

MEMORANDUM

To Anne Capra, AICP, Director, Planning & Conservation
Michael Beauchemin, Working Committee Member
Ken LeBlanc, Working Committee Member
Dan Luis, Working Committee Member
Nate Therien, Working Committee Member
Martha Terry, Working Committee Member

From Gina Bukas, Administrative Specialist

Date September 24, 2024

Project 24106: South Hadley - Routes 202/33 Corridor Zoning Amendments

Subject Community Forum 1

Cc: Emily Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, President
Supriya Kelkar, AICP, LEED AP ND, Planner/Urban Designer

Summary:

This memorandum summarizes the feedback received on September 16, 2024 at South Hadley's first Community Forum. The meeting content introduced the South Hadley community to the Routes 202/33 Corridor Zoning Amendments process, discussed the existing conditions, and began a dialogue about the corridor's future zoning.

After introductions and a brief update of the planning process to date, the consultant team presented the community with 3 exercises:

- Exercise A: Attendees walk around to review the corridor's nonconformance maps and post questions/comments if they want.
- Exercise B: Interactive presentation of the existing conditions and introduction to zoning. Attendees review existing parcels, and the consultant team answers questions throughout the process.
- Exercise C: Attendees use 3D materials to present their vision of the corridor's future zoning.

In the section below, we will present the input we received from the attendees. The presentation and maps used in this forum have been sent to the Town as PDF documents. The Town will receive all thumbnails within this memo as full documents. The attendee sign-in sheets are attached as separate documents.

EXERCISE A: Review the nonconforming lots of the corridor and post questions/comments.



Attendees reviewed the nonconformance maps of the corridor and posted comments.

Lot Conformity by Frontage



Comments:

1. Can the length of the frontage line be changed to include as many non-conforming existing properties – w/ 50% nonconforming, perhaps the change to a different length could add to some uniformity.
2. For office or residential, consider underground parking to decrease impervious parking space.

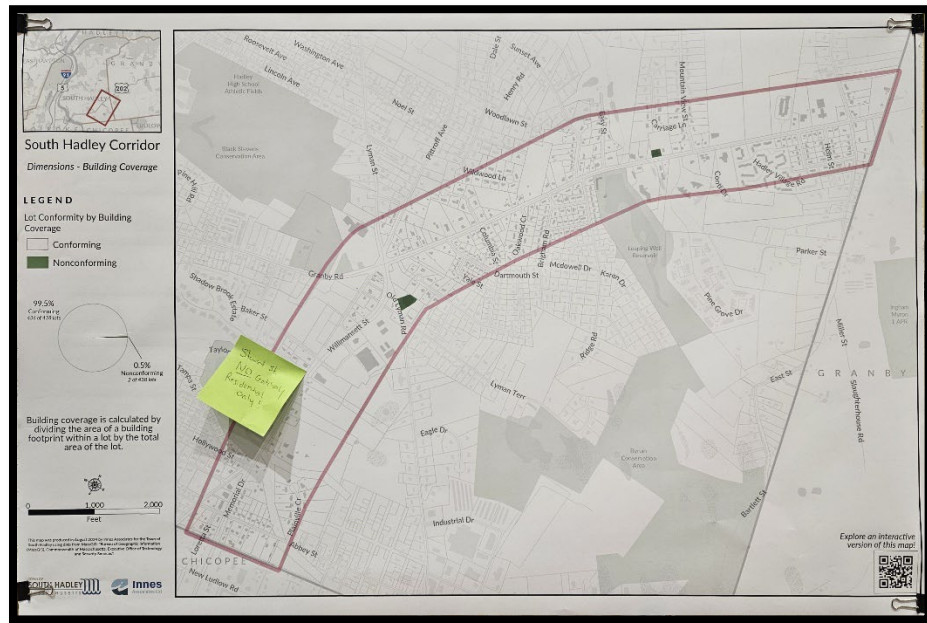
Lot Conformity by Building Front Setback



Comments:

1. On setbacks – consider two setbacks: to impervious, to buildings. Level green space near road.
2. I'd like to see a change in the current building front setback “conformity”. To allow for existing buildings that are non-conforming to be “included” as conforming – within reason. No loss of existing sidewalks.
3. Will current residential growth (and zoning) be able to support new business?

