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# Clark Greylock as Tourist Destination?

**To the Webmaster:**

Initial plans for the WACC Clark Greylock facility at Phelps Knoll, announced in February 2004 press release, included a cafe as well as a "Visitor Orientation Center providing information to tourists on the cultural and natural resource opportunities of Northern Berkshire County and Southern Vermont."

According to the press release, this would serve as "a new gateway to the wonderful sites of the Northern Berkshires. With 70 percent of the region's visitors enter the area through the Route 7 corridor, this location provides a unique opportunity as the Clark has a strong commitment to the promotion of regional tourism to stabilize its economy."

A later press release announcing the architectural designs, from July 2004, does not mention this aggressive tourist-promotional component, though stated space allotments include 2800 sq. ft. of exhibition space, two large porches at 670 sq. ft. each, and 2000 sq. ft. of lobby/store/cafe space.

For all the concern about *potential* commercial development along this corridor, this aspect of the Clark Greylock project represents commercial development staring us in the face.

Does a large tourist center, promoting venues well beyond the Clark itself, really fall into the supposedly "educational" function that the Clark has used to justify the development of this site?

What other potentially destructive features would such a tourist-oriented facility require? Increased signage along Rte. 7? Large paved parking lots for tourist buses? Additional water/sewage capacity?

What changes would have to be made to accommodate the increased traffic/turning activity associated with such a tourist center on a stretch of road with one of the worse sight lines in town?

Do we really need *another* tourist information center, carefully promoting the same selection of over-exposed big-ticket venues with a clutter of pamphlets and brochures, while the small venues continue to languish in the shadows?

Why should the Clark be granted the role of tourist gatekeeper at this site?

The alternative NBHS development would alter the Phelps Knoll site as well, but at least this wouldn't involve the added insult of tourist promotion.

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