

Route 202 & 33 Corridor Re-Zoning Project

February 23, 2024

Project Summary

The Town of South Hadley will develop zoning amendments for the Routes 202/33 corridor based on the recommendations of a Corridor Study adopted in January 2022. Funding for this project is provided by a Community Planning Grant from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. The Route 202/33 corridor is the most heavily traveled corridor in South Hadley, and contains a broad mix of residential, open space and recreation, and commercial uses along the approximately 1-mile length of the two roads. This section of roadway links South Hadley in the north to Granby and Chicopee in the south. The intersection of Routes 202 and 33 at the heart of the corridor is one of five commercial nodes in South Hadley and, is centered between the Plains Elementary School and the Big Y shopping plaza.

The full Corridor Study (January 2022) may be viewed online [here](https://www.southhadley.org/1262/11838/Route-20233-Corridor-Study?activeLiveTab=widgets):

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The Study defines a series of recommendations for addressing the future of the Route 202/33 corridor. The focus of regulatory and public realm recommendations is on creating an identity for a corridor that many see as a through-way to other destinations rather than a destination in and of itself. South Hadley's portion of the corridor is a transition point between the land uses in Chicopee and those in Granby, and the goal is to have an identity that is recognizably South Hadley and not extensions of its neighbors. The corridor's identity should indicate that it is not just a vehicular corridor, but a series of linked neighborhoods and business clusters.

The focus of this project is to implement the zoning and design guidelines recommendations of the Corridor Study, which are summarized as follows:

- Divide corridor into sections by appropriate land uses for the new zoning districts and development density for specific uses within the corridor;
 - Establish zoning regulations and design guidelines for each sector;
 - Establish appropriate design review process for new zoning districts that incorporates relevant design guidelines;
- Consider adding a wider variety of housing types and small business types to the Zoning Use Regulations Schedule to address changing needs for housing and economic development over time;
- Change requirement for permits/approvals to decrease the level of review required for desirable land uses, possibly add design review to all projects requiring site plan approval and/or a special permit;
- Allow conversion of single-family residential in the proposed Gateway District to other uses (Professional Services, Two-family, Three-family, Mixed-use) with site plan review and design guidelines; and,
- Add design guidelines that address convenient access for drivers, such as drive-thru windows, while ensuring safe access for pedestrians and maintaining the residential scale and feel of the corridor.

SCOPE OF WORK

The project scope of work includes the following components and deliverables:

- Three new zoning districts, based on the recommendations of the Route 202/33 Corridor Study: Low-density mixed-use, Gateway, and Open Space and Recreation;
- Design guidelines, including text and illustrations;
- Amendments to the zoning map;
- Public engagement, including three public forums and broad outreach (e.g. door hangars, newspaper ads, social media, online survey, etc.);
- Meetings with project advisory committee (6-8 meetings); and,
- Public hearings with the Planning Board (3-4 meetings).

Task 1: Project Initiation

- Meet with Town staff to discuss the work plan and public engagement strategy.
- Meet with Advisory Committee to introduce them to the planning process and previous work (Route 202/33 Corridor Study).

Task 2: Analysis of Conditions

- Evaluate physical changes to the corridor since the original corridor study was completed.
- Document specific buildings/sites of concern for use in the public engagement process.
- Conduct additional analysis on the transition border from one proposed subdistrict to the next to justify the proposed boundaries.

Task 3: Draft Zoning, Boundaries and Design Guidelines

- Develop a draft zoning framework from the recommendations of the corridor plan.
 - Consider format (base vs. overlay, Euclidean vs. Form-Based)
 - Identify options for development standards/design guidelines to test with the community.
 - Develop precise boundaries for the three recommended districts.
- Create visuals and presentation formats (slide deck, video, online survey) to communicate the draft framework and reasoning behind the proposed changes.
- Meet with the Advisory Committee to discuss options implications for the draft zoning framework.

Task 4: Community Input

- Develop an engagement plan to seek input from the community on the draft zoning framework.
- Develop a coordinated outreach strategy that includes physical and online notification.
- Conduct two (2) in-person workshops and supplement with an online or other asynchronous option.
 - Test proposed subdistricts, dimensional standards, development standards, and design guidelines.
 - Explain the potential impact of the zoning on the chosen districts.
- Record input for use in Task 5 and discuss the results from each workshop with the Advisory Committee.

Task 5: Revised Zoning and Testing

- Revise and complete the draft zoning bylaw, based on community input.
- Review and revise the draft with input from the Town planning staff and the Advisory Committee.

- Prepare a slide deck for presentation to the Planning Board, with a summary of the proposed zoning.
- Request review of the draft by the Town Counsel.
- Present the draft bylaw at a public meeting, inviting members of the Planning Board, Selectboard, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other relevant committees.
- Revise draft based on these comments.

Task 6: Planning Board Hearing

- Present the draft bylaw to the Planning Board at the first public hearing.
- Prepare summary handout and slide deck for the Planning Board.
- If needed, attend additional public meetings to assist with the public hearing process.

Task 7: Final Amendments to Town Meeting for Adoption

- Submit report to Town Meeting with final recommendations for adoption
- Warrant Articles for zoning amendments at Town Meeting