Lot Conformity by Building Coverage



Comments:

1. Stewart St. NO Gateway, Residential only!

Lot Conformity by Impervious Surface Coverage



Comments:

1. No warehouses or storage units. Definitely!

EXERCISE B: Existing conditions and introduction to zoning. What would you like to see on the Corridor?



Attendees review existing parcels, and the consultant team answers questions throughout the process.

EXERCISE B: What would you like to see on the Corridor?

EXERCISE B: What would you like to see on the Corridor?

Use the instruction sheet to refer to the questions and put a sticker on the most appropriate location!

LEGEND

- Parcel
- Route 202/33 Corridor Extent
- Building Footprint

A. Use a sticky note to write your thoughts! What do you like? What do you not want to see on the Corridor?

B. Put a sticker for the location of the following!

- Convenient Public Transit
- Public Open Space
- Public Trails
- Adaptive Bikes

Scan for an online interactive version of the exercise!

This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the Town of South Hadley using data from National, Regional, Geographic Information System (GIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Geographic Information System and aerial photography.

SOUTH HADLEY
MASSACHUSETTS

Innes
ASSOCIATES

Comments:

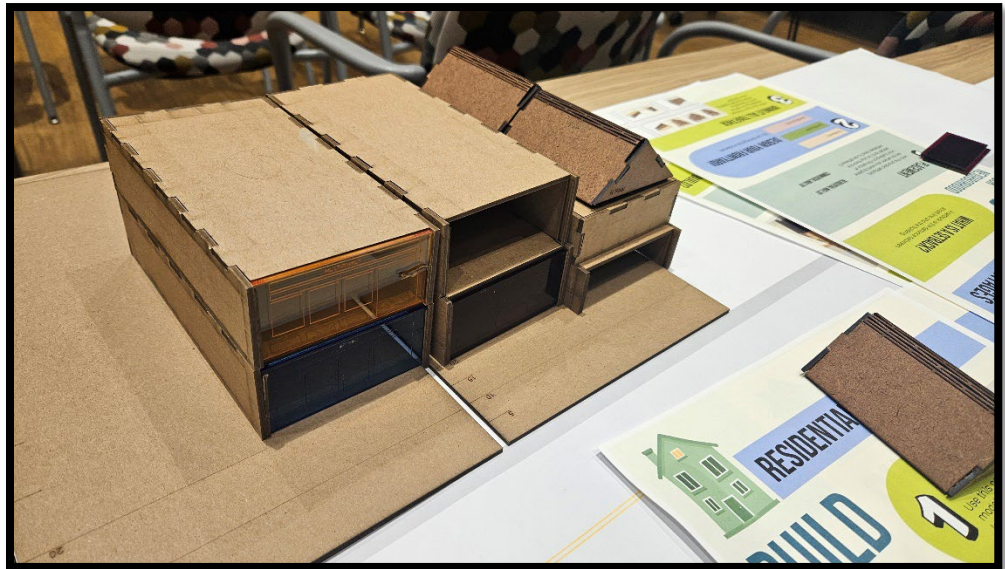
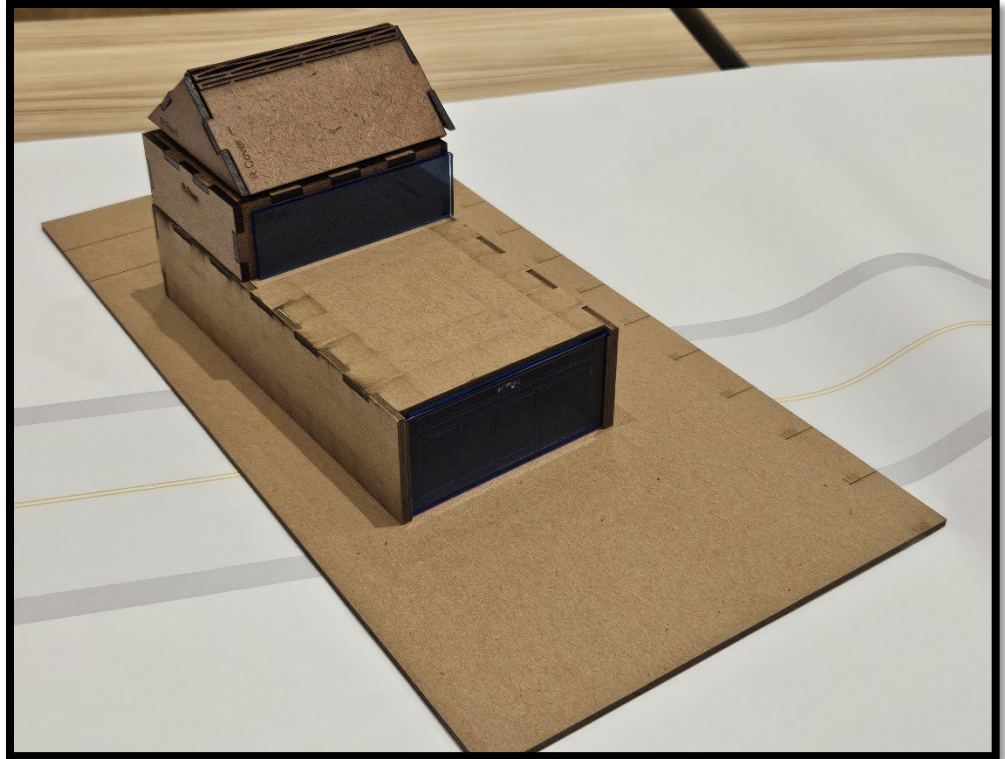
1. Enforce crosswalk rights.

