Works—particularly Superintendent Jeff Vincent—and Parks and Recreation, provided essential technical and administrative assistance.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Staff and Other Consultants

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission served as the Lead Planning Consultant for the project and produced this document.

Thomas Skoglund, Senior Land Use Planner, served as Consultant Project Manager.

Christia Mulvey, Associate Planner, provided technical support for the Task Force in writing the plans and conducting the community survey.

Nat Karns, Executive Director, assisted project management, provided technical assistance.

Zoe Neaderland, Senior Planner, provided technical assistance on linking areas of town.

John Schmid, GIS Planner, provided technical assistance in creating and producing the maps included in this plan.

Sheila Finn, former Natural Resources Planner, provided technical and design support for the project until she left the Commission in June 1998.

Dr. John Mullin from the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at UMass-Amherst ran a community visioning workshop for the town in May 1998.

Others Stakeholders Consulted During the Course of This Project

Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Economic Development Committee, Lenox Housing Authority, Manager of High Lawn Farm, Berkshire Natural Resources Council, and others, including various local citizens and experts.