

LOWE'S HADLEY SITE TRAFFIC ESTIMATES

Site Characteristics:		
Home Improvement Superstore		161,321 sq ft GLA
Restaurant		6,000
Total		167,321 sq ft GLA

Time Period	VEHICLE TRIPS			Route 9 Existing	Route 9 Proposed	%Increase
	Enter	Exit	Total			
WEEKDAY PM PEAK HOUR						
Lowe's	25% Pass-By	76	79	155		
	15% Diverted Linked	48	48	83		
	60% New	183	190	373		
Restaurant	25% Pass-By	10	7	18		
	15% Diverted Linked	6	4	10		
	60% New	23	16	39	1,830	2,038
Total		344	343	687		
WEEKDAY 24-HOUR						
Lowe's	25% Pass-By	725	725	1,450		
	15% Diverted Linked	435	435	870		
	60% New	1,740	1,740	3,479		
Restaurant	25% Pass-By	98	98	196		
	15% Diverted Linked	59	59	117		
	60% New	235	235	469	24,000	25,974
Total		3,290	3,290	6,581		
SATURDAY NOON PEAK HOUR						
Lowe's	25% Pass-By	115	102	218		
	15% Diverted Linked	69	61	131		
	60% New	277	246	523		
Restaurant	25% Pass-By	19	11	30		
	15% Diverted Linked	11	7	18		
	60% New	45	27	72	2,215	2,512
Total		537	454	991		
SATURDAY 24-HOUR						
Lowe's	25% Pass-By	921	921	1,842		
	15% Diverted Linked	553	553	1,105		
	60% New	2,210	2,210	4,421		
Restaurant	25% Pass-By	119	119	238		
	15% Diverted Linked	71	71	143		
	60% New	285	285	570	22,600	24,895
Total		4,159	4,158	8,318		

Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers, Trip Generation, 6th Edition, 1997

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Ron Bronstein
FROM: Steve Savaria
DATE: September 25, 2003
RE: Lowes Hadley

I have attached a table indicating the expected traffic generation numbers for the proposed project in comparison with existing traffic volumes on Route 9 and the corresponding percentage increases calculated from these numbers, showing the expected increases to be less than 15 percent in daily and peak period traffic on Route 9. These figures are the standard accepted values which we will be presenting in the impact analysis for the project, but in fact we feel are quite conservative based on Lowes' experience and the following factors:

- Trends in regional travel tend to be driven by socio-economic factors such as population, employment, workers per household, vehicle ownership, etc. and have a very weak correlation to changes in retail development. I have also attached a graph plotting historic Route 9 traffic data and the Hampshire County unemployment rate over time. In general, weekday traffic volumes have increased at a rate of about 1% annually over the past 15 years, about the same rate as the population of Hadley, during a time of exponential commercial development in the corridor. On the section of Route 9 between Mill Valley Road and North Maple Street, weekday traffic volumes are at the same level now as they were in 1989, despite the construction of multiple commercial projects, each of which were predicted to generate thousands of daily trips.

The majority of peak period trips in the corridor are commuting trips. The largest employer in the region, UMass, is at one end of the corridor, and the densest population center, Northampton, is at the other. It can be seen in the graph that traffic demand on Route 9 peaked about 3 years ago when regional unemployment was at historic lows. Traffic volumes on Route 9 have been going down since then, in response to the poorer economy in general and rising unemployment fueled in part by staff reductions at UMass. Even after Lowes comes to Hadley, if unemployment continues to rise, traffic volume on Route 9 will continue to decline.

- Retail development cannot manufacture customers, it gravitates to where the market already is. Lowes' prospective customers are already in Hadley. They live and work in the area and are traveling on Route 9 daily. Lowes is coming to serve that existing market, not draw customers in from long distances. That is why Wal-Mart came to

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Hadley as well as Northampton, and why traffic has not increased significantly as a result. Lowes presence will not increase the demand for home improvement products in the area. Local residents who already purchase these products will simply not have to travel outside Hadley to do so, and will be able to combine Lowes shopping trips with their other local trip purposes, resulting in reduced vehicle-miles of travel and more efficient use of the transportation infrastructure.

- The notion that office development as an alternative to retail would have less increase traffic impacts is false. While office space may generate less total traffic per acre of land developed, all of the trips will be new, and will multiply as the new workers travel around the region for other purposes as well as commuting. There is no pool of high tech workers currently residing in Hadley which could be employed by businesses occupying large quantities of new office space. There are, however, many thousands of such unemployed or underemployed workers in other parts of the country who would migrate to the area to fill such new jobs, bringing their families and vehicles with them and increasing all those factors identified above as influencing regional travel demand. When you sit in eight lanes of bumper to bumper, stop and go traffic on Route 128 at 5:00 PM, you are among office workers, not shoppers.
- There has been concern raised regarding public safety and statements made that traffic accident rates in Hadley are increasing. The graph also shows the annual total town-wide number of accidents as remaining constant over the same recent period of rapid commercial development.

As a postscript, I will add a personal observation. During the 1980's I counted all the vehicles going into and out of the Campus Plaza shopping center, which was about 12,000 vehicles per day, or roughly half as much as the daily volume on Route 9 at that time. Does that mean that half of the traffic on Route 9 is going to and from Campus Plaza? It does not. Does it mean that if the Campus Plaza didn't exist there would only be half as much traffic on Route 9? Of course not. It means that a lot of the people who drive by the Campus Plaza on a daily basis also choose to shop there on the way to or from wherever else they are going. That is the nature of retail traffic.

Route 9 Traffic Trends