EXERCISE C: Use 3D materials to present your vision of the corridor's future zoning.



EXERCISE C: Use 3D materials to present your vision of the corridor's future zoning.

The Results:



Comments:

1. The participants of this exercise underlined the importance of wider and safer sidewalks along the corridor.
2. Participants would like to see fewer street-facing parking lots. Parked cars would be preferred at the back of street-facing lots or underground.
3. They would like to see larger front setbacks. Lots of green space, buffer areas, and outdoor seating in future residential and commercial buildings along the corridor.
4. On the other hand, they would also like to help the existing non-conforming lots get in compliance by changing the conformity requirements.
5. Design guidelines seem to be of utmost importance for this group. They prefer uniformity and gradual building height change along the corridor. Commercial areas should blend seamlessly with the residential buildings.
6. Swapping out the big grocery stores and fast-food chains with small businesses. They would like to see a more vibrant local commercial scene comprised of small shops, cafés and restaurants. Low-height mixed-use buildings were also considered as a possibility.
7. People would like to see more public parks and green spaces.

What did people say?

Many of the attendees appeared unfamiliar with the 2022 corridor study and/or the public process of updating zoning. Some asked questions or provided comments that suggested they were unaware that this was the first meeting in this process. For example, one person brought a petition asking that their street be removed from “the Gateway district.” (While the 2022 plan did identify potential zoning districts, this first meeting of the rezoning process did not present specific recommendations for zoning changes.)

Many, but not all, participants disagreed with the need to change zoning along the corridor and were not receptive to the information about existing non-conforming parcels or the design exercise provided by the consultant team.

As a result, the consultant team recognizes the need to provide additional guidance about the purpose of zoning, the reasons for re-evaluating the current zoning, and the potential implications of zoning changes on this corridor prior to developing the draft zoning and design guidelines.