

South Hadley 2020 Master Plan Update

Prepared for the Town of South Hadley, Massachusetts
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Adopted March 2022

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All photos, except those on pages 20 and 21, provided by Lucia Foley.

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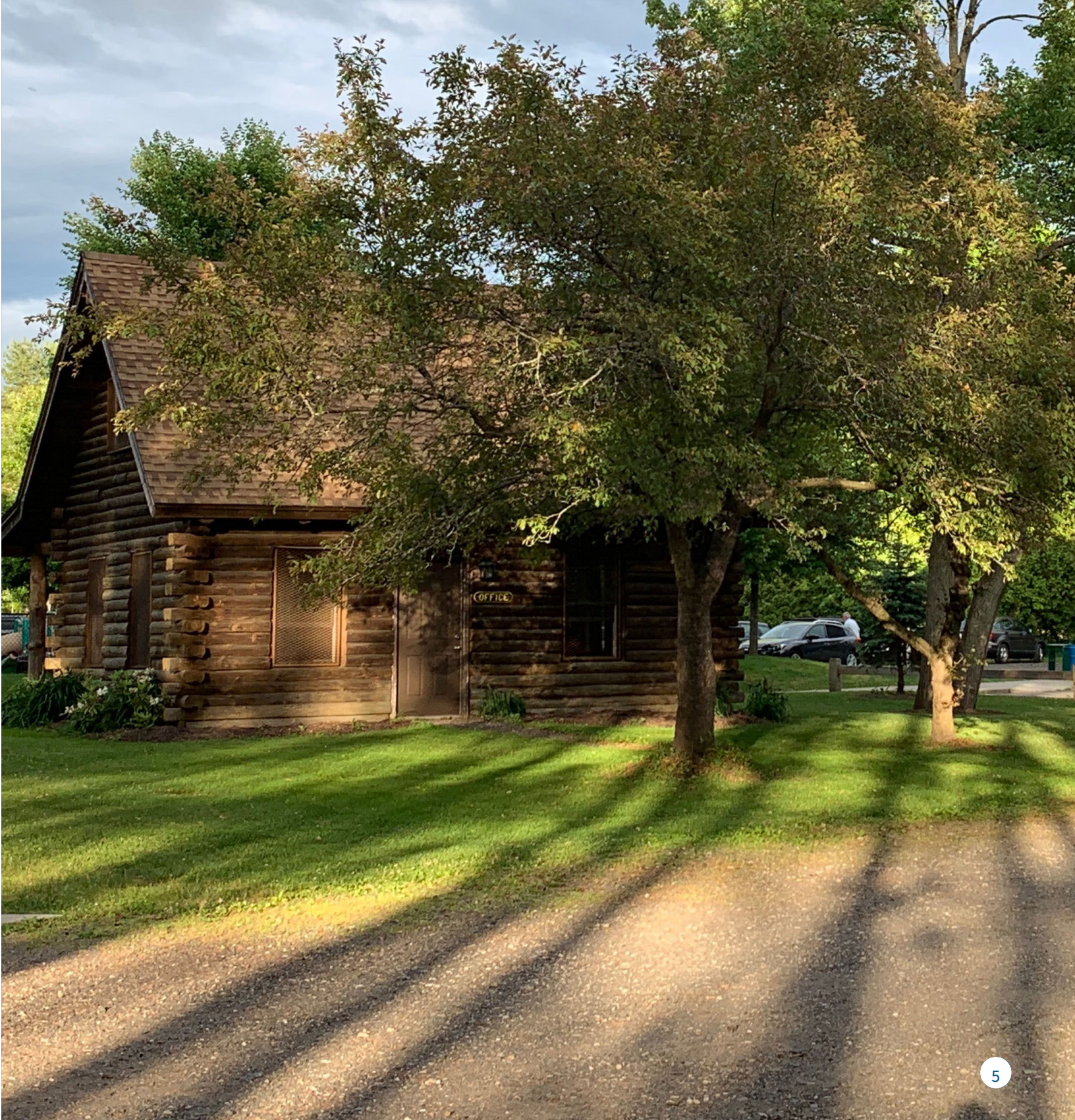
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Executive Summary

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intent of this Master Plan Update is not to replace the 2010 *South Hadley Master Plan* (the 2010 Plan) in its entirety, but to redefine the vision for the Town based on the changes since the 2010 Plan went into effect. Many of the goals in both plans are very similar. This more succinct plan builds on the original 2010 Plan by redefining the vision for South Hadley's next ten years, from 2020-2030, and identifying specific goals to guide progress towards achieving that vision.

Community Vision

The community and the municipal government share a focus on maintaining a positive, mutually supportive relationship that establishes and implements policies that support a healthy and sustainable natural, physical, and economic environment in which the entire community can prosper. These policies encourage access to a variety of jobs, goods, services, housing types, and educational, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities for the individuals who live, work, play, and learn in South Hadley.

To accomplish this vision, the South Hadley community – residents, business owners, nonprofits, and Town (municipal officials and staff) – will:

- Create an environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.
- Provide community-wide stewardship of its natural, cultural, and historic resources.

- Incorporate measures in its policies and practices that increase the Town's resiliency and ability to prosper and thrive in response to challenges such as a significant economic downturn, climate change, or other stressors.
- Be a leader in municipal communication.

Based on the results of the planning process and community input, the Master Plan Update Advisory Committee identified the three highest priorities for the next ten years:

- Address community-wide housing needs.
- Preserve the Town's natural resources for future generations.
- Support a welcoming community for all ages, races, ethnicities, cultures, abilities, and income levels.

Five community forums and nineteen meetings-in-a-box (smaller focus groups led by community volunteers who met at different locations across town) informed members of the South Hadley community about the planning process and sought input on the opportunities and challenges that will define the Town's policies and actions over the next ten years. The input was translated into the recommendations provided in other sections of this Master Plan Update. The update to the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan was concurrent with this Master Plan Update and the forums included discussions of both plans.

The Master Plan Update Advisory Committee (MPUAC) provided comments and advice throughout the duration of the project. This committee was essential in guiding the planning team's efforts.

The South Hadley Planning Board adopted this plan on March 28, 2022.

Introduction

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2. INTRODUCTION

This introduction focuses on describing the people and places of South Hadley and outlines the planning process and public input into that process. This chapter also contains a discussion of the planning elements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 41, Section 81D (Section 81D).

ABOUT THIS PLAN UPDATE

The Town of South Hadley is nestled between the Holyoke Range and the Connecticut River, home to a robust network of open spaces accessible for recreation and leisure. Natural resources and beauty are some of the South Hadley community's most cherished assets. South Hadley community members see both the ecological and social value in these assets and serve as stewards of the land and advocates for its preservation. Community members also recognize the value of growing South Hadley's economy through strategic commercial and mixed-use development. The key is to balance the two – preserve and protect South Hadley's cherished and iconic landscapes, while creating incentives for development in specific locations which are contextually suited to development and revitalization. By striking this balance, the South Hadley community will be able to grow and adapt to changing demographics while maintaining the character and identity that has defined the town for decades.

To achieve this goal, the Town of South Hadley undertook a planning process in 2019 to update its 2010 Master Plan (the 2010 Plan). The Town completed the majority of the public engagement component of the plan by February 2020, however, the social distancing requirements of COVID-19 delayed the production and review of the draft plan.

The intent of this Master Plan Update is not to replace the 2010 Plan in its entirety, but to redefine the vision for the Town based on changes since the 2010 plan went into effect. Indeed,

many of the goals in both plans are very similar. However, by 2019 our collective understanding of the impacts of climate change on our social, economic, and physical resiliency has changed and we now recognize the urgency of preparing for future change. The attempts to control the COVID-19 pandemic at a local, state and national level have revealed some weaknesses, such as the lack of universal internet access, that are also addressed by this Master Plan Update. Questions around the availability of different housing types and the protection of South Hadley's significant natural resources link both climate change and the pandemic response as we consider new ways of interacting with each other at home and in public and of continuing the 2010 Plan's commitment to building an inclusive community. Social life is shifting – at least temporarily – away from indoor gatherings and towards outdoor dining, retail, and other public gatherings. Experimentation with new ways of working and social interaction during this period will change priorities around physical (non-vehicular) and virtual connections and those changes can move community-building towards an equitable participation across races, ethnicities, cultures, ages, abilities, , gender identification, sexual orientation and economically disadvantaged.

WHY PLAN?

Municipal resources are limited. These resources include operating and capital funds, and the time and energy of Town staff and volunteers, whether elected, appointed, or just pitching in. Planning allows municipalities to define a community-wide vision and supporting goals that direct policies and investments of money and time toward specific actions. A good plan also encourages private investments that are consistent with community objectives. Without a plan, resources may be spent on activities that do not reflect the priorities of the community. When resources are limited, effective planning allows the allocation of those resources

towards the priorities identified in the plan.

CORE INITIATIVES OF THE 2010 PLAN

The 2010 Plan identified five core initiatives:¹

- Revitalize South Hadley Falls.
- Invest in the Route 116/Route 33 Commercial Focus Area as a mixed-use center.
- Connect South Hadley's Centers.
- Secure open space in the range, river, and rural areas.
- Update the regulatory infrastructure to support the community's desired outcomes.

Although the Town has completed many of the recommended actions in the 2010 Plan, these five initiatives continue to represent areas of concern in this Master Plan Update, which has integrated them into updated areas of focus. Many of the strategies for these initiatives were topics of conversation at the five community forums held in 2019 during the planning process for this Master Plan Update. Ideas common to both documents include new or improved pedestrian and bicycle connections; updating zoning to reflect the desired mix of uses and levels of density in specific areas; and identifying other areas for protection as open spaces. The focus of the first three core initiatives was the Route 116 corridor and connecting the Town Common/College area to South Hadley Falls, with enhanced development at the Route 116/Route 33 junction.

The Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) notes two significant accomplishments in their June 2020 report to Town Meeting: the approval of the South Hadley Urban Redevelopment and Renewal Plan and the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Both plans fulfilled some of

the recommendations in the 2010 Plan. MPIC kept a running report of actions that had been implemented, were ongoing, or were deemed no longer relevant. The last annual report from MPIC, in 2019, indicated that the majority of tasks had been completed or were ongoing. Earlier reports included completed actions such as establishing a Commission on Disabilities, completing the library, and creating the Redevelopment Authority.

¹ 2010 *South Hadley Master Plan*, page 4.

CORE GOALS OF THIS UPDATE

This more succinct plan builds on the original 2010 Plan by redefining the vision for South Hadley's next ten years and identifying specific goals that will guide progress towards achieving that vision as stated in **Chapter 1. Executive Summary**. To accomplish that vision, the South Hadley community – residents, business owners, nonprofits, and Town (municipal officials and staff) – will:

- Create a respectful and welcoming environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.
- Provide community-wide stewardship of its natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Incorporate measures in its policies and practices to increase the Town's resiliency and ability to prosper and thrive in response to challenges such as a significant economic downturn, climate change, or other stressors.
- Be a leader in municipal communication, with the public and among municipal staff, boards, and volunteer committees.

For each of the four goals identified, this Master Plan Update identifies specific objectives that provide additional guidance to the Town and the community in the future implementation of the vision. **Chapter 3. Community Vision, Goals, and Objectives** provides more information about the goals, objectives, and current initiatives that support them. **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan** defines specific future actions that address one or more of the objectives.

Members of MPIC requested that this Master Plan Update also define a series of metrics that would assist in understanding whether the level of progress on each action over the next ten years had met the level anticipated in the implementation plan of this Master Plan Update.

PEOPLE AND PLACES OF SOUTH HADLEY

People

South Hadley's growth rate is higher than the region's, but lower than the state's. Its population is projected to increase by 2.5% over the next 10 years, driven by growth in residents ages 30-44 and those over age 65. South Hadley's population is also diversifying. A recent decrease in white residents has been offset by growth in the Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and Black populations, helping to offset what would otherwise be a declining population and bringing a wider variety of cultures and experience to the community. South Hadley households have a higher median income than those in Hampshire County as a whole but have experienced slower income growth than Hampshire County and the State since 2010. South Hadley has a relatively well-educated population, with 41% of residents earning a bachelor's degree or higher. This closely aligns with the state's educational attainment figures.

One of the challenges South Hadley faces is its ability to meet the specific needs of its more vulnerable populations – the young and the elderly. Due to the presence of Mount Holyoke College, the largest age group in South Hadley is between the ages of 18 and 24. The next largest population is the middle-aged population. As this population ages into the elderly group, they will be burdened by the current shortage of senior living options. Providing resources for all age groups must go beyond housing to look at the specific needs of each group and take into consideration transportation and access to services and amenities. South Hadley is home to many life-long residents who may struggle to maintain their way of life if opportunities to age in place are not increased.

Places

NEIGHBORHOODS AND ECONOMIC CENTERS

A neighborhood is the intersection of people and place. The boundaries may be fuzzy, and are often a combination of history, geography, and culture, intertwined to create a home for the people who live there and a destination for people who visit there. South Hadley does not appear to have strong neighborhood identities beyond “The Falls” and “The Commons.” The consultant team heard during the planning process that some see a divide in town between the northern and southern parts of town.

At the community forums, participants discussed four sub-areas, which were centered on commercial nodes, or centers of activity.

The nodes, or center, of each area discussed were as follows:

- Area centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke College at Route 47 and Route 116
- Woodlawn Neighborhood (centered on the intersection of Routes 116 and 33)
- South Hadley Falls
- Intersection of Routes 202 and 33

Of these four areas, the focus of the initiatives of the 2010 Plan was on the following (1) the area centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke College at Route 47 and Route 116; (2) the Woodlawn Neighborhood (centered on the intersection of Routes 116 and 33); and (3) South Hadley Falls. The intersection of Routes 202 and 33 is the subject of the *Routes 202/33 Corridor Study*. The planning process for this study was parallel to that of this Master Plan Update, and the study should be completed in 2021.

These sub-areas are not the only ones in South Hadley, but, as commercial centers, they serve as a source of goods and services – and perhaps jobs – for the adjacent neighborhoods. Additional sub-areas could have as their centers shared open or recreational space, schools, or some other

component that promotes community gatherings and interactions. Those neighborhoods tend to be less concentrated and less diverse in terms of mix of uses. As South Hadley goes into its next phase of planning over the coming ten years, the Planning & Conservation Department should undertake a process to come to a community consensus on clearly defined neighborhoods or “sub-areas” to allow opportunities for more focused planning studies.

The bullets below list the priorities for each sub-area as defined during the public engagement process in Forums 2 and 3.

Village Commons/Mount Holyoke College

- Increase economic development opportunities for small-scale businesses in the area centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke at Route 47 and Route 116.
- Enhance and expand open spaces on the periphery of the neighborhood, such as a small park, a community garden, a playground, a dog park, or recreational/sports facilities.
- Increase the variety of housing choices between the neighborhood core and periphery. Housing options should meet a wide range of needs for affordability, household sizes, life-stages, and the ability to age in place within the community.

Woodlawn Neighborhood

- Create incentives for the re-establishment of a grocery store at this location. Study non-traditional approaches such as a co-op grocery store.
- Increase opportunities for small businesses in and around the neighborhood core.
- Provide civic/institutional facilities such as a gym, community center, or community gardens.
- Increase the variety of housing choices.

South Hadley Falls

- Preserve the existing character of the neighborhood core.
- Increase the number of small businesses such as retail shops, small grocery stores or farmer's market, ice cream shops, cafés, or restaurants near the neighborhood core.
- Provide opportunities for an art gallery and artist studios.
- Develop affordable mixed-use housing.
- Expand light industrial uses around the neighborhood periphery.

Intersection of Routes 202 and 33

- Preserve the existing clusters of single-family homes; consider adding more open space such as a small park, community garden, or dog park.
- Increase commercial activity such as restaurants, ice cream shops, or retail between the neighborhood core and periphery.
- Increase the variety of housing choices.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACES

South Hadley has two major natural resources, including over six miles of riverfront land along the Connecticut River and the Mount Holyoke Range. Descriptions of both are within the Town's newly updated *Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)*, approved in 2020. South Hadley is also fortunate in having extensive areas of open space and areas devoted to recreational use. Some of the open space is protected but much of the land, including recharge areas for the aquifer, is not.

Special places in South Hadley include the following:

Conservation Areas

- Bachelor Brook/Stony Brook Conservation Resource Area
- Bachelor Brook East
- Bagg-Pierce Wildlife Sanctuary
- Black Stevens Conservation Area
- Bynan Conservation Area
- Gormally Conservation Area
- Hahn-Warner Arboretum
- Hawkins Bird Sanctuary
- Jones/Carver/Newton Conservation area
- Laurie Avenue Conservation Area
- LeBlanc Conservation Area
- Mount Holyoke Range
- Titus Pond Conservation Area
- Edward Trompke/Stony Brook Conservation Area
- Warner Conservation Area

Recreational Areas

- Beachgrounds Park
- Brunelle's Marina
- BATTERY Brook Park
- Canal Park and River Outlook

- Center School site
- Dog Park on Mulligan Drive
- Ledges Golf Course
- McCray's Farm
- Michael E. Smith Middle School
- Mosier Elementary School
- Mount Holyoke College
- Mount Holyoke Range
- Leaping Well Nature Trail (Toth Property)
- Orchard's Golf Course
- Plains Elementary School
- South Hadley High School
- Town Farm
- Woodlawn Field

The 2020 OSRP includes specific information about these areas with an implementation plan for addressing current and future needs. The first two forums in the planning process for this Master Plan Update contributed to the initial planning stages for the 2020 OSRP.

Connections

Throughout this document, the analysis and recommendations consider three methods of connection:

- **Physical connections** that focus on non-vehicular (i.e. walking and biking) connections such as multi-modal paths that, when possible, are separate from the roads.
- **Social connections** that consider ways to encourage and promote the interactions among community members in South Hadley and to encourage those who have not been historically represented in Town affairs to become involved.
- **Virtual connections**, primarily internet-based and brought into prominence by the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. These connections will only become more important given new trends in working and communicating.

Physical connections link housing and economic development to open space and recreation; social and virtual connections link people to services from the Town, provide economic opportunities, and prevent loneliness for more vulnerable members of the South Hadley community.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Over the ten-year life of this Master Plan Update, climate change will have the single greatest impact on the future of South Hadley. Increased heat days will harm a vulnerable human population and create hazards for forested areas and hard infrastructure, such as roads. Flooding and drought from the shifting precipitation patterns will affect the built environment and the town's significant natural resources.

South Hadley's forested areas and marshland are under threat, primarily because of the increase in the number of days per year hotter than ninety degrees and the shift in the timing and intensity of precipitation events. The alternation of drought with intense precipitation will have a negative impact on these resources, creating stress on the existing flora and fauna of the region, leading to habitat shift and the potential for wildfires.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a current example of how the combination of human expansion into wilderness areas (allowing for transmission of disease from animals to human) and the ease of global travel (which facilitates the rapid spread of new diseases) can have unforeseen impacts on human health and the economy. This pandemic created immediate shifts in how people work, shop, and interact with each other. As climate change increases the migration of peoples from impacted areas, pandemics are likely to become more frequent, although not all will spread worldwide.

This Master Plan Update integrates the discussion of sustainability and resiliency into each aspect of planning by considering the effects of climate change on the social, environmental, and economic life of the town. Recommendations seek to strengthen the overall health of these areas and prepare the town for the challenges to come.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

Chapter 3. Community Vision, Goals, and Objectives

This intensive community effort led to a vision for what South Hadley could become in the next ten years. Four broad goals help define a series of objectives and actions that will guide the South Hadley community in its journey towards fulfilling that vision. The goals and strategies are the base of an implementation plan (**Chapter 5. Implementation Plan**) shaped by input from South Hadley's boards, committees, and departments. This input includes actions that the Town is taking now to address these goals.

Chapter 3. Community Visions, Goals, and Objectives also fulfills the requirements for a goals and policies statement as required by Section 81D.

Chapter 4. Plan Recommendations

This chapter contains a discussion of the topics from the public forums and the link between those topics and the planning elements that must be addressed under Section 81D. These elements are as follows: housing, economic development, open space and recreation, natural and cultural resources, services and facilities, and circulation.

The foundation for the recommendations in this chapter is the data and input gathered from many sources throughout the planning process, but primarily from the five forums held in 2019. These high-level recommendations are supported by the more specific actions listed in the implementation plan, and are intended to offer an aspirational, yet realistic guide for South Hadley's future.

To support the recommendations, this chapter also provides a high-level SWOT Analysis (Strengths/Weaknesses/ Opportunities/Threats) of existing conditions in the town.

Chapter 5. Implementation Plan

The planning process for this update to South Hadley's comprehensive plan identified certain actions needed to support the fulfillment of the vision, goals, and objectives established by the input from the community forums. These actions have been drawn from a variety of sources, including feedback from the Master plan Update Advisory Committee (MPUAC) and Planning staff, answers to the questionnaires sent to the boards, committees, and departments, and research by the consultant team.

A key focus of this implementation plan is both assigning responsibilities for future actions and defining the measures by which successful implementation can be judged. This plan identifies metrics that can be collected now and used to measure progress towards the goals of this plan over its 10-year life.

Successful metrics should be easy to collect and update; the update process should become a part of the mission of the entity collecting the information, and the metrics must be reported on a regular basis, such as annually. The metrics should also be comparative, showing progress towards achievement of a given goal. For example, the absolute number of something is not important; it is the increase or decrease of that number from an initial base that will provide information about the impact of the actions on successful implementation of the community's vision.

This chapter also fulfills the requirements for an Implementation Program under Section 81D.

Chapter 6. Glossary

The glossary provides definitions of terms used throughout this document that may not be familiar to those not in the planning field.

Chapter 7. Sources

The final section of the plan provides some useful sources for those who wish to know more about planning and some of the other topics discussed in this plan.

Appendices

Two appendices provide supplemental information about the public process. Appendix A is a complete record of the public process and the results of each forum and paired meetings-in-a-box. Appendix B contains the results of the questionnaires conducted during the planning process.

Appendix C contains a few of the maps from this plan in an 11x17 format. Appendix D is a draft scope for a planning process for the neighborhoods of South Hadley.

Appendix E is the full implementation plan with associated metrics. It accompanies Appendix F, an Excel version of the Implementation Plan. This will allow the Town to track its progress on the recommended actions over the next ten years.

PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS

The public engagement process (see **Figure 2.1**) sought to identify community goals for the future which would guide the content of this Master Plan Update. The consultant team was fortunate in being able to draw upon the experience of members of two Town committees: the Master Plan Update Advisory Committee and the Master Plan Implementation Committee.

Master Plan Update Advisory Committee (MPUAC)

MPUAC has been an integral part of this planning process. The Selectboard chose the members of this committee and several members volunteered to facilitate at the community forums. They provided feedback at regular meetings of the committee and input on draft materials and documents.

The charge of the MPUAC will end with the approval of this Master Plan Update.

Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC)

Members of MPIC facilitated the nineteen meetings-in-a-box and the direct outreach to the boards, committees, and departments and to the Fire Districts and Water Departments in late 2019-early 2020. The community forums provided valuable insight into the development of the vision, goals, and strategies. The boards, committees, and departments provided insight into ongoing and future actions that would help implement the vision and goals.

MPIC will continue to monitor the Implementation Strategy. The members of MPIC are jointly selected by the Selectboard and the Planning Board, and members are appointed for three-year terms. The charge of the committee is part of the Town's bylaws (Section 7-20).

Community Forums

The Town sponsored five public community forums:

- **Balance Preservation and Development:** February 27, 2019
- **Neighborhoods for All Ages:** March 27, 2019
- **People, Prosperity, Housing, and Connections:** April 24, 2019
- **Sustainability and Resiliency:** May 29, 2019
- **Prioritization and Implementation:** October 23, 2019

These forums were the heart of this community-defined Master Plan Update. The underlying ideas for the vision, goals, and objectives became clearer as a result of the discussions over the course of the first four forums.

Two parallel processes supported the results of the forum: a significant “meetings-in-a-box” process that ran in parallel to the public forums (nineteen meetings held throughout the town) and two online efforts: a questionnaire developed by the Town and a regional survey sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

To develop the framework for a robust implementation plan, the consultant team asked community members to prioritize the objectives in the fifth forum. The consultant team then worked with the MPUAC and MPIC to ask Town boards, committees, departments, and the Fire Districts' Water Departments to identify how they were addressing objectives now, what they could address in the future, the resources they would require to meet these objectives and the metrics they could use to measure progress. This outreach occurred in January and February 2020.

The following descriptions of the first four forums provide information about the topics and discussions at each.

FORUM #1: BALANCE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT: FEBRUARY 27, 2019

Each community determines its own balance between the preservation and development of land based on community values and needs. South Hadley is rich in open space and natural resources and has specific areas where physical and economic development should be encouraged. For this forum, balancing preservation and development meant ensuring that unprotected areas of significance receive the appropriate mix of local and state protections while new development is focused in those areas, such as South Hadley Falls, that have been previously developed but are now underutilized. The priorities indicated in this forum focused on reinforcing the existing pattern of roads and buildings for development and preserving existing open space for conservation, as well as both passive and active recreation.

FORUM #2: NEIGHBORHOODS FOR ALL AGES: MARCH 27, 2019

”Neighborhoods for all ages” is a goal to ensure older people can stay in their community and provide opportunities for younger people to become part of the community. This would require age-appropriate options for housing and access to education, jobs, goods, services, recreational activities, social engagement, and open spaces. Participants at the forum discussed the four different areas of town, and options for land use and transportation in radii of ¼-mile, ½-mile, and 1-mile from the center points of those areas. The areas are as follows:

- Neighborhood centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke College at Route 47 and Route 116
- Woodlawn Neighborhood (centered on the intersection of Routes 116 and 33)
- South Hadley Falls
- Intersection of Routes 202 and 33

The mix of these components will vary from place to place, but the discussion centered on those factors that support a neighborhood that is both physically and socially healthy and includes a diverse population. This plan defines a diverse population as one that is inclusive of (but not limited to) different ages, races, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender identifications, and a wider range of incomes, including those who are economically disadvantaged. These factors must be supported by a network that includes physical connections and social connections. Physical connections discussed included trails, sidewalks, bicycle paths, roads, and transit, both public and private. Social connections discussed included jobs, gathering spaces (indoor, outdoor, public, private), and places for active and passive recreation. In 2020, the needs for these connections became even greater, and those needs have influenced the recommendations in this Master Plan Update.

FORUM #3: PEOPLE, PROSPERITY, HOUSING, AND CONNECTIONS: APRIL 24, 2019

In Forum #2, participants looked at specific sub-areas in isolation. In Forum #3, participants discussed how those sub-areas worked as part of the entire Town, considering needs for housing, economic development, and the physical and social connections among them.

- **People** referred to those who live and work in South Hadley now as well as those who will live here in the future and how the population is affected by changing demographic trends.
- **Prosperity** examined access to jobs, goods, and services throughout the town.
- The focus of **Housing** was on appropriate policies and locations for different types of housing.
- **Connections** linked the three topics through both physical and social connections. Physical connections are those that involve transportation on foot, by bicycle, or by vehicle, either public or private. Social connections involve linking spaces from neighborhood to neighborhood to encourage town-wide interactions and community-building. Social connections also include virtual forums, through social media and other online communication networks.

FORUM #4 SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY: MAY 29, 2019

During this forum, participants explored threats to sustainability and resiliency, using the definitions of chronic stressors and acute shocks developed by the 100 Resilient Cities program. The term “chronic stressors” refers to any negative change that happens slowly over time such as unemployment or an affordable housing shortage. The term “acute shocks” refers to sudden changes with a negative impact such as a hurricane or pandemic. During this forum, participants identified the following chronic stressors and potential acute shocks in South Hadley.

Chronic Stressors

- Underutilization of South Hadley Falls in terms of economic development, housing, placemaking, and walkability
- Lack of affordable housing, including rentals
- Retail desert: residents must travel outside the town for many goods
- Narrow tax base/lack of funds
- Low accessibility, including lack of public transportation, to a commercial center from elsewhere in the town
- School funding

Acute Shocks

- Impacts of climate change (especially shifts in precipitation and high heat days) on humans, surface water, flora and fauna, and infrastructure (Over time, this will shift to a chronic stressor.)
- Flooding (The crowd-sourced flood-prone areas in **Figure 5.1** are not the same as the 100-year or 500-year flood plains.)

Chronic stressors and acute shocks do not operate in isolation but compound one another. Participants in the forum began exploring some potential impacts on environmental, social, and economic components of the community and the Town.

FORUM #5 PRIORITIZATION: OCTOBER 23, 2019

Participants in the fifth forum discussed the prioritization of the objectives that had been developed after the first four forums. The resulting prioritizations provided initial information about the timing of actions in the implementation plan (**Chapter 5. Implementation Plan**).

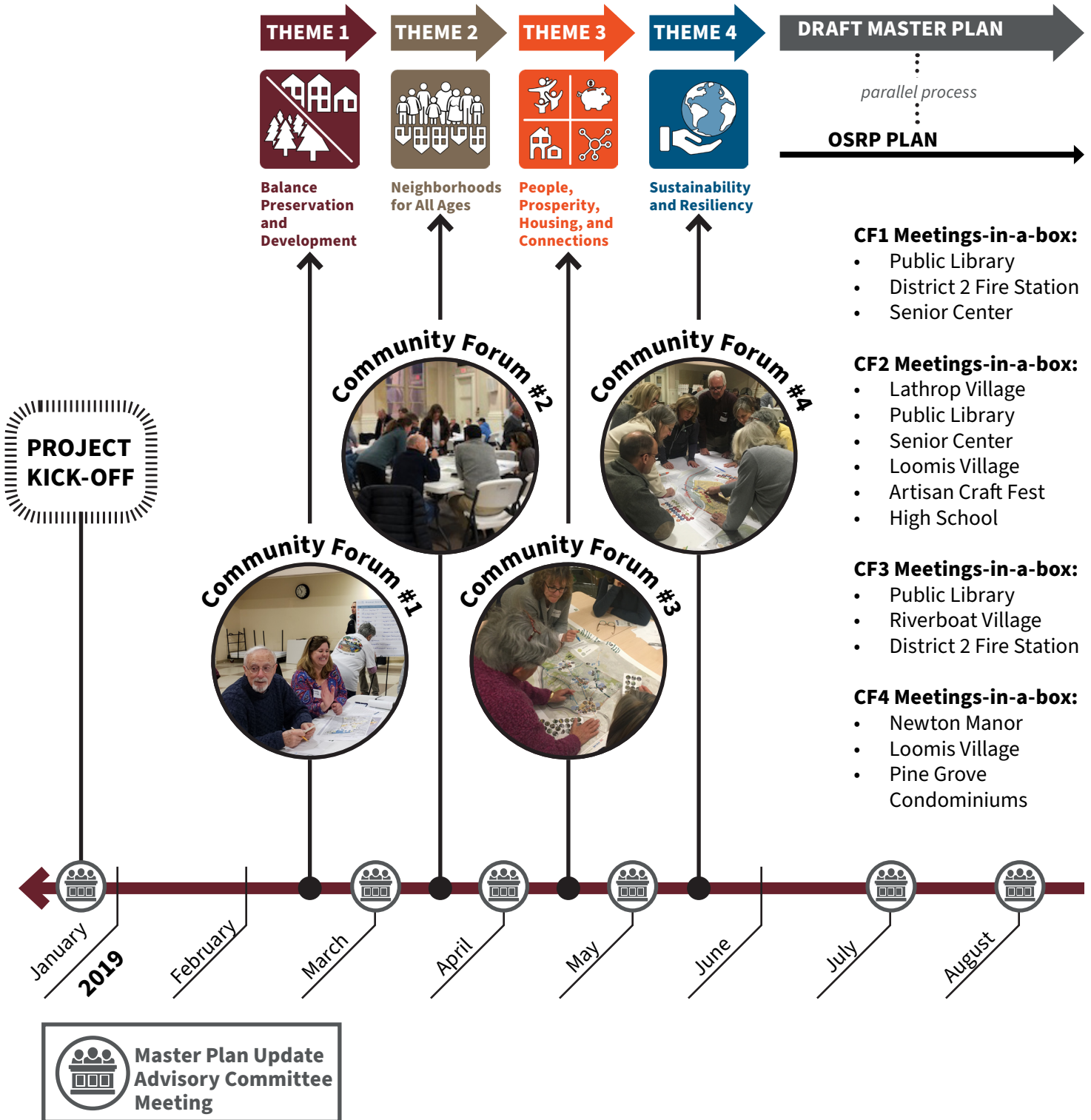
POST-FORUM CHANGES

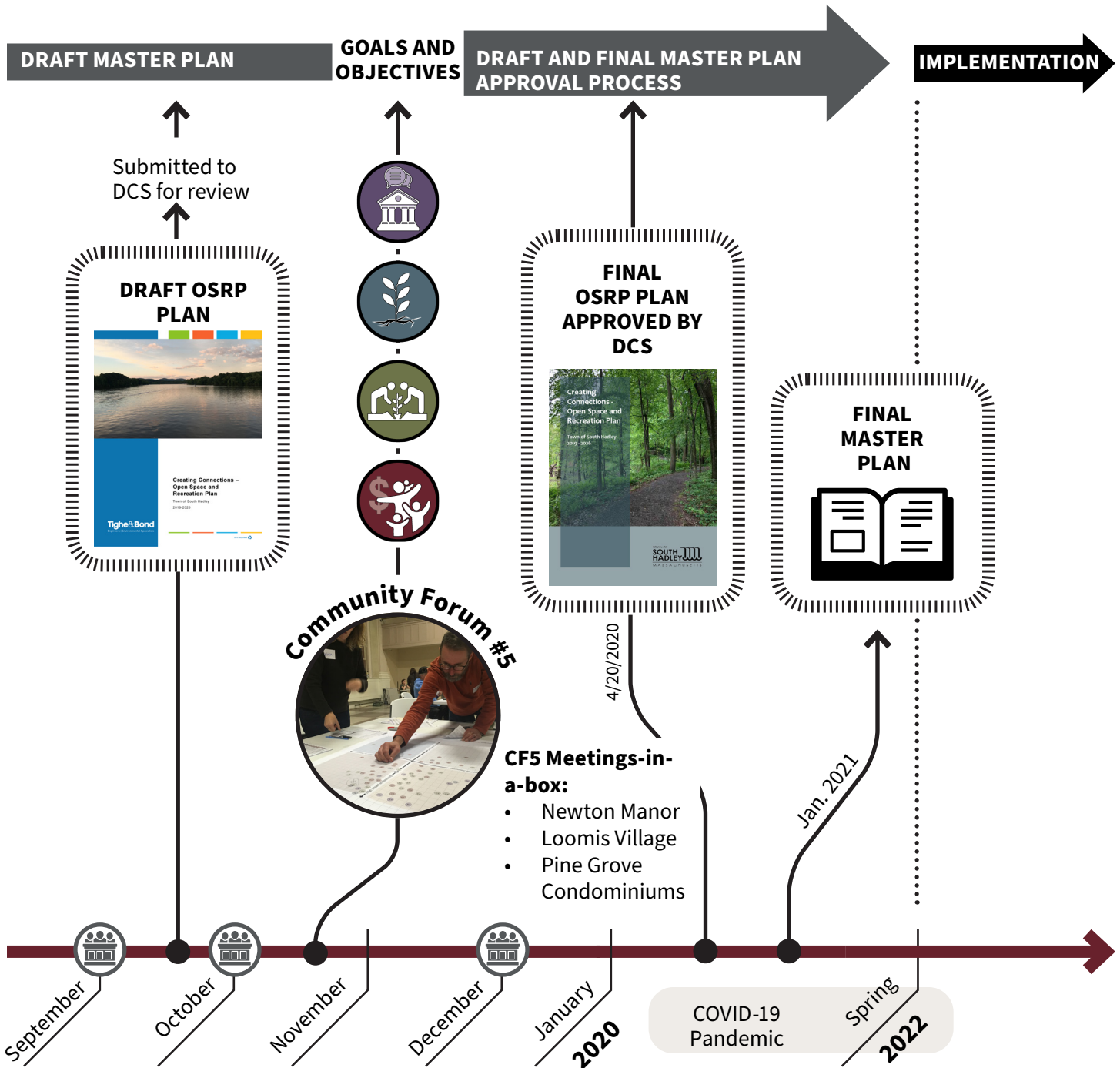
After the five forums, MPUAC and the consultant team began working together to create the draft plan. Input from MPIC's outreach to boards, committees, and departments became the initial bases for the implementation plan in **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan**. This input was discussed with members of the MPUAC, as were initial lessons from local, national, and state responses to the COVID-19 pandemic that had implications for municipal operations. Calls for equity and social justice as a result of national events required a response in this forward-looking document to ensure that all community members feel welcome and valued. Further research by the consultant team at the request of the MPUAC members also contributed to changes.

APPROVAL PROCESS

The South Hadley Planning Board adopted this plan on March 28, 2022 pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Section 81D. The Planning Board may also ask Town Meeting to endorse this Master Plan Update as was done for the 2010 Mater Plan.

Figure 2.1: Planning Process


















M.G.L. CHAPTER 41, SECTION 81D

Chapter 41, Section 81D of the Massachusetts General Laws (Section 81D) is the enabling legislation for comprehensive planning in Massachusetts. The planning elements of Section 81D are as follows:

- Goals and policies statement which identifies the goals and policies of the municipality for its future growth and development. Each community shall conduct an interactive public process, to determine community values, goals and to identify patterns of development that will be consistent with these goals. (See **Chapter 3. Community Visions, Goals, and Objectives.**)
- Land use plan element which identifies present land use and designates the proposed distribution, location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses. This element shall relate the proposed standards of population density and building intensity to the capacity of land available for planned facilities and services. A land use plan map illustrating the land use policies of the municipality shall be included.
- Housing element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives including programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. This element shall identify policies and strategies to provide a balance of local housing opportunities for all citizens.
- Economic development element which identifies policies and strategies for the expansion or stabilization of the local economic base and the promotion of employment opportunities.
- Natural and cultural resources element which provides an inventory of the significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the protection and management of such areas.
- Open space and recreation element which provides an inventory of recreational resources and open space areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the management and protection of such resources and areas.
- Services and facilities element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.
- Circulation element which provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems.
- Implementation program element which defines and schedules the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master or study plan. (See **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan.**)

Master plans in Massachusetts often devote one chapter to each of the nine elements of Section 81D, separating the actions in the implementation program by chapter. Because of the unique needs of this planning process, the approach for this plan has been to address the elements by combining them into the topics discussed at the first four forums. Each topic incorporated several elements, so that this Master Plan Update addresses all the Section 81D elements. The structure of this plan recognizes the interdependence of the Section 81D elements and ensures that those interdependencies are interwoven with South Hadley's vision, goals, objectives, and actions. (See **Figure 2.2** for the links between the 81D elements and the goals of this Master Plan Update.)

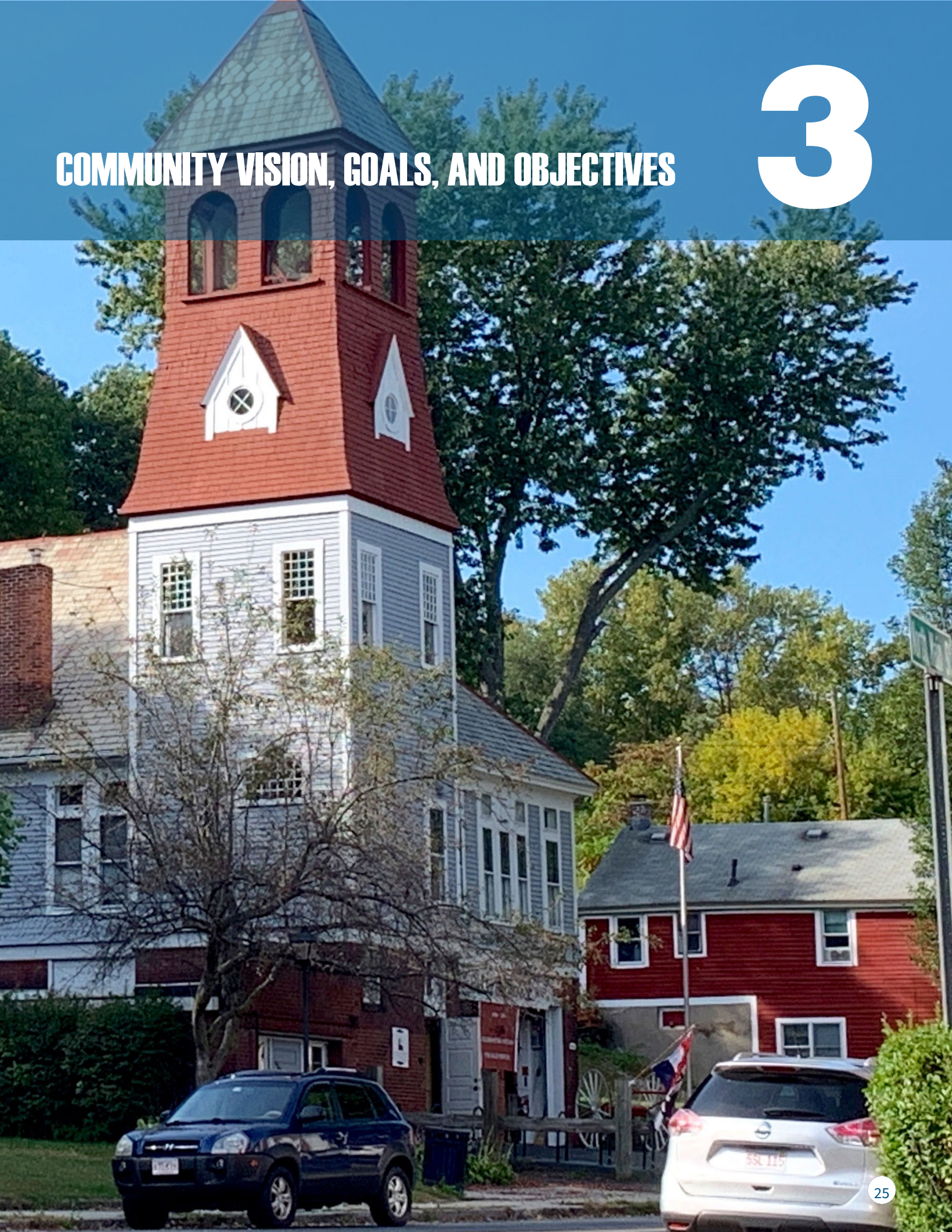
Figure 2.2: Links between 81D Elements and Plan Goals

		GOALS			
					
CH. 81D ELEMENTS		A Thriving Community	Caring for Our Resources	A Resilient Community	Excellent Communication
	Goals and Policies	+	+	+	+
	Land Use	+	+	+	+
	Housing	+	+	+	+
	Economic Development	+	+	+	+
	Natural and Cultural Resources	+	+	+	+
	Open Space and Recreation	+	+	+	+
	Services and Facilities	+	+	+	+
	Circulation	+		+	
	Implementation	+	+	+	+



COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

3



3. COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

COMMUNITY VISION

A key element of a comprehensive plan in Massachusetts is the Goals and Policies Statement. Input from the five forums and discussions with MPUAC contributed to the vision for the community as stated below. The goals that follow this statement also capture the input from the public outreach, but contain modifications based on research and analysis from the consultant team and input from MPUAC and the Town's Planning Staff.

PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Each of the four goals below has several objectives that provide additional guidance to the Town and the community for future implementation of the vision. The departments, boards, and committees of South Hadley are already working on initiatives that address these four goals and their objectives. These initiatives are listed after each goal and its objectives.

These ongoing actions are representative of the work the Town's boards, committees, and departments are doing, and were provided to MPIC as part of an outreach effort in January 2020.

COMMUNITY VISION

In ten years...

The community and the municipal government share a focus on maintaining a positive, mutually supportive relationship that establishes and implements policies that support a healthy and sustainable natural, physical, and economic environment in which the entire community can prosper. These policies encourage access to a variety of jobs, goods, services, housing types, and educational, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities for the individuals who live, work, play, and learn in South Hadley.

To accomplish this vision, the South Hadley community – residents, business owners, nonprofits, and Town (municipal officials and staff) – will:

- **Create a respectful and welcoming environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.**
- **Provide community-wide stewardship of its natural, cultural, and historic resources.**
- **Incorporate measures in its policies and practices to increase the Town’s resiliency and ability to prosper and thrive in response to challenges such as a significant economic downturn, , climate change, or other stressors.**
- **Be a leader in municipal communication, with the public and among municipal staff, boards, and volunteer committees.**



GOAL 1: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

South Hadley creates a respectful and welcoming environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.

This goal addresses the social, economic, and physical resiliency of the South Hadley community by addressing the need for housing, economic development, open space, recreation, and the transportation links that connect them. The objectives consider regulatory changes to attract businesses and provide options for a variety of housing types, public investments in infrastructure for connections and public health, and public investments and partnerships for programming for public health and life-long learning, including in the arts.

OBJECTIVE 1-1: Create the physical and regulatory conditions that support job retention and growth and encourage new retail, services, and professional telecommuting.

OBJECTIVE 1-2: Focus on economic development that provides well-paying jobs and attracts companies (including light manufacturing) that value South Hadley as a place for their employees to live and work.

OBJECTIVE 1-3: Support the development of housing at different scales and price ranges to meet the needs of people at all life stages and incomes.

OBJECTIVE 1-4: Improve connections for all, including those with varied abilities, and especially to open space and recreational activities to support community health and engagement.

OBJECTIVE 1-5: Strengthen social engagement by providing multi-generational programming.

OBJECTIVE 1-6: Support educational resources for people of all ages and abilities.

OBJECTIVE 1-7: Be a welcoming community that attracts and supports a diverse population.

CURRENT ACTIONS

The following are some examples of current activities underway in support of this goal. For recommended actions, refer to **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan.**

Bike/Walk Committee

- Supporting volunteer conservation corps for open space stewardship
- Supporting public treks at local outdoor resources

Conservation Commission

- Promoting the trail system on conservation lands

Council on Aging

- Considering additional transportation needs/uses other than our own mini-van and PVT mini-van
- Building an all-inclusive senior center
- Building a better Memory Cafe for dementia seniors and their caregivers
- Promoting age friendly and dementia friendly practices

Department of Public Works

- Maintaining and improving infrastructure
- Maintaining and installing roads and sidewalks
- Coordinating discussion of maintenance needs for new recreation projects

Health Department

- Enhancing intergenerational resources and education

Inspectional Services

- Streamlining permitting

Planning Board

- Reviewing applications against goals of the 2010 Master Plan, particularly those requiring Special Permits and Site Plan Review.
- Supporting revitalization of South Hadley Falls and other areas for development
- Supporting use of existing 40R districts
- Promoting use of Flexible Development Bylaw
- Supporting Inclusionary Housing and recommendations of the *2016 Housing Production Plan*
- Evaluating how streets and sidewalks be connected to a comprehensive pedestrian/bicycle plan

Police Department

- Providing traffic enforcement of pedestrian cross walks, bicycle lanes and child passenger safety seats
- Providing outreach for youth (school resource officer) and elder community members (TRIAD)
- Providing outreach to families and persons with mental illness and families and persons affected by opiate abuse

Recreation Department

- Focusing on ages outside of school age or mixed ages and non-sport related activities
- Evaluating re-purposing

defunct skate park at Buttery Brook Park into pickle-ball courts

Redevelopment Authority

- Focusing on the revitalization of South Hadley Falls

School Department

- Providing education beyond the classroom

Selectboard

- Supporting new Commission on Disabilities in implementing ADA study
- Promoting efforts to make the community welcoming to a wide range of ethnicities, races, cultures, incomes, and abilities

SHELD

- Providing fiber optic internet connections
- Provide low and stable electric costs
- Supporting community events, including safety awareness programs

Tree Committee and Tree Warden

- Providing educational programs related to the value and function of trees in the natural infrastructure



GOAL 2: CARING FOR OUR RESOURCES

South Hadley provides community-wide stewardship of its natural, cultural, and historic resources.

This goal protects community resources by building town-wide care and protection for its natural resources, including its aquifer, agricultural lands, wildlife corridors; its historic assets, including buildings, viewsheds, and development patterns; and its cultural assets, including its history and social connections.

OBJECTIVE 2-1: Protect the community's drinking water supply and groundwater and ensure that the water supply is adequate to meet the needs of the community in perpetuity.

OBJECTIVE 2-2: Expand resources by engaging community members in support of the acquisition and maintenance of strategic open space parcels to support community and wildlife needs.

OBJECTIVE 2-3: Protect agricultural land as a natural resource and support local agriculture as an economic enterprise and historic resource.

OBJECTIVE 2-4: Develop regulations and programs that support the reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings, the retention of historic development patterns (the interrelationship of streets, building footprints, and open spaces), and the creation of new and protection of existing viewsheds (views of landscapes and/or natural and historic resources), especially those of the Connecticut River.

OBJECTIVE 2-5: Integrate cultural opportunities into civic life, including regular and seasonal community events, public art in appropriate areas of town, support for cultural and educational organizations, events at Mount Holyoke College, and a variety of existing and future indoor and outdoor gathering spaces.

OBJECTIVE 2-6: Identify state and federal programs and seek grants and other sources of funding.

OBJECTIVE 2-7: Ensure protection of woodlands from threats associated with climate change such as wildfires, disease, and pests through proper management.

CURRENT ACTIONS

The following are some examples of current activities underway in support of this goal. For recommended actions, refer to **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan.**

Administration

- Spreading word about town-sponsored events

Bike/Walk Committee

- Providing letters of support and outreach for grant proposals

Conservation Commission

- Advocating for land protection for conservation purposes including, but not limited to, wetlands, rivers, and plant and animal habitat
- Coordinating the Volunteer Conservation Corps to assist with conservation land stewardship and deliver educational programming about conservation areas in South Hadley
- Enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the South Hadley Wetlands Bylaw through review and permitting of projects within jurisdictional areas
- Participating in river front clean-ups (Connecticut River Source to Sea Clean-up) and invasive species control programs

Cultural Council

- Promoting grant availability, awarding grants, and publicizing the events of the grantees

Fire District 1, Board of Water Commissioners

- Updating infrastructure to ensure reliability of service

Fire District 2, Board of Water Commissioners

- Advocating for water quality and protection of the aquifer

Historic District Commission

- Reactivating and developing a list of priorities for 1-3 years

Inspectional Services

- Streamlining permitting
- Continuing strict enforcement of conditions on work activities

Library

- Developing stewardship of site along the Connecticut River

Planning Board

- Applying expanded land use regulations within the Water Supply Protection District (WSPD) to new applications
- Continuing focus on stormwater management in review of applications
- Supporting prohibition of significant excavation in WSPD
- Supporting the development of programs that encourage reuse of historic buildings

Police Department

- Providing safety assessments and staffing for various community events to ensure safety and access for all
- Providing security assessments at facilities (faith based,

municipal, industry and schools) to improve safety at these locations

Recreation Department

- Supporting current programs, such as July 4th fireworks and summer concert series

School Department

- Supporting community events that included Bag the Community food drive, FallsFest, Tigers Around Town, the K-12 Music Festival, and participation by the Marching Band in parades

Selectboard

- Supporting grant applications

SHCTV

- Supporting community events, either by filming them, providing equipment for residents to film, or publicizing on CH15

Tree Committee and Tree Warden

- Hosting Annual Arbor Day program at Michael E. Smith Middle School



GOAL 3: A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

South Hadley incorporates measures in its policies and practices to increase the Town's resiliency and ability to prosper and thrive in response to challenges such as a significant economic downturn, climate change, or other stressors.

This goal integrates resiliency into every policy decision and investment that the Town will make over the next ten years. Resiliency includes consideration of the physical, economic, and social factors as these are interdependent in the health of the town.

OBJECTIVE 3-1: Address climate change and resiliency measures in all actions.

OBJECTIVE 3-2: Diversify the tax base to support jobs, manufacturing, goods, and services for residents, and strengthen the municipal budget in order to increase capacity and services.

OBJECTIVE 3-3: Encourage participation on Town boards and committees by people who are now or have been under-represented in the community, as demographics change over time, to ensure broad-based representation in decision-making and support for Town policies and actions.

OBJECTIVE 3-4: Connect all residents and businesses to high-speed fiber network. Provide appropriate training and devices for low-income and/or elderly households.

OBJECTIVE 3-5: Identify and take advantage of non-tax base revenue sources.

CURRENT ACTIONS

The following are some examples of current activities underway in support of this goal. For recommended actions, refer to **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan.**

All Boards, Committees, and Departments

- Seeking relevant grants

Conservation Commission

- Advocating for land protection for conservation purposes including, but not limited to, wetlands, river front, and habitat for plants and animals
- Enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the South Hadley Wetlands Bylaw through review and permitting of projects within jurisdictional areas
- Implementing 2:1 tree replacement requirement policy for trees cut in jurisdictional areas
- Supporting nature-based solutions for stormwater management, including green infrastructure

Department of Public Works

- Maintaining existing emergency services

Fire District 1, Board of Water Commissioners

- Coordinating with Department of Public Works-Highway, Columbia Gas, SHELD on capital improvements
- Maintaining hydraulic connections with Fire District

#2

- Updating infrastructure to ensure reliability of service

Health Department

- Staffing and maintaining warming and cooling centers
- Enforcing drainage of stormwater control structures to inhibit mosquito breeding
- Participating in Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District
- Updating Town’s emergency plans annually and conduct exercises to test them (with EMD)
- Monitoring flooding (with EMD)

Planning Board

- Implementing regulatory changes needed to address climate change

Police Department

- Acquiring hybrid vehicles to reduce gas usage

Recreation Department

- Focusing on fundraising and seeking additional revenue to maintain current programs and to grow new programming

School Department

- Supporting recycling, composting, greenhouse student environmental protest, and StuCo roundup petition advisories

Selectboard

- Supporting new process and encouragement of a wider applicant pool representative of

all members of the community

SHELD

- Providing net metering policy and rebate programs
- Providing redundancy for electric supply and fiber
- Maintaining status as lowest carbon footprint electric light department in Massachusetts

Sustainability & Energy Commission

- Collaborating with town officials to include energy efficient and sustainable practices in municipal buildings
- Collaborating with town officials to prepare South Hadley to join Massachusetts’ Green Communities grant program



GOAL 4: EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

South Hadley is a leader in municipal communication, with the public and among municipal staff, boards, and volunteer committees.

While the Town has an award-winning website, the impacts of COVID-19 to date have identified some weaknesses in the Town's ability to communicate with its residents and businesses. Communication includes the following: outreach to future residents and businesses; communication between the public and municipal officials (elected and appointed); and internal communication among the municipal officials and staff who will implement the recommendations of this Master Plan Update.

OBJECTIVE 4-1: Support a strong sense of a multi-ethnic, multiracial community identity through coordinated visual presentation, including graphics and typefaces in all communications (reports, informational materials, signage and Town website, social media, and other messaging).

OBJECTIVE 4-2: Provide a consistent, positive message for members in the South Hadley community and beyond, including attracting new businesses and residents.

OBJECTIVE 4-3: Develop a clear and consistent method of publicizing Town policies.

OBJECTIVE 4-4: Provide timely information about Town actions, services, meetings, and events.

OBJECTIVE 4-5: Function well and consistently in an emergency, with connections to regional resources.

OBJECTIVE 4-6: Communicate progress in reaching the goals of this plan using the metrics defined in the Implementation Plan to indicate success or a need to reorient Town efforts.

OBJECTIVE 4-7: Improve access by citizens to information about and participation in Town governance, including by virtual means.

CURRENT ACTIONS

The following are some examples of current activities underway in support of this goal. For recommended actions, refer to **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan.**

Administration

- Streamlining communication and comments via the Town website to departments
- Advertise boards/committees that need members

Bike/Walk Committee

- Providing frequent updates to the Bike/Walk Committee’s page on Town website, newsletters/notices to the friends list

Board of Assessors

- Providing a wide variety of property related information on the Town website and the Assessors’ digital mapping program

Conservation Commission

- Engaging in targeted educational outreach to inform residents about the value of wetlands and other water resources and regulatory requirements under the Wetland Protection Act (WPA) and Wetlands Bylaw

Department of Public Works

- Communicating regularly about ongoing projects

Health Department

- Participating in the Hampshire Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalition

Health Department/ EMD

- Submitting content to Town Reminder and cable

Historic District Commission

- Posting links on web page to resources on Town History

Human Resources/Admin

- Supporting all Town employees by offering professional development days and continuing education, increased internal communication, and expanded personnel management skills for department heads

IT Department

- Supporting municipal website and communication including social media

Master Plan Implementation Committee

- Monitoring completion of actions, ongoing progress, and obstacles to implementation identified in this Master Plan Update

Planning Board

- Posting agenda background information for each meeting, including project plans and other assessment reports.

Police Department

- Coordinating messaging with other departments around shared concerns
- Maintaining links between department website and town website with same graphics and feel

Recreation Department

- Promoting activities not run by the Recreation Department

School Department

- Collaborating with Fire Districts and Police Department
- Communicating using monthly newsletters, Resource Officer pamphlets, website, social media, robocalls, cable TV
- Creating welcome signs to reinforce branding

Selectboard

- Supporting Town website re-design and updates
- Increasing participation in Civic Ready

SHELD

- Supporting website, newsletters, social media, and safety awareness programs
- Ensuring availability of fiber and redundancy of network to support excellent response time in emergencies
- Providing fiber optic internet connections

Town Accountant

- Updating financial policies for budgeting and reserves

Town Clerk

- Retaining, preserving, and restoring Town records



Plan Recommendations

4



4. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides more information about major areas of discussion that have appeared throughout the planning process. One critical area of conversation has been the balance between housing and commercial development. A second critical area has been the need to accommodate an aging population and the resources that population would require. A third has been the need to attract business that would provide jobs, goods, and services to the population. And finally, questions about the impacts of climate change on the population and the significant natural resources in South Hadley have been woven through this process.

To address these topics, this chapter groups the discussions and recommendations into six major areas:

- SWOT Analysis
- Sustainability and Resiliency
- Housing Variety
- Economic Development
- Preservation
- Connections

During the process of researching existing conditions and while analyzing the results of the community forums, the consultant team prepared a SWOT analysis to guide its understanding of the planning context that informed these recommendations and the implementation plan in **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan.**

SWOT ANALYSIS

To understand the current conditions in South Hadley, the consultant team developed a SWOT Analysis. SWOT stands for **Strengths**, **Weakness**, **Opportunities**, and **Threats**. A **Strength** or a **Weakness** is considered as something emerging from within South Hadley itself, while an **Opportunity** or **Threat** as of something external to South Hadley. For example, open and recreational space is a **Strength** in South Hadley (a condition within the boundary of the town). However, climate change, an external factor, will cause changing patterns in precipitation; this **Threat** may make maintenance and enjoyment of these areas more difficult. On the other hand, the open space presents an **Opportunity** to help the community adapt to some of the impacts of climate change by mitigating the impact of heat islands.

The SWOT analysis was updated during the process as the planning team discovered new information or developed a better understanding of the implications of known information.

Strengths

- **Robust open space and recreation network:** South Hadley has an open space network consisting of both active and passive outdoor spaces for recreation, leisure, and conservation.
- **Aesthetically and ecologically significant natural resources:** Nestled between the Holyoke Range mountains and the Connecticut River, South Hadley is a beautiful place, with regionally significant terrestrial and aquatic habitats, supporting many rare and endangered species.
- **High Level of Community Involvement:** South Hadley is home to an actively involved community, whose members serve as stewards of the environment and advocates for ecologically, economically, and socially conscious preservation and development. South Hadley has many opportunities for residents to serve the community on committees, boards, clubs, and other organizations that serve to improve the quality of life in South Hadley.

Weaknesses

- **Narrow Tax Base:** South Hadley's tax base draws primarily upon tax dollars from residents. Many residents travel to neighboring communities to obtain goods and services, meaning the money they spend is not put towards public services in their own municipality. Given the retail available in neighboring communities, this pattern is likely to remain the same; increased retail in South Hadley will be based on demand for more specialized retail and is unlikely to be a significant contributor to the tax base.
- **Lack of Diverse Housing Options:** The majority of South Hadley's housing stock is single-family residential. This housing type does not serve the needs of all demographics in South Hadley, particularly the needs of an aging population and persons with lower incomes, including young families.
- **Lack of Connectivity/Public Transit:** South Hadley community members have to rely almost solely on vehicular transportation, with no public transit options beyond the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority routes, which prioritize campus shuttles that link Mount Holyoke College to the other colleges in the area (Routes 38 and 39) and a regional bus from Amherst to Holyoke (Route 29). The Council on Aging bus provides valuable transit services to members of the community who are elderly or have disabilities but is limited to certain days and locations and requires reservations.

Opportunities

- **Economic Development:** South Hadley already has several existing commercially oriented nodes, which could be further developed to increase access to economic opportunities for small businesses, which would help address the narrow tax base and stated concerns about the lack of retail. This includes the four areas discussed earlier in the plan: the neighborhood centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke College at Route 47 and Route 116; the Woodlawn neighborhood (centered on the intersection of Routes 116 and 33); South Hadley Falls; and the intersection of Routes 202 and 33. The area centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke at Route 47 and Route 116 has additional potential because of the proximity to the student population. The Woodlawn neighborhood includes a 40R district. South Hadley Falls is the historic heart of industrial development and has an active redevelopment plan. The intersection of Routes 202 and 33 (and the entire Routes 202/33 corridor) is the subject of a parallel planning process.
- **Increase/Diversify Housing Stock:** In order to meet the state-mandated 10% affordable housing requirement, South Hadley needs to add an additional 313 affordable units to its current housing stock, according to the *2016 Housing Production Plan*. This need dovetails with desires expressed by the community for more – and more affordable – housing options. The Town should consider different ways of meeting these needs, including multifamily housing at different scales; conversions from single-families to two-families; accessory dwelling units; and cluster zoning with smaller housing units.
- **Changing Demographics:** As South Hadley’s demographics shift (see **Chapter 2. Introduction**), the Town must adapt to meet the needs of a diversifying population and provide opportunities for growth that serves all members of the community. The change in the race, ethnicity, and culture of South Hadley residents allows the Town to be proactive in creating a climate that supports housing choices, job opportunities, and social connections that reinforce an inclusive community. Reactive policies and regulatory strategies will not allow the Town to adjust to the changing demographics quickly enough to meet the needs of its population. This plan defines a diverse population as one that is inclusive of (but not limited to) different ages, races, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender identifications, and a wider range of incomes, including those who are economically disadvantaged.
- **Multi-modal Connectivity:** Maintaining the existing road network in good condition is critical but is not the only action required to improve connectivity. Creating favorable conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists requires making an investment in the public realm. This investment includes sidewalks and bike lanes and the amenities, such as shade trees and street furniture, that make the physical infrastructure pleasant to use. Linking South Hadley’s pedestrian and bicycle network to regional trails is an opportunity to expand the network and improve regional cooperation.
- **Preservation and Development:** The public process identified priority locations for preservation and development, which were further refined during the review process of the draft Master Plan Update. These are listed on the next page. Actions in **Chapter 5. Implementation Plan** focus on identifying and mapping these areas and other opportunities and developing preservation and development strategies specific to the areas under consideration.

PRIORITY LOCATIONS FOR PRESERVATION

- Aquifer, Bachelor Brook Watershed, including Dry Brook Hill
- Active farmland, particularly along Alvord and Pearl Streets
- Holyoke Range mountains
- Connecticut River and shoreline
- Stony Brook Riverfront Area
- Buttery Brook Watershed (critical for maintaining the floodplain capacity)
- Historic buildings and development patterns within South Hadley Falls
- Historic and cultural assets throughout South Hadley
- Local and national historic districts

PRIORITY LOCATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

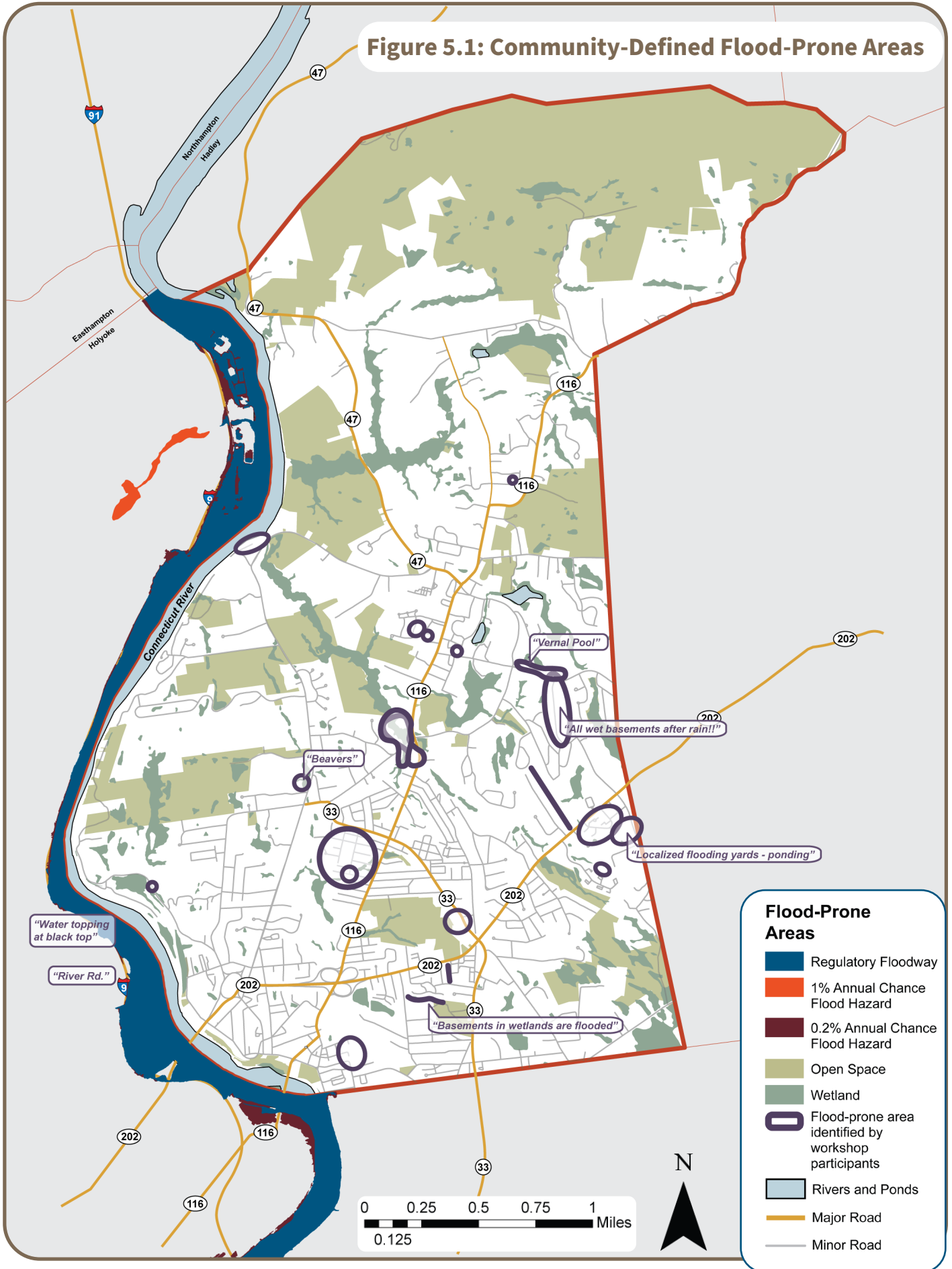
- Mills at former Rexham on Gaylord and Lamb Streets (South Hadley Falls)
- 40R District at Newton (Route 116) and Lyman Streets
- South Hadley Falls Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Area and the Falls 40R District
- The Willimansett Street area
- The neighborhood centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke College at Route 47 and Route 116
- Historic buildings throughout South Hadley for rehabilitation or adaptive reuse

Threats (Challenges)

Although “Threats” is the standard terminology for a SWOT Analysis, a better word might be “Challenges.” This analysis includes a changing climate, a changing economy, and changing demographics as factors that will challenge the Town to respond with policies and action that will build a sustainable and resilient community in terms of access to information, education, housing, jobs, and services.

- **Climate Change:** Like all communities, South Hadley will face significant challenges as climate change advances, including increased frequency and severity of storm events and flooding, shifting habitats affecting many plant and animal species, and an increased chance of drought, wildfire, and other heat-related issues. The crowd-sourced flood-prone areas (identified during community forums and shown in **Figure 5.1**) are likely to see greater impacts as precipitation levels and timing shift over the next few decades. These areas are not part of FEMA flood plains. Updated FEMA flood maps are not complete for South Hadley and are anticipated to be released in 2022/2023. Local knowledge about existing conditions is also important when planning for climate change.
- **Post-COVID Changes:** The drafting of this plan was slowed by the unprecedented changes to our collective ability to meet in person, beginning in March 2020. The rapid spread of COVID-19 in the northeast in Spring 2020 and the continuing spread in other regions of the United States has required people to restrict the natural human desire to gather with friends, families, neighbors, and community members for recreation, work, education, and civic events. The shut-down of much of the economy and the intermittent steps to reopen, which vary by region and sometimes by municipality, have created an uncertain economic forecast and the need for more virtual connections.
- **Equity:** An increased focus on systemic racism in the United States has grown out of the uneven response to the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has had a disproportionate negative impact on people of color, particularly Black and Latin and Hispanic members of our society. This population includes those workers who are at the front lines of this pandemic, including those in health care and other service jobs and those in the restaurant, hospitality, and retail industries. These industries experienced a more significant negative impact than those white collar industries whose employees could transition to work from home. Questions about when or whether retail and restaurants will have the same presence in downtowns lead to questions about what types of jobs provide livable wages for all members of a community. Issues of equity are also seen in determining who has access to internet, whether broadband or fiber optic.
- **Ageing Population:** South Hadley is a life-long home to many. While this strengthens the social fabric of the community and fosters a sense of pride and ownership among community members, it also means that the population is aging with limited opportunities to age in place. As noted in **Chapter 2. Introduction**, the population over 65 is growing. An aging population is also a vulnerable population, more susceptible to the effects of climate change discussed above. This population is also more vulnerable due to inflexible income, and a sense of isolation. The current pandemic has demonstrated a greater need to offer training programs for seniors on using technology. Increasing access to affordable and accessible housing, alternative transportation options, services, and technology will be vital to ensure that South Hadley continues to support and promote neighborhoods for all ages.

Figure 5.1: Community-Defined Flood-Prone Areas



SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

The Brundtland Commission defines sustainability as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹ In terms of the Town’s mission, this definition of sustainability should guide policies about land use, including the

- Balance of preservation and development,
- Provision of services to the community, and
- Impact of economic development on community needs and the municipal budget.

The need to address sustainability in South Hadley should guide decisions about investing resources (operating and capital funds, staff and volunteer time) into existing and future buildings and infrastructure, staffing needs, and initiatives to improve the provision of services.

Resiliency refers to the ability to adapt to (or bounce back from) change. The Rockefeller Foundation’s 100 Resilient Cities campaign defines urban resilience as the following: “the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stressors and acute shocks they experience.”²

The 100 Resilient Cities campaign describes the resilience dividend as the “net social, economic, and physical benefits achieved when designing initiatives and projects in a forward looking, risk-aware, inclusive, and integrated way. Its “resilience framework” addressed four categories:

- Health and well-being
- Economy and society
- Infrastructure and environment
- Leadership and strategy

Chronic stressors and acute shocks, defined earlier, do not operate in isolation but compound one another. For example, while climate change was identified as a chronic stressor, the impacts of that stressor include acute shocks like severe storms, flooding, and droughts. As an example, the COVID-19 pandemic is an acute shock that has had an impact on communities world-wide, and the ability of a single municipality to address a shock of this magnitude is limited. This acute shock has revealed the critical importance of far-reaching internet access and technological education and weaknesses in our economic and social structures. The implications of access to technology on equity and resiliency have become clearer than ever.


Furthermore, chronic stressors like the housing crisis, income inequality, and food insecurity compound the challenges that come with a shock like a pandemic. In the midst of this crisis, it is difficult to forecast the impact on any community ten years into the future; however, South Hadley will need to consider its ability to address future pandemics and other such crises. The impact of the physical environment on public health, the need to work with regional neighbors to address common issues, and the consideration of distributed medical facilities and connections to supply lines are likely to be topics that should be addressed in the next ten years. The Town’s focus at this forum on municipal communications, including online access and distribution of information, now seems prescient.

A town that is sustainable can manage the current and future ongoing operations; a town that is resilient can weather severe shocks such as a significant economic downturn or natural catastrophe. To be both sustainable and resilient, the Town of South Hadley needs to be a community that is welcoming to all, with a focus on social and racial justice, a strong and diversified tax base, regulations that promote investment while protecting valued assets, well-managed natural resources that support the health of all ecosystems, and a social network that supports and promotes Town policies and goals.

¹ <https://www.sustainabledevelopment2015.org/AdvocacyToolkit/index.php/earth-summit-history/past-earth-summits/58-the-brundtland-commission>

² <https://www.100resilientcities.org/resources/>

Recommendations

Sustainability and Resiliency are integrated into all the recommendations that follow and into the objectives and actions for all four goals. Look for this logo at each related recommendation in this section: 

HOUSING VARIETY

The vast majority of South Hadley's housing stock is comprised of single-family detached homes (**Figure 5.3**). This shapes the town's identity as a small New England town. South Hadley has about 10% more detached single-family homes than Massachusetts on average, and fewer attached single-family, two-family, 3-4 units, 5-9 units, and 10+ unit residences than the average Massachusetts community according to the U.S. Census Bureau 2013-17 American Community Survey. While South Hadley saw a significant increase in its housing stock between 1940 and 2000, after that the market dwindled significantly and has not rebounded to its pre-2008 levels, leaving a shortage of affordable housing and housing options for senior residents. New units from 2015-2017 are exclusively single-family (**Figure 5.6**) and built at a rate lower than the state's (**Figure 5.5**).

South Hadley has a higher rate of home ownership than Massachusetts overall, with only 27% of residents renting their homes (**Figure 5.4**). This imbalance contributes to a stark divide in cost burden (defined as spending 50% or more of their income on housing) between owners and renters: the percentage of owners who are cost burdened is less than half the percentage of renters who are cost-burdened (**Figure 5.2**). The higher cost of the existing rental units relative to ownership units means that the 27% of South Hadley residents who rent their homes do not have the same opportunities for prosperity as those who own their homes do. To address the need for more affordable housing, South Hadley must increase its stock of both rental units and ownership units at more affordable levels.

When municipalities plan for affordable housing, a number of terms are used in the conversation and it can be confusing to separate these terms. In general, affordable housing refers to housing that is affordable to an individual or household based on the cost of housing relative to income. A general rule of thumb is that no more than 30% of one's gross income should be spent on housing, which includes the direct cost of housing and other costs such as utilities, insurance, and property taxes.

Federal and state housing programs define affordability by income and household size. These definitions are used to help people qualify for assistance either through subsidy programs or for housing units that are characterized as Affordable Housing under state or federal laws.

Housing in a community can be affordable because of its cost relative to the average cost of housing within a community or region. The lower cost could be a factor of size, age, layout, or location relative to the local or regional standard.

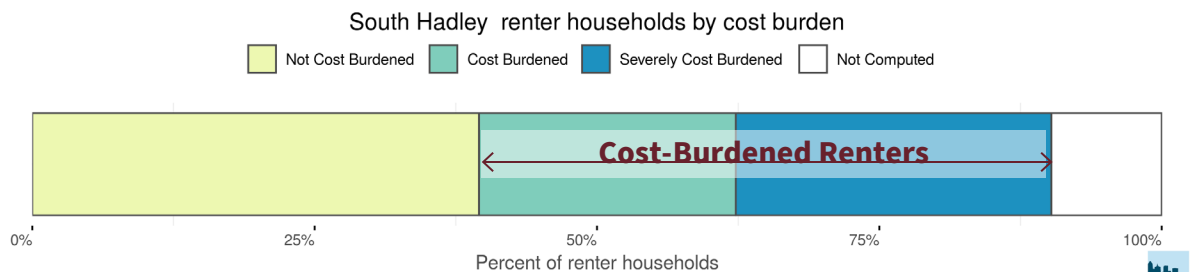
Housing in a community may also be designated as Affordable Housing because it is a component of a state or federal program that make such housing available to individuals or households that meet certain income levels and some other qualifications, such as age, disability, and/or veteran status.

The recommendations in this plan suggest a mixture of housing types that is affordable to a variety of individuals and households across a wide range of income levels. Housing types may be ownership or rental, smaller detached or duplex units on smaller lots or buildings with multiple units.

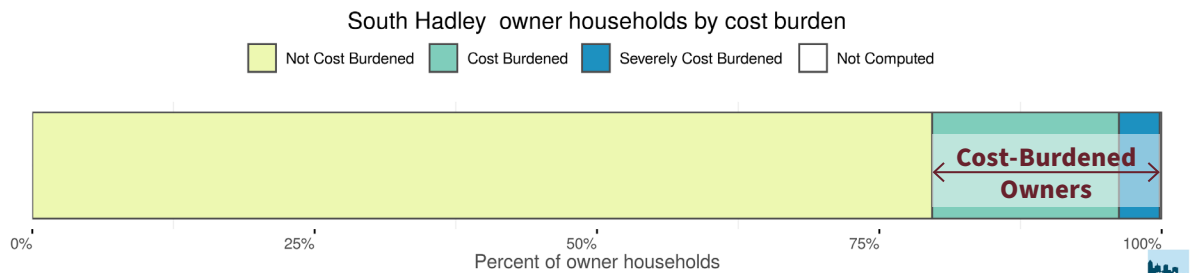
Affordable Housing that can address the needs of the most vulnerable is also important. These vulnerabilities may be due to income, age, or physical disability and allowing people who are vulnerable to remain within their communities helps promote social resiliency and leads to better physical and mental health outcomes.

Figure 5.2: Renter Households by Cost Burden

Source: Massachusetts Housing Partnership



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-year estimates. Table B25070: Gross rent as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months

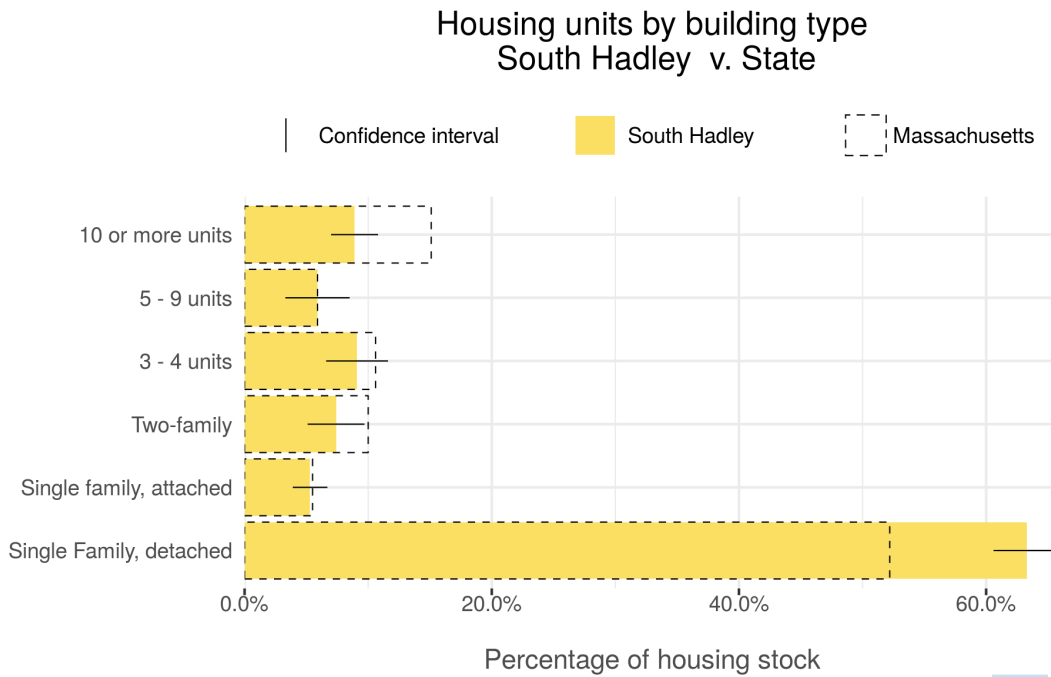


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-year estimates. Table B25091: Mortgage Status by selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months



Figure 5.3: Housing Units by Building Type

Source: Massachusetts Housing Partnership



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-year estimates
Table S2504: Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units

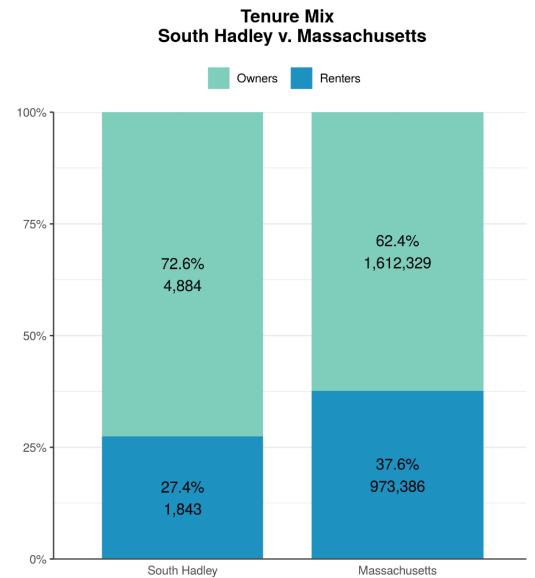


Recommendations

- 🌱 Provide a wide range of options for housing types, both ownership and rental. Affordable units should be distributed within new housing construction to support neighborhoods with a mix of incomes and ages. This could include the conversion of existing single-family homes to two- or three-family homes in specific areas of town.
- 🌱 Support the development of housing options for all ages and incomes in the neighborhoods centered within these areas:
 - Area centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke College at Route 47 and Route 116
 - Woodlawn Neighborhood (centered on the intersection of Routes 116 and 33)
 - South Hadley Falls

Figure 5.4: Tenure Mix

Source: Massachusetts Housing Partnership



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-year estimates. Table DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics



Figure 5.5: Housing Stock by Year Built

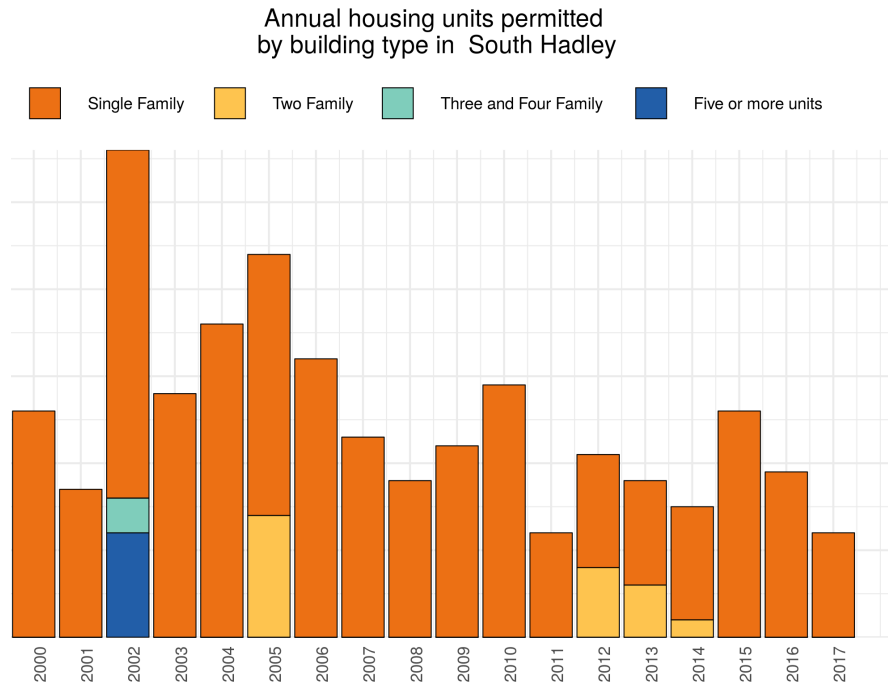
Source: Massachusetts Housing Partnership



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-year estimates. Table S2504: Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units



Figure 5.6: Annual Permits for Housing Units by Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Annual Building Permit Survey (Reported and Imputed)



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic prosperity and growth are influenced by five factors:

- Sustained or growing population
- Sustained or growing wealth/income
- Sustained or growing employment base
- Ability to capture regional growth and spending
- Ability to attract outside spending (tourism)

When planning for economic development, South Hadley should consider its competitive advantages and how those relate to the factors above:

- High quality of life for those who appreciate South Hadley's easy access to natural resources and recreation and cultural amenities supplied by the Five College consortium (Mount Holyoke, Amherst College, Hampshire College, Smith College, and UMass Amherst)
- Future access to high-speed internet through SHELD's plan to install fiber optic throughout town
- Access to both local and regional road networks, including I-90 and I-91
- Access to passenger rail service in Holyoke, and Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, CT Well-educated population
- Mount Holyoke College and access to the Five Colleges Consortium:
 - Business incubation potential through the members of the Five College Consortium, especially the University of Massachusetts Amherst
 - Potential to expand professional training opportunities for the public at MHC and area colleges
 - Rich arts and cultural opportunities afforded by the Five College Consortium and area non-profit organizations

Understanding where South Hadley fits within the regional economy is important to its ability to attract businesses that provide jobs, goods, and services to its residents. The two areas of analyses that follow provide more information about opportunities for South Hadley in future job growth and retail.

Economic Sectors and Employment

South Hadley's local economy is driven by the Education, Government, and Health Care³ industries. These three industry sectors account for 68% of all jobs in South Hadley. 400 new jobs in these three sectors covered 72% of employment growth from 2010-2018. These three sectors will continue to dominate employment growth over the next 10 years.

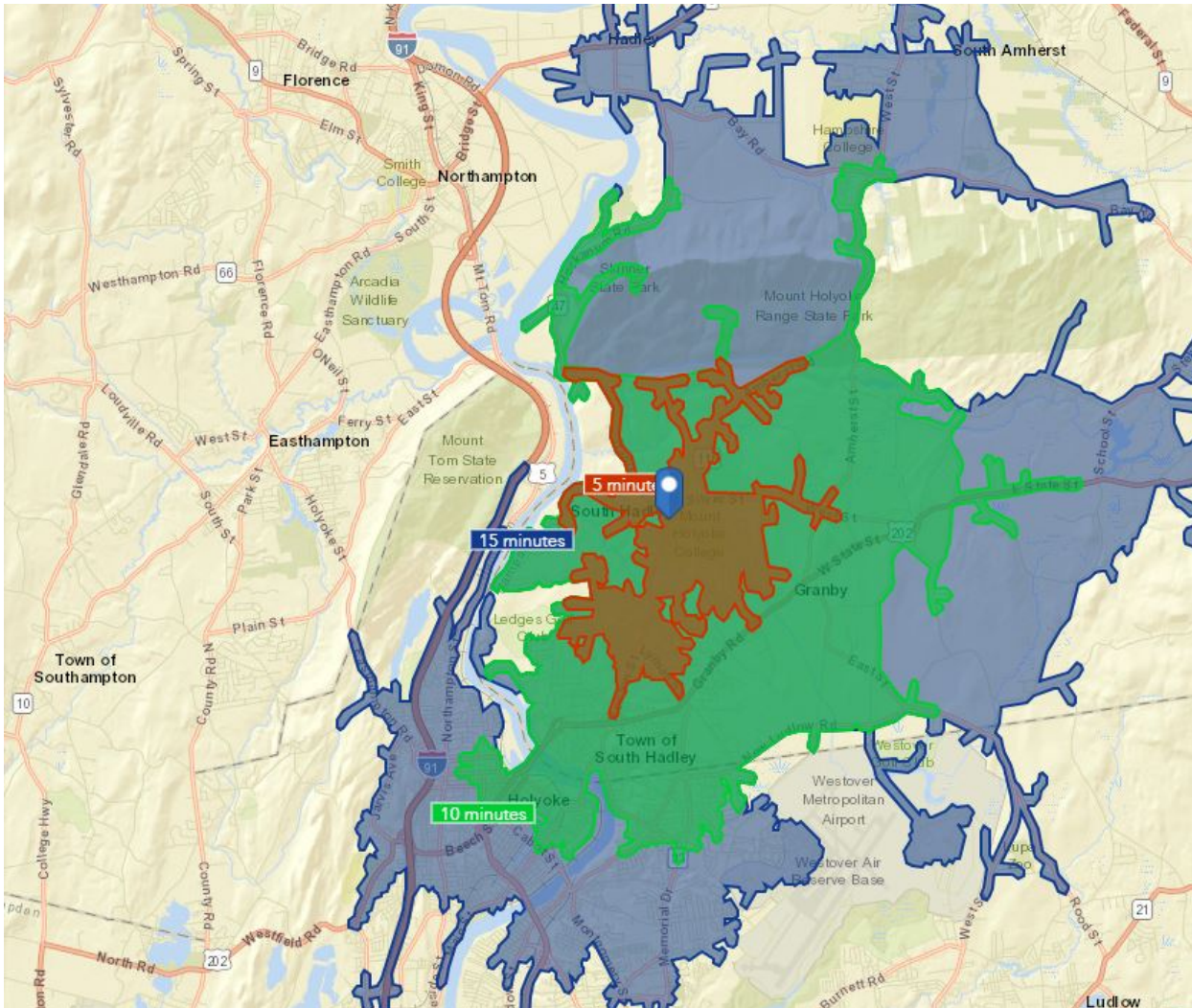
The larger Hampden and Hampshire County region is projected to have similar growth sectors to South Hadley. The aging population in Central and Western Massachusetts is driving the Healthcare and Social Services sectors and the need for medical care for the elderly and home care workers is expected to grow substantially. Specialty construction trades like electricians and plumbers are also projected to grow as housing will need retrofitting to keep up with future population changes.

The opportunities in South Hadley for capturing a share of future employment growth include the following:

- Healthcare (Doctors' Offices, Outpatient Facilities, Medical Labs)
- Education (Spin-Off Businesses, Campus Expansion)
- Professional & Technical Services (Small Professional Offices, Local Entrepreneurs)
- Elder Care (Home Health Care Offices, Assisted Living, Physical Therapy Offices)
- Construction (Contractor Yards, Specialty Storerooms, Small Office Space)

³ Capitalized industry names in this section refer to NAICS codes. <https://www.naics.com/search/>

Figure 5.7: Regional Locus



Drive-times from South Hadley Commons

- 5- Min
- 10-Min
- 15-Min

Retail Gap Analysis

A retail gap analysis is a snapshot of the supply and demand for certain types of retail and/or services in a location at a given point and is based third-party data sources that captures sales within a given area by business type. If the demand within that area is high and supply low, dollars will leak out of the area studied to other areas. This leakage indicates an opportunity within the studied area for new or additional businesses to capture the leakage.

A municipality may use a retail gap analysis to understand missing components from its local economy. They may also be used by property owners and/or developers to attract new tenants to a site by showing the opportunity to move or expand a successful business to a new area which has unmet demand for those goods or services.

The area studied is generally defined in terms of drive times from a central point. The retail gap analysis completed in 2019 for this planning process identified retail within a five-, ten-, and fifteen-minute drive time of South Hadley Commons and focused on the retail opportunities within the 10-minute drive time which captured the local market without running into demand from the regional retail marketplace. The team chose this location as it is in the approximate geographic center of Town (~3.12 miles from the southern border and ~3.05 miles from the northern border).

Oversupply means that there are more stores selling a product than there is demand in the drive time studied. New businesses in these categories have a lower chance of success because of the higher cost of capturing the oversupplied market.

Undersupply represents an opportunity for an entrepreneur to start a new business or for a store in a nearby community to consider an expansion to South Hadley. Undersupply is an indication to that Town and to commercial landlords that they should actively seek these business types as they have a high chance of success.

A retail gap analysis is a measure of supply and demand at a specific point in time; the relationship between supply and demand may change as a result

of changing economic conditions or demographic trends. Other factors that may have an impact on future retail opportunities include economic development activities by the Town and projects by an individual or group dedicated to providing a specific good or service.

The retail gap analysis performed in 2019 indicated the following areas of opportunity for new businesses; these should be re-evaluated to see if conditions since 2019 are still favorable:

- Clothing (4,984 square feet or one or two stores)
- Shoes (1,010 square feet or 1 store)
- Jewelry/Luggage (340 square feet)
- Sporting Goods (4,984 square feet or one or two stores)
- Books/Music (1,010 square feet or one store)
- Office Supplies/Gifts (4,984 square feet or two-three stores)
- Restaurants (2,237 square feet or one or two small restaurants)

The following are four primary ways to fill an undersupply of retail:

- Construct a new store on an empty lot.
- Reuse a vacant building or space.
- Expand an existing building or expand into the storefront next door.
- Diversify the product types of an existing business (for example, a grocery adds a florist).

The future impact of COVID-19 on South Hadley's economy is difficult to predict. Since March 2020, the impacts of the pandemic have varied by age, health status, race/ethnicity, income level, occupation, and access to technology.

The strong likelihood is that people are developing new habits in work, commuting and shopping that will have an impact on future patterns. For example, an emerging conversation in many communities is a need for more small, local businesses to address daily needs, such as groceries.







Although the retail gap analysis completed in 2019 indicated an oversupply in grocery stores, participants at the community forums consistently requested one, particularly the small neighborhood market that many remembered growing up. These requests are likely driven by a local desire for closer and more pedestrian-accessible grocery stores and a perceived lack of competition. The Town should consider working with local landlords, commercial brokers, and entrepreneurs to identify opportunities from these new demands and from the other emerging trend of more professionals working locally rather than commuting to out-of-town offices. South Hadley should also consider strategies to reduce commutes (and thus vehicular travel) and support town-based businesses.





High-Speed Internet Access

During the ten-year life of a master plan, it would be normal to experience periods of growth and downturn. Lessons learned from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic can add to the economic resiliency of the South Hadley community. Internet access that is available to all will address resiliency to both acute shocks and chronic stressors, particularly economic development. High-speed internet access is a competitive advantage for companies who may wish to expand operations or relocate to South Hadley. It is also a competitive advantage as methods of working change: an emerging trend is of professionals who have been required to work from home may continue to do so at least part-time post-pandemic. This trend will also require access to high-speed internet. SHELd's plan to provide fiber optic will help South Hadley be a competitive location for these businesses and professionals.

In addition to internet access, key strategies for many communities have included allowing outdoor dining and retail and supporting outdoor gathering spaces and events for smaller groups of people. Placemaking in downtowns, a focus on outdoor recreation (passive and active), and strong communication efforts are tools that can continue to strengthen social and economic resiliency.

Recommendations

-  Ensure affordable access to high-speed internet is available to all businesses and residents. SHELd is continuing its four-year effort to roll out its Fibersonic network.
-  Retain existing local businesses and create the conditions and incentives to foster a diverse range of economic opportunities, including those in the arts and cultural economy. Such opportunities should provide well-paying jobs and attract companies, including light manufacturing, that value South Hadley as a place for their employees to live and work.
-  Support regional workforce initiatives in support of local and regional businesses.
-  Support businesses that serve remote workers (full- or part-time). These businesses could include co-working spaces, take-out food, small printing and office supply stores, delivery and warehousing, and maker spaces that would supplement home-based or small professional offices.
-  Evaluate opportunities to fill existing vacant buildings with small businesses, exploring ways to leverage grant or loan programs to work with property owners and small businesses to address tenant fit-out costs, lease terms, and rents.
-  Redevelop existing developed but underutilized areas.
 - Re-develop South Hadley Falls.
 - Retain the historic character/identity of the Falls.

-  Review regulatory and permitting structure to evaluate whether the current zoning and permitting requirements are limiting the ability to start and expand businesses in South Hadley.
-  Review housing policies to ensure that lower-income employees are able to live and work in South Hadley.
-  Develop the 40R districts to provide opportunities for mixed-use development, including commercial development and affordable housing. Such development should build on existing commercial uses and provide a level of residential density that would support dwelling units for a mix of incomes and space for a range of commercial opportunities.
-  Modify existing regulatory and permitting requirements to diversify and stimulate new commercial uses compatible with neighborhood characteristics:
 - Neighborhood centered on the Village Commons and Mount Holyoke College at Route 47 and Route 116
 - Woodlawn Neighborhood (centered on the intersection of Routes 116 and 33)
 - South Hadley Falls
 - Routes 202 and 33 Corridor

PRESERVATION

While the topics of preservation during the community forums focused on the preservation of open space, preservation also refers to the built environment of structures and street. Historic development patterns are a physical reminder of the history of a community and contribute greatly to that community’s unique identity. The redevelopment of South Hadley Falls is a strategy to leverage the historic quality of that area to increase opportunities for economic development.

While such reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure helps address economic resiliency, the preservation of open space addressed both environmental and social resiliency. Strategic preservation of land can help mitigate the impacts of climate change by addressing flooding and heat islands.

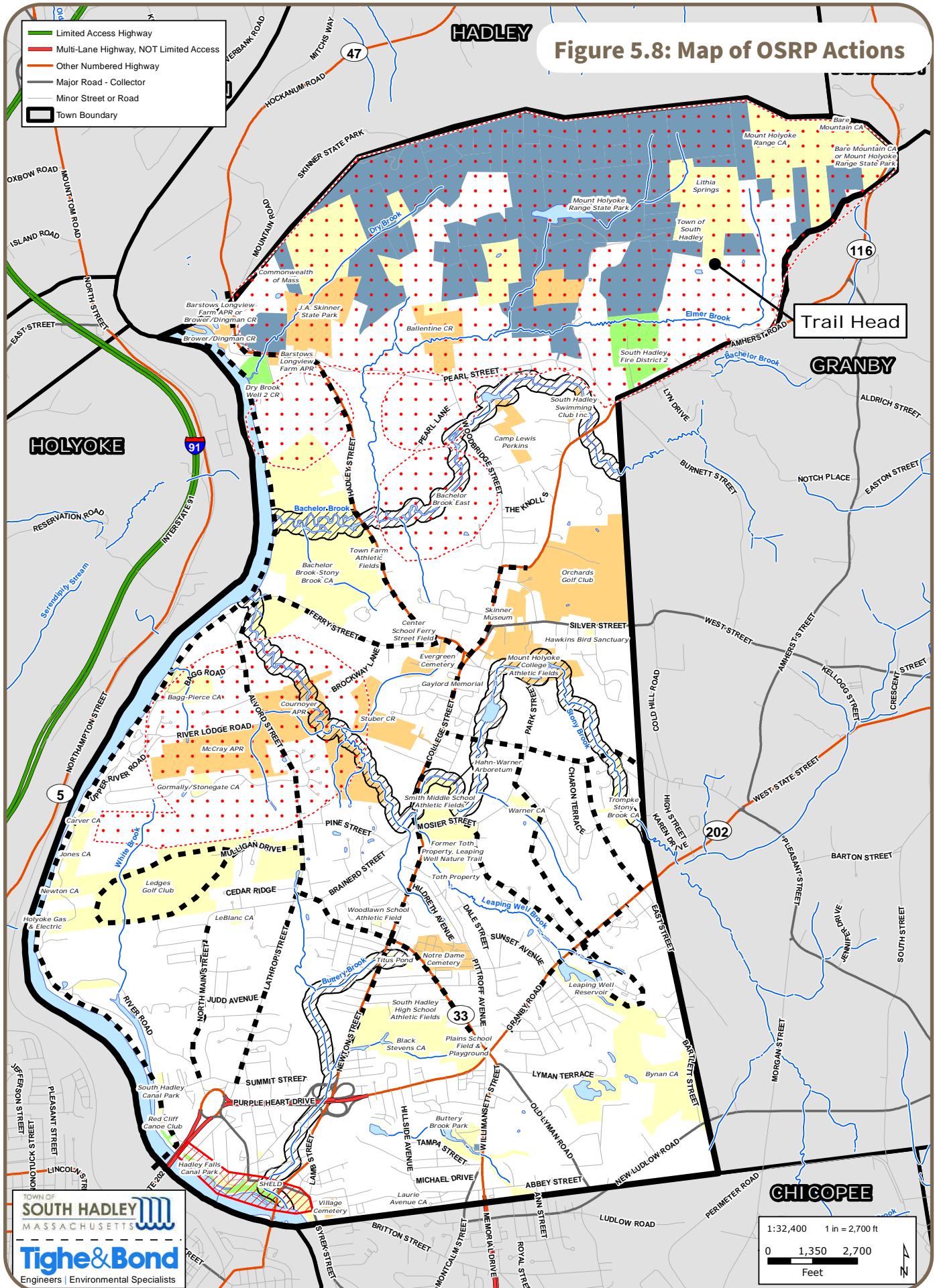
Flooding, already a problem in some areas, is likely to increase as the result of shifts in precipitation patterns and intensity. Preserving land adjacent to areas affected by flooding allows the Town to address the need for flood storage during and after high-intensity precipitation events.

Heat islands are areas of unshaded pavement that store and release heat. Converting small lots into pocket parks and increasing the tree canopy along sidewalks and streets (often referred to as urban forest) can reduce the impact of heat islands. Such reduction increases the comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Finally, preservation of open spaces also helps the health of the flora and fauna of South Hadley by preserving habitat. Connected areas of open space create wildlife corridors. For humans, open space provides opportunities for passive recreation, such as walking trails, and can be adjacent to playgrounds or areas of more active recreation. Recreational spaces contribute to a sense of community, strengthening social resiliency.

Figure 5.8 is from the *2019-2026 Creating Connections - Open Space and Recreation Plan*. It shows the proposed actions from that plan.

Figure 5.8: Map of OSRP Actions



TOWN OF
SOUTH HADLEY
MASSACHUSETTS

Tighe & Bond
Engineers | Environmental Specialists

CHICOPEE

1:32,400 1 in = 2,700 ft

0 1,350 2,700
Feet

Recommendations

Protect natural resources.

- Implement protections for the town's drinking water supply, including the entire aquifer, and its groundwater.
- Protect agricultural land as a natural resource and encourage agricultural activities, especially organic agriculture, integrated pest management, and/or other sustainable agricultural practices.
- Reactivate the Agricultural Commission to support farming in the community.
- Provide protections for the ecological habitat along river corridors throughout town.
- Conserve ecological habitat and use it for citizen science initiatives or community gardens.

Preserve historic buildings and development patterns, often consistent with the density and scale of a walkable neighborhood.

- Preserve viewsheds of the Connecticut River. (A viewshed is the view of an area from a specific point and may be integral to community and personal experience. A good example is glimpse of a river through a wooded area as one turns a corner.)
- Preserve Alvord, Pearl, and River Streets as scenic routes.
- Identify characteristics of historic neighborhoods that are desirable, and assess zoning bylaw use and dimensional standards to determine if dimensional standards support or discourage preferred development patterns, and make recommendations for zoning code changes and new design standards.
- Develop sub-area plans to determine desirable form and character of neighborhoods, and make recommendations to amend zoning code and develop design standards to achieve preferred forms .
- Develop appropriate guidelines for new buildings and the adaptive reuse of existing

buildings in local and national historic districts.

- Develop more general design guidelines or more prescriptive standards for new development, renovation and rehabilitation, and streetscape, both public and private. Consider compatibility with context, particularly scale, rather than consistency with style.

Preserve and expand public access to the waterfront on the Connecticut River.

Identify specific areas for future open space and recreational uses, including trails.

Identify and map small open space lots and evaluate their value and function.

Develop activities that could co-exist with golf at Ledges Golf Course in the short-term. A targeted study could address potential uses and community preferences for the long-term use of this property.

Maintain a variety of open space types suited to all age groups and acquiring empty nonconforming lots for small pocket parks or gardens wherever feasible to build up the open space network and connectivity for wildlife corridors.

Continue to use the [South Hadley Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) to guide for preservation of open spaces.

CONNECTIONS

Circulation






Improving connectivity in and around South Hadley will mean addressing car-dependency by creating new connections for pedestrians and bicyclists and investigating options for the expansion of public transit. According to the 2013-17 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, just over half of South Hadley residents commute outside of the county to their places of work. Almost all commute by car. According to the same survey, about 48% of South Hadley households have 2 vehicles available, 30% have 3 or more, 20% have just one, and about 2% have no vehicle available.

Enhancing and expanding public transit services will be a vital step to provide equitable access to all populations within the community. Connectivity also includes non-vehicular connectivity. Improving the pedestrian realm and enhancing safety for bicyclists is vital to increasing not just physical connections from point A to point B, but social and emotional connections between people as they engage with each other and with their environment. South Hadley already boasts a robust open space network of parks and conservation areas for both leisure and recreation. Improving access to them may be in the form of improved and extended sidewalks, shared use paths, bike lanes, paths and trails.

Some of the non-vehicular options discussed include the following:

- Sidewalk and shared use path
- Sidewalk and bike lane
- Separate bike/pedestrian path
- Hiking/Greenway trails

RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Identify opportunities to create off-road walking and biking paths to connect housing, services, goods, jobs, open spaces, and recreational areas. Continue to use the [South Hadley Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#) as a guide.
-  Support safe and healthy connections within each neighborhood:
 - Preserve and expand access to South Hadley's robust network of both passive and active open spaces.
 - Reduce barriers that prevent students from walking or biking to schools.
 - Provide inter-generational spaces and programming to diminish feelings of isolation among the senior population.
 - Provide a wide range of housing choices located near services offering affordability and accessibility to increase opportunities for aging-in-place in South Hadley.
 - Support educational opportunities for children and adults.
-  Provide street furniture, particularly outdoor seating or other rest areas, as a means to maximize the use of multi-modal connectivity networks by adding a layer of social infrastructure.
-  Identify and improve opportunities for expanding physical connections throughout South Hadley including sidewalks, alternative off-road trails and shared-use paths, and other multi-modal infrastructure.
-  Offer improved transportation options to provide access to critical services such as food providers, medical services, the library and Town Hall.

Social and Virtual Connections

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted other elements of connection: social connection, which was a component of the forum discussions, and internet-based connection, which has become a significant area of inequality since the lockdown in March 2020. Prior to the pandemic, the need to bring new people into town affairs had been a topic of conversation. The transition to online participation for many official meetings has increased participation by some people who otherwise could not go to an in-person meeting because of work or family obligations. Post-pandemic, the ability to integrate in-person and online meetings may help continue the level of flexibility required to attract new voices to town discussions.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing has been required to prevent the transmission of the disease. However, strategies for reducing transmission include reducing the number of people who gather in an indoor environment, wearing masks that cover mouth and nose when in close proximity to others, and ensuring a higher quality of indoor air. These strategies have reduced the ability for people to gather at restaurants, for indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment, to attend school, to work, and to participate in civic events such as town meetings.

The ability to conduct activities outdoors has also been a critical need during this period. In fact, South Hadley held its Town Meeting outside. During this period, people have been attracted to outdoor activities in record numbers. Access to these facilities will remain critical as they have offered the most opportunities for social interactions during this period (see **Figure 5.9** for recreation areas and Town facilities). Restaurants have moved takeout and seating outdoors and, in some areas, retail has had the option to move goods onto the sidewalk or offer curbside pickup.

Winter conditions will challenge the continued ability to socialize and conduct businesses outdoors;

communities will need to plan for creative ways to support their business community and commercial areas in the colder months. Indoor community gathering spaces will need to consider retrofitting to increase the quality of indoor area and may need to rethink how much space to allocate people when renovating or designing new facilities.

This plan recommends actions that will strengthen social connections by increasing communications between residents and the municipality both during the pandemic and afterward. In an acute shock, strong communication ties will allow critical messages to be distributed across multiple channels. Informed residents will be able to take the appropriate actions to protect themselves and inform appropriate town officials of vulnerable neighbors. These social connections are critical to the resiliency of the South Hadley community both to address continued goals around increasing the diversity of residents participating in community conversations and to assist in future times of stress including winter storms.

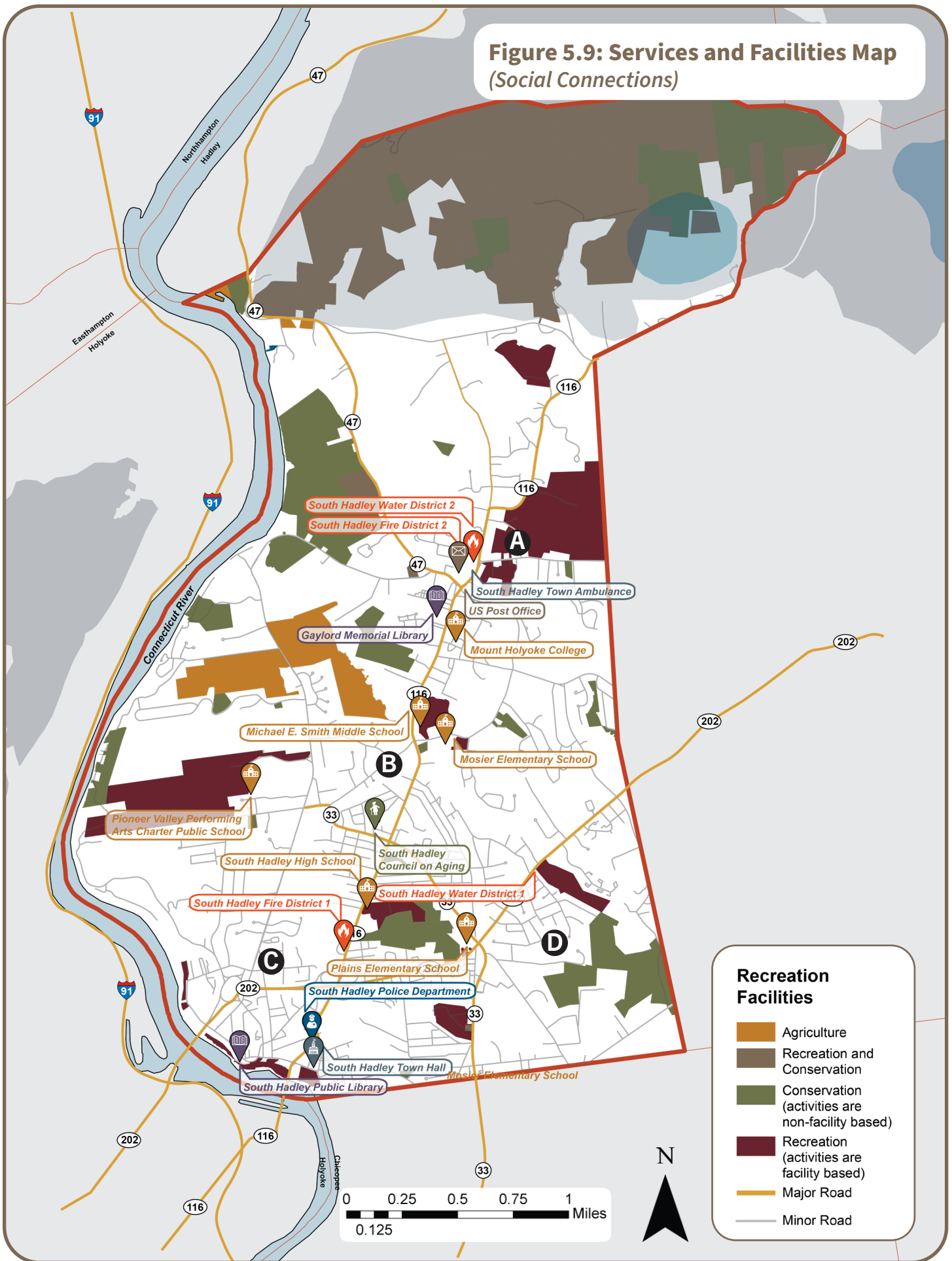
VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

Having access to the internet has been critical for many people to be able to attend school, continue working and to have access to friends and family members, allowing those people to continue to earn an income and maintain social contact.

Those without internet access, either through lack of income or of familiarity with the technology, are on the negative side of the digital divide: they are unable to continue to participate in civic and social life and are therefore isolated. They may also suffer a negative economic impact, because they do not have reliable internet access.

The digital divide may be offset by those with access to smartphones, and in future outreach programs, ensuring that digital communication is smartphone enabled will reach a greater number of people in the past. The COVID-19 crisis exposed the need for full internet access and education in how to use connections and devices. Technological access and literacy have serious implications for issues of equity and equality. Barriers to technology are barriers to obtaining an education, applying for

**Figure 5.9: Services and Facilities Map
(Social Connections)**














jobs, filing for unemployment, seeking medical assistance, combating the effects of isolation on mental health, and even participating in government activities. Without up-to-date and effective internet access, there could be a disproportionate bias in the information that decision-makers receive online. For this reason, a key action step will be to increase access to broadband and/or fiber to all households and businesses and a related step will be to provide internet accessible devices to low-income households and training to those who are unfamiliar with the use of the devices and the communication technologies widely in use to connect people to each other, to their employers, and to critical information from all levels of government (local, state, and federal) during this crisis. Local cable access Channel 15 is another excellent communication resource however in need of financial support. As Comcast loses its customer base to SHELD fibersonic, there needs to be a means to support Channel 15 cable access.

MUNICIPAL COMMUNICATION

All the goals and objectives in this Master Plan Update overlap jurisdictional boundaries and successful implementation will require joint action in terms of creating and implementing policies, rules and regulations, funding strategies, and cross-collaboration. Communication among boards, committees, and departments will be critical to this process and many of the recommendations and actions address such communications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Ensure access to high-speed internet is available to all homes. SHELD is continuing its four-year effort to roll out its Fibersonic network, which provides high-speed internet access to residential users. Access is a function of the ability to connect, the affordability of that connection, and the technology and training to use that connection.
-  Reinforce and publicize a strong community identity, continuing the use of a consistent graphic identity for Town materials (physical and virtual) and extending a consistent identity for signage throughout the town.
-  Provide and maintain technology enabling the work of Town committees/boards (elected and volunteer), including interactive real time connection to members of the public.
-  Develop a marketing and facilitation program to attract a variety of businesses to the four developed areas of town.
-  Increase usage of website and social media to communicate with residents.
-  Increase person-to-person outreach in the town, especially for isolated populations.
-  Engage residents new to municipal processes to increase the pool of volunteers and people invested in Town policies and programs.
-  Create a program to provide internet access, internet-enabled devices, and training to households with residents that are low-income, elderly, or both.
-  Track changing demographics to ensure that Town services and programs continue to meet the needs of residents.
-  Provide and expand services and infrastructure for vulnerable populations.
-  Support and expand services offered by the Senior Center/Council on Aging.

Implementation Plan

5



5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This implementation plan is in two forms: a static list provided in this chapter and an Excel spreadsheet (Appendix D) that can be used as a tool to track progress over the next ten years.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This chapter identifies specific actions to implement the vision and goals described earlier. The Planning Board is the entity defined by the Commonwealth as being responsible for South Hadley's Master Plan. As such, the Planning Board intends to align their future projects to support the goals and objectives of this Master Plan Update. For example, considering regulatory changes to proactively address the impacts of climate change and developing regulatory strategies to protect the Mount Holyoke Range and the aquifer are actions by the Planning Board that would fulfill the recommendations of this Master Plan Update.

The Board plans to add the four goals as a reference list to evaluate the applications and other actions they review to determine how those actions fit into this Master Plan Update. The members see this as support for this plan and a signal to the public of their responsibility as custodians of the plan.

As requested by MPUAC and coordinated by MPIC, representatives from Town boards, committees, departments and the Fire and Water Districts reviewed the draft of the goals and objectives in January 2020 and responded to the following requests:

- Please list any actions you (your board or committee) are currently taking to support the proposed goals.
- Please list any additional actions you (your board or committee) would like to take to support the proposed goals.

- Please list any resources you (your board or committee) anticipate requiring in order to address actions to support the proposed goals.
- Please describe how you (your board or committee) might measure the success of actions taken to support the proposed goals.

The answers to these questions form the initial base of this Implementation Plan, which is divided into three sections:

- **New actions:** This section identifies new initiatives that will help implement each goal. These future actions are listed by goal. Each goal is accompanied by a short summary and a list of the relevant objectives. Actions are sorted by the entity responsible for implementation. Actions may fulfill one or more of the objectives for each goal.
- **Resources:** This section lists the resources that responding entities defined as necessary to complete the actions that support the goals of this Master Plan Update. Resources include money (both operating and capital funds) and time (both staff and volunteer).
- **Metrics:** A consistent topic of discussion with MPUAC was the identification, development, and use of metrics to measure progress towards the completion of this Implementation Plan. With limited municipal resources available, the Town needs to understand how well its resources have been used. Responding entities identified the types of data each could collect to create an initial baseline that could be measured to evaluate whether actions have been successful in meeting the goals and objectives identified in this plan. This section also provides suggestions for how the data could be collected, monitored, and reported.

Ongoing actions identified in this process are provided in **Chapter 3. Community Visions, Goals, and Objectives.**

PRIORITIZATION OF ACTIONS

The community forum on October 23, 2019 asked participants to review the objectives for each goal and provide their thoughts on the priority of each. Their responses helped determine an initial set of priorities for when and where the Town should invest its limited resources. If the priority weightings are translated into a timeline, then the highest priority objectives would be addressed first, and the lowest priority objectives addressed last. However, this conversation did not consider the existing available resources, current and ongoing efforts within the Town, and the future ability to address the objectives. Defining actions to be prioritized should consider the following factors:

- Does this objective require a policy change or an investment of funds?
- Are the funds required to implement the objective classified as operating or capital?
- Are the funds required municipal or non-municipal (federal, state, private)?
- Does the objective require actions from more than one board, committee, or department?
- Can the objective be broken into smaller actions, some of which can occur earlier, and/or at lower cost, and some of which may occur later and/or at higher cost?
- Can the objective be achieved by reallocating existing resources?
- Can policies and actions be combined to address multiple objectives?

The initial prioritization of actions is based on the information from the October 2019 public forum and the questions above. The Town Administration should review priorities on an annual basis and integrated into the municipal budget process, to ensure that the prioritization continues to make sense given shifting resources and needs. Tracking and analyzing the identified metrics will help the Town Administration and the community understand which actions have been completed; which actions are on track; and which actions have either not begun or are not on track.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This structure of this implementation plan includes three sections:

- The four goals with the relevant action strategies, objectives described in **Chapter 3. Community Visions, Goals, and Objectives**, and the accompanying table of actions. Each table includes the specific action, the primary and secondary entities responsible for implementation, recommended metrics, and priorities.
- Resources for departments, boards, or committees that are necessary to address the goals.
- Metrics that will be used to measure the success of implementation actions undertaken by Town staff, elected officials, partner organizations, and residents.

The Excel table (**Appendix E**) matches the content of this Implementation Plan and will support sorting by goal, action, committee, and priority.

Definition of Prioritization Groups

The life of a master plan is around ten years. The actions in the plan below are prioritized into four categories:

- Immediate (within the next year)
- Short-term (1-3 years)
- Mid-term (3-5 years)
- Long-term (5-10 years)

Objectives that have multiple timelines (i.e. ST/MT) indicate that the action may be started in the short-term but will take several years to be fully adopted as an ongoing practice (for example, communication initiatives) or fully functional (actions such as protecting land).

As noted earlier, the priorities should be evaluated annually to measure progress and continued relevance.



GOAL 1: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

South Hadley creates a respectful and welcoming environment in which all community members can prosper and thrive.

Summary of Action Strategy

Actions for this goal should focus on:

- Creating and sustaining a diverse and welcoming community.
- Attracting businesses that will provide well-paying jobs for residents.
- Attracting businesses that will provide goods and services for residents.
- Updating and developing inclusionary housing stock suitable for people at every stage of their lives and priced at varying levels of affordability.
- Improving current and creating new connections, both physical (pedestrian, bicyclist, driver) and social (access to the internet, community groups) for all ages, interests, and needs.
- Providing educational opportunities that support lifelong learning for access to better jobs and to increase happiness.
- Creating sub-area plans to further apply many of the goals for people, prosperity, housing and connections to specific strategies to truly create neighborhoods for all.

Objectives

#	Goal 1 Objectives	Proposed Metrics
1-1	Create the physical and regulatory conditions that support business retention and growth, and attract new, well-paying jobs.	Change in physical and regulatory conditions. Number of jobs retained. New businesses generated. Number of new jobs. Number of new businesses.
1-2	Support the development of housing at different scales and price ranges to meet the needs of people at all life stages and incomes.	Number of units created at different price ranges. Change in typology of housing produced.
1-3	Improve connections for all, including those with varied abilities, and especially to open space and recreational activities to support community health and engagement.	Number of new connections. Location of new connections. Change in typology of connections (sidewalks, paths, bike lanes). ADA accessible improvements. Change in what is connected (open space, recreational areas, commercial centers). Change in number of users. Demographics of users. Changes in public health. Changes in community engagement.



GOAL 1: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

#	Goal 1 Objectives	Proposed Metrics
1-4	Strengthen social engagement by providing multi-generational programming.	Amount and types of multi-generational programming. Change in attendance. Reactions of participants.
1-5	Support educational resources for people of all ages and abilities.	Change in availability. Change in types of educational resources by user type. Number of users.
1-6	Be a welcoming community that attracts and supports a diverse population.	Change in diversity of population (see definition in the Glossary on page 94).

Actions

These are new actions to support implementation of this goal and its objectives. If an action has more than one board or committee listed, the Primary Entity is first.

#	Goal 1 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G1-1	Assist in development/distribution of brochures/trail maps, and provide support for improved wayfinding, volunteer trail efforts.	Bike/Walk Committee	ST
G1-2	Encourage young families and schoolchildren to use/enjoy our outdoor resources.	Bike/Walk Committee School Department Recreation Conservation Commission Commission on Disabilities	I
G1-3	Support improved connectivity, including mapping to identify easements and routes for more direct walking/biking connections to schools, shopping, town/outdoor resources, and other amenities; and construction of trails and multiuse paths.	Planning & Conservation Department Bike/Walk Committee	MT
G1-4	Support permitting for access routes for pedestrians and bicyclists in new business/housing projects.	Planning & Conservation Department Bike/Walk Committee	MT
G1-5	Establish regular funding and volunteer base for stewardship of conservation areas and the trail network.	Planning & Conservation Department Bike/Walk Committee	ST



GOAL 1: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

#	Goal 1 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G1-6	Increase awareness among residents about the value of natural resources through learning programming.	Planning & Conservation Department Conservation Commission School Department	ST
G1-7	Restore and protect the floodplain storage capacity of Buttery Brook as a component for redevelopment of South Hadley Falls.	Planning & Conservation Department Conservation Commission	LT
G1-8	Advocate for programs and services that allow seniors to age in place.	Council on Aging	ST
G1-9	Expand programming for seniors.	Council on Aging	ST
G1-10	Provide and support inter-generational programming.	Library Cultural Council Council on Aging Historical Commission School Department	ST
G1-11	Raise awareness of the stigma of ageism and promote opportunities to highlight the wisdom and strength of aging.	Council on Aging	MT
G1-12	Develop historic walks around town.	Historical Commission Bike/Walk Committee Commission on Disabilities	ST
G1-13	Use the park adjacent to the Library to highlight South Hadley's historical, cultural and natural resources.	Library Historical Commission Cultural Council Conservation Commission Redevelopment Authority HG&E	MT
G1-14	Offer more technology assistance for people trying to keep up with their devices.	Library School Department Council on Aging	ST



GOAL 1: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

#	Goal 1 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G1-15	Support implementation of the <i>2016 Housing Production Plan</i> with relevant regulatory strategies and update the plan in 2022.	Planning Board Commission on Disabilities Council on Aging Housing Authority	ST
G1-16	Engage an affordable housing developer to build new housing.	Planning & Conservation Department Administration Housing Authority Redevelopment Authority	MT
G1-17	Create a planning process that identifies the sub-areas in South Hadley (neighborhoods).	Planning & Conservation Department	I/ST
G1-18	Develop sub-area plans that identify strategies for preserving desirable characteristics and neighborhood enhancement needs.	Planning & Conservation Department	ST
G1-19	Create a plan for locating outdoor gathering spaces and seating, and advocate for public outdoor seating/areas as a priority in all new business and housing projects. Develop and maintain a master map of all outdoor seating and gathering areas.	Planning & Conservation Department Bike/Walk Committee Commission on Disabilities Conservation Commission Department of Public Works Planning Board	ST/MT
G1-20	Assess and map undersized (non-conforming) and undeveloped lots to understand where they are located and the adjacencies to other land uses.	Planning & Conservation Department	I
G1-21	Support traffic calming measures in permitting for new projects and municipal roadway improvements.	Police Department Planning and Conservation Department DPW	ST



GOAL 1: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

#	Goal 1 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G1-22	Work with Council on Aging to improve communication, education and programming to elderly population regarding fraud and scams.	Police Department Council on Aging SHCTV	I
G1-23	Distribute information about existing programs to assist residents of the Falls, e.g. CDAC Home Modification Loan Program, for housing rehabilitation for low income families.	Redevelopment Authority Falls Neighborhood Association	I
G1-24	Develop a marketing and facilitation campaign to encourage more housing and small business for the Town, with a focus on the Falls.	Redevelopment Authority	ST
G1-25	Promote low cost reliable electricity and availability of fiber; consider offering or expanding incentives for business or industry to locate or expand in South Hadley.	SHELD Administration Redevelopment Authority	ST
G1-26	Identify and encourage conditions that attract and support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color population.	Selectboard Administration All entities	ST/MT
G1-27	Increase transportation options for members of the South Hadley community, including affordable and accessible options.	Selectboard Administration Commission on Disabilities Council on Aging School Department	MT/LT
G1-28	Support changing student demographics and needs.	School Department South Hadley Public Library	MT
G1-29	Investigate offering town-wide wifi and/or wifi hot spots.	Town Administration SHELD	ST
G1-30	Facilitate public outreach events and forums around sustainability, such as public access TV, Know Your Town, mailed resource advertisements, and social media.	Sustainability and Energy Commission SHCTV SHELD	ST
G1-31	Foster Town engagement with college/university personnel and consultants to provide special expertise.	Administration Other entities as appropriate	ST, MT, LT



GOAL 2: CARING FOR OUR RESOURCES

South Hadley provides community-wide stewardship of its natural, cultural, and historic resources.

Summary of Action Strategy

Actions for this goal should focus on:

- Understanding that the physical health of the people in South Hadley is directly linked to the health of our environment.
- Valuing the history of the town as reflected in our buildings, landscape, and institutions and as expressed by the culture and backgrounds of all its people.
- Building a strong community identity around the connections between people, the environment, our history, and our culture.

Objectives

#	Goal 2 Objectives	Proposed Metrics
2-1	Protect the community's drinking water supply and groundwater and ensure that the water supply is adequate to meet the needs of the community in perpetuity.	Acres of land formally protected. Adequacy of water supply for current and future needs. Quality of water. Enforcement of Water Supply Protection District (WSPD) regulations.
2-2	Expand resources by engaging community members in support of the acquisition and maintenance of strategic open space parcels to support community and wildlife needs.	Number of community members involved. Number of parcels acquired. Date maintenance plan(s) approved.
2-3	Protect agricultural land as a natural resource and support local agriculture as an economic enterprise and historic resource.	Change in amount of agricultural land protected. Change in types of agricultural activity.



GOAL 2: CARING FOR OUR RESOURCES

#	Goal 2 Objectives	Proposed Metrics
2-4	Develop regulations and programs that support the reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings, the retention of historic development patterns (the interrelationship of streets, building footprints and open spaces), and the creation of new and protection of existing viewsheds (views of landscapes and/or natural and historic resources), especially those of the Connecticut River and the Mount Holyoke Range.	Number of historic structures that have been rehabilitated or converted to adaptive reuse. Number of new streets constructed and location of relative to existing streets. Number of new and protected viewsheds.
2-5	Integrate cultural opportunities into the life of the town, including regular and seasonal community events, public art in appropriate areas of town, support for cultural and educational programs, events at Mount Holyoke College, and a variety of existing and future indoor and outdoor gathering spaces.	Number of and types of events. Change is the amount, type, and location of public art. Change in the number, type, and location of gathering spaces. Change in the use of the gathering spaces.
2-6	Identify state and federal programs and seek grants and other sources of funding.	Number and types of grant applications. Number and types of grants funded. Funding applied for and funding awarded.
2-7	Protect woodlands from threats associated with climate change such as wildfires, disease and pests through proper management.	Inventory of existing policies for the management of forest lands, resource sharing, regional coordination, emergency protocols. Change in that inventory.

Actions

These are new actions to support implementation of this goal and its objectives. If an action has more than one board or committee listed, the Primary Entity is first.

#	Goal 2 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G2-1	Create and update master map for outdoor seating and gathering areas.	Bike/Walk Committee	ST
G2-2	Develop and implement a forest management program on Town-owned forest lands.	Conservation Commission	MT



GOAL 2: CARING FOR OUR RESOURCES

#	Goal 2 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G2-3	Develop internships with area colleges to assist the Commission in stewardship activities, including trail maintenance, and conduct ecological inventories of conservation areas.	Planning & Conservation Department Conservation Commission	MT/LT
G2-4	Expand funding for land conservation through regional partnerships to tap into new resources.	Planning & Conservation Department	MT/LT
G2-5	Work toward protection of parcels identified as priority for protection in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.	Planning & Conservation Department	LT
G2-6	Increase land protection in the Bachelor Brook watershed, including the Mount Holyoke Range.	Planning & Conservation Department Water District #2	LT
G2-7	Inventory/map parcels vulnerable to development in the Mount Holyoke Range.	Planning & Conservation Department	ST
G2-8	Permanently protect land in Zone 2 for aquifer recharge to public water supplies.	Planning & Conservation Department Water District #2	ST
G2-9	Restore Titus and Black Stevens Ponds (including Newton Smith Brook).	Planning & Conservation Department	LT
G2-10	Seek/support opportunities to pair land use conservation with culture/arts/historic preservation and other uses.	Planning & Conservation Department Cultural Council Historical Commission	MT
G2-11	Identify and inventory existing Connecticut River viewsheds.	Planning & Conservation Department	ST
G2-12	Create an inventory of historic structures and views.	Historical Commission	ST



GOAL 2: CARING FOR OUR RESOURCES

#	Goal 2 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G2-13	Work with other Town entities to create and implement a plan to maintain viewsheds that currently exist.	Planning & Conservation Department Department of Public Works Historical Commission Tree Committee and Tree Warden	MT
G2-14	Encourage applicants who seek grants for development of cultural events and arts management to include interns as part of the project.	Cultural Council	ST, MT
G2-15	Increase visibility of, communication about, and investment in the arts, education, and associated activities in the community.	Cultural Council Historical Commission Old Firehouse Museum School Department South Hadley Public Library	ST
G2-16	Inventory and preserve archives at the Town of South Hadley Library and the Old Firehouse Museum.	Historical Commission Town Clerk's Office	LT
G2-17	Undertake a study of the Endorse Dry Brook aquifer to assess the extent of recharge and contributing factors.	Fire District #2 Water Department	LT
G2-18	Revise subdivision regulations through such means as: limitations on clear cutting of trees, decrease impervious surface cover and encouragement of more shared open space.	Planning Board	ST
G2-19	Review/update Flexible Development Bylaw and whether it should be allowed by right.	Planning Board	LT
G2-20	Examine how agriculture may be encouraged via incentives/regulations.	Planning & Conservation Department	ST
G2-21	Research options for conserving open space and agricultural parcels without access to CPA funds.	Planning & Conservation Department	ST
G2-22	If SHELD moves, consider redevelopment of site on Main Street.	SHELD	ST/MT



GOAL 2: CARING FOR OUR RESOURCES

#	Goal 2 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G2-23	Investigate impacts of taxation or new stormwater utility on new asphalt installations for roads and driveways.	DPW Sustainability & Energy Commission Board of Assessors	ST
G2-24	Monitor and safeguard water safety at point of delivery in all public buildings.	Administration Health Department	ST
G2-25	Coordinate resources for protection against wildfire, given climate change such as physical improvements as well as public education.	Fire Districts #1 and #2 Conservation Commission Department of Public Works Planning Board Police Department Tree Warden	ST/MT



GOAL 3: A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

South Hadley incorporates measures in its policies and practices to increase the Town's resiliency and ability to prosper and thrive in response to challenges such as a significant economic downturn, climate change, or other stressors.

Summary of Action Strategy

Actions for this goal should focus on:

- Implementation of near-term actions required for mitigation of the impacts of climate change. This could be as simple as protecting and planting shade trees and as complex as requiring low-impact development strategies for stormwater management for both public and private development.
- Increasing and diversifying the tax base to protect South Hadley during an economic downturn and to provide more resources during times of economic prosperity.
- Strengthening social networks and bonds, both in-person and virtual, to address normal emergencies, such as winter storms, and less frequent crises, such as pandemics.
- Promoting a greater diversity of people on town boards and committees.

Objectives

#	Goal 3 Objectives	Proposed Metrics
3-1	Address climate change and resiliency measures in all actions.	Identification of point person to monitor progress. Date of education campaign to boards, committees, and departments. Date(s) that change in policies/new policies adopted. Impact of change in policies.
3-2	Diversify the tax base to support the municipal budget in order to increase capacity and services.	Number of new jobs. Number of new businesses. Number of expanded businesses. Change in tax revenue.



GOAL 3: A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

#	Goal 3 Objectives	Proposed Metrics
3-3	Encourage participation on Town boards and committees by people who are under-represented in the community to ensure broad-based representation in decision-making and support for Town policies and actions.	Number of people recruited. Number of people appointed to Town boards and committees. Number of people new to board and committee service. Number of participants in town-wide forums and discussions about civic affairs.
3-4	Develop a program to connect all residents and businesses to the internet. Provide appropriate training and devices for low income and/or elderly households.	Number of households and businesses connected. Number of people receiving devices and training.
3-5	Identify and use non-tax base revenue sources.	Date sources identified. Amount and sources of funds applied for. Amount and sources of funds received.

Actions

These are new actions to support implementation of this goal and its objectives. If an action has more than one board or committee listed, the Primary Entity is first.

#	Goal 3 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G3-1	Change boilers in Town buildings to heat pump systems when the boilers need to be replaced.	Sustainability & Energy Commission Administration	ST/MT
G3-2	Develop a campaign for sponsorship of benches to increase public seating.	Bike/Walk Committee	ST
G3-3	Develop an urban forestry plan for public shade trees, including a management plan to improve the health of existing shade trees and a plan to increase the urban forest canopy.	Planning & Conservation Department Department of Public Works Tree Committee and Tree Warden	ST/MT
G3-4	Assess tree health; prune or remove hazardous trees.	Tree Committee and Tree Warden Department of Public Works	ST/MT



GOAL 3: A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

#	Goal 3 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G3-5	Develop program with South Hadley High School to have a youth member on the Conservation Commission.	Conservation Commission	ST
G3-6	Incorporate floodplain management in design and planning of redevelopment projects.	Redevelopment Authority Planning & Conservation Department Planning Board	ST/MT
G3-7	Develop set of best practices for addressing climate change through project permitting.	Planning & Conservation Department	ST
G3-8	Consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA).	Selectboard	ST/MT
G3-9	Support an investigation to re-delineate the District 2 Water Supply recharge area.	FD #1 and #2 Board of Water Commissioners Conservation Commission Planning Board	ST
G3-10	Consider alternative community heating and cooling sites and work to identify and map new potential sites.	Board of Health Administration Council on Aging School Department South Hadley Public Library Sustainability & Energy Commission	ST
G3-11	Review Town regulations and regulatory authority concerning preserving and promoting public health.	Board of Health Administration	ST/MT
G3-12	Update and maintain the current affirmative action plan.	HR/Administration Commission on Disabilities	ST
G3-13	Create volunteer opportunities for employees to give back to South Hadley.	HR/Administration	ST
G3-14	Incorporate addressing climate change/resiliency into routine permitting and operations.	All Boards and Committees	ST



GOAL 3: A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

#	Goal 3 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G3-15	Work with Town administration and neighboring towns to consider adoption of Zero Net Carbon goals, tree planting, requiring energy efficiency standards with new construction (particularly municipal) electric charging stations, solar on existing structures, etc.	Planning Board Administration SHELD Sustainability & Energy Commission Tree Committee and Tree Warden	ST
G3-16	Measure baseline climate data (carbon, number of trees, solar, etc.) and track these markers.	Planning & Conservation Department	ST/MT
G3-17	Train all Police Supervisors in Incident Command System #300 and #400 to improve response to an emergency within the community.	Police Department	ST
G3-18	Seek charitable donations for work of the Redevelopment Authority. Mention at all presentations/public events that the Redevelopment Authority can accept donations. Enable online donations.	Redevelopment Authority	ST
G3-19	Consider solar energy and install as feasible at public facilities.	School Department Capital Planning	ST/MT
G3-20	Hire staff and recruit volunteers from a wide base in terms of diversity and educational backgrounds.	School Department Administration Commission on Disabilities	ST
G3-21	Install solar arrays on the South Hadley High School with battery storage in con-junction with SHELD.	School Department SHELD Sustainability & Energy Commission	MT
G3-22	Reach outside South Hadley for hiring purposes.	School Department Administration	ST
G3-23	Monitor unfilled seats on boards and committees and, using inclusionary policies, identify people to fill those seats.	Selectboard	ST
G3-24	Work with boards and committees to produce videos to welcome new members and give them a brief overview of responsibilities.	SHCTV All boards	ST
G3-25	Encourage people of diverse backgrounds to run for boards and/or apply for committees to ensure broad representation of all residents in government functions.	All boards	ST/MT



GOAL 3: A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

#	Goal 3 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G3-26	Incorporate renewable energy into our portfolio over time as load permits either through Department owned assets or other large-scale installations.	SHELD	MT
G3-27	Provide internet connectivity to every household and business in South Hadley with a combination of broadband, fiber and Wifi.	SHELD Town Administration	MT
G3-28	Establish a grant program to provide internet-enabled devices to low-income households.	SHELD Council on Aging School Department South Hadley Public Library	ST/MT
G3-29	Work with Council on Aging and Library to provide training for those unfamiliar with connecting to online resources.	SHELD Council on Aging School Department South Hadley Public Library	ST
G3-30	Advocate for all new residential and commercial buildings to be built with a solar-ready roof.	Sustainability & Energy Commission Planning Board	MT
G3-31	Advocate for all new municipal buildings to be built as Net Zero.	Sustainability & Energy Commission Planning Board	MT
G3-32	Discuss with SHELD the long-term changeover away from nuclear power to renewables (planned for 2045).	Sustainability & Energy Commission SHELD	MT/LT
G3-33	Support charging stations in town, operated by private entities and the Town.	Sustainability & Energy Commission Administration	MT
G3-34	Attend relevant meetings of Conservation Commission, Planning Board, the Bike/Walk Committee and other Town committees.	Tree Committee and Tree Warden	I
G3-35	Develop an inventory of public mature shade trees throughout the town. Record the location and condition status of each tree. Develop recommendations for new trees, locations and cost estimates for funding.	Tree Committee and Tree Warden	ST



GOAL 4: EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

South Hadley is a leader in municipal communication, with the public and among municipal staff, boards, and volunteer committees.

Summary of Action Strategy

Actions for this goal should focus on:

- Strengthening communication between the municipal government and its residents, businesses, and institutions.
- Creating a strong and consistent identity that attracts new businesses and residents to move to South Hadley.
- Creating strong partnerships among the different boards, committees, and departments and community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and other volunteer groups to achieve implementation of this Master Plan Update.

Objectives

#	Goal 4 Objectives	Proposed Metrics
4-1	Support a strong and welcoming multi-ethnic and multiracial community identity .	
	Create a consistent style of Town communication through coordinated visual presentation, including graphics and typefaces in all content communications (reports, informational materials, signage and Town website, social media, and other messaging).	Date coordinated graphics package distributed for use. Feedback from residents and business owners.
4-2	Attract new business and residents through coordinated outreach and marketing.	Change in content, type, and media of message. Number of new businesses. Number of new residents. Feedback from new businesses and new residents.
4-3	Develop a clear and consistent method of publicizing Town policies, regulations, bylaws and procedures.	Date publication plan developed. Date approved. Consistency of publication across media. Feedback on communication methods. Feedback on policies post-announcement.



GOAL 4: EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

#	Goal 4 Objectives	Proposed Metrics
4-4	Provide timely information about Town actions, services, meetings and events.	Date information is posted relative to date need (i.e. number of days prior to a meeting that an announcement is made). Number of responses. Number of people using services. Type of services used. Number of participants at virtual and in-person events or meetings. Number of views of recorded meetings.
4-5	Function well and consistently in an emergency, with connections to regional resources.	Compare responses in an emergency with neighboring and/or similar community.
4-6	Communicate progress in reaching the goals of this plan.	Date data is collected. Consistency of collection methods. Date data is shared with the Town. Change in how data is used (eliminate completed actions, shape ongoing actions, refocus as necessary).
4-7	Improve public access and ability for participation in Town governance to the extent permissible.	Number of people participating in virtual meetings. Number of boards and committees whose meetings are available. Number of elected and appointed officials with Town emails. Number of email accounts in use. Number of committees with webpages. Timeliness and relevancy of information of webpage.



GOAL 4: EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

Actions

These are new actions to support implementation of this goal and its objectives. If an action has more than one board or committee listed, the Primary Entity is first.

#	Goal 4 Actions	Entities Responsible	Prior-ity
G4-1	Create working groups of staff and committee and board members to meet regularly around common priorities to identify and work together toward shared objectives.	All boards, committees, and departments Administration Selectboard	ST
G4-2	Conduct an annual joint meeting with other committees to share priorities.	Conservation Commission	I
G4-3	Create digital resources on various platforms a podcast or video campaign to hat answers basic questions about Town government and Town department procedures.	Administration SHCTV	ST
G4-4	Improve inter-departmental communications within the municipality and to the public.	Administration All departments	ST/ MT
G4-5	Provide professional development for all departments and committees as appropriate to improve skills in website content development and presentation.	Administration All departments	ST/ MT
G4-6	Develop a professional communications position.	Administration	LT
G4-7	Develop uniform standards and set of content for the website presence of boards and committees.	Administration	ST/ MT
G4-8	Create a central resource directory on the Town website for all listing and linking to all current plans, reports and key data.	Administration All boards, committees, and departments	ST/ MT
G4-9	Develop "onboarding" protocols for new members of boards and committees and publicize the protocols online. This should include the charge of the board or committee and resources available to assist them.	Administration	ST
G4-10	Create a shortened URL that each board, committee or department can use to drive visitors to their pages.	Administration	ST
G4-11	Provide clear communications standards and training for boards and committees, including timely posting of meeting minutes on the website and maintaining an up-to-date and informative presence on the Town website.	Administration	ST
G4-12	Create a single repository of GIS data, adding dynamic layers and linking permitting data and tax data.	Board of Assessors	ST



GOAL 4: EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

#	Goal 4 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G4-13	Prior to Town Meeting, review proposed bylaws as to legality, consistency with other bylaws, and alignment with the goals of this Master Plan Update and make recommendations for action (recommend or not recommend) to the Selectboard and Town Meeting.	Bylaw Review All other boards and committees	ST/ MT
G4-14	Increase awareness among residents and knowledge about what a wetland is and when work needs a permit.	Conservation Commission Planning & Conservation Department	ST
G4-15	Increase the public's willingness to seek guidance from the Conservation Commission before doing work.	Conservation Commission Planning & Conservation Department	ST/ MT
G4-16	Increase use of media and the Town website to promote and showcase good projects with outcomes in support of the values of the Wetlands Protection Act and the goals of this Master Plan Update.	Conservation Commission Planning & Conservation Department	ST/LT
G4-17	Promote the Town's age friendly initiatives.	Council on Aging	ST
G4-18	Create a publicly available Cultural Resource Guide.	Cultural Council	ST
G4-19	Use the District sign to better inform our customers of our activities.	Fire and Water Department District #2	ST/ MT
G4-20	Use the water billing notice mailings to inform customers about water department activities and policies.	Fire and Water Department Districts #1 and #2	ST/ MT
G4-21	Procure portable road signs for emergency use.	Health Department Emergency Management Director	ST
G4-22	Post articles in area newspapers, Town's website and social media.	All boards and committees.	ST/ MT
G4-23	Focus on ways to improve the on-boarding process for new employees.	HR/Administration	ST/ MT
G4-24	Look at ways to coordinate services with the School Department's Human Resources.	HR/Administration School Department	ST/ MT



GOAL 4: EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

#	Goal 4 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G4-25	Review bylaw for Master Plan Implementation Committee and consider updating charge.	Master Plan Implementation Committee Bylaw Review Committee	ST
G4-26	Work with boards, committees, and departments to develop a progress "dashboard" that the public can see.	Master Plan Implementation Committee Administration Information Technology	ST/ MT
G4-27	Work with boards, committees and departments to identify baseline data for impact evaluation and standard metrics, as appropriate.	Master Plan Implementation Committee All boards, committees, and departments	MT
G4-28	Work with boards, committees, and departments to monitor progress towards goals using metrics recommended in this Master Plan Update, as appropriate.	Master Plan Implementation Committee All boards, committees, and departments	MT/ LT
G4-29	Work with Town Administrator, Planning Board and Selectboard to determine whether there are additional reporting mechanisms that should be put in place, for example to flag an urgent issue.	Master Plan Implementation Committee Administration Planning Board Selectboard All departments	ST/ MT
G4-30	Update Police page on Town's website to include more relevant information.	Police Department Information Technology	I
G4-31	Issue regular press releases, supported by robust and current website content, about projects and programs supporting redevelopment of the Falls.	Redevelopment Authority	ST/ MT
G4-32	Use social media more broadly, as part of an overarching communications plan, to promote redevelopment efforts.	Redevelopment Authority	ST/ MT
G4-33	Communicate progress on goals twice a year to the entire community.	School Department	ST



GOAL 4: EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

#	Goal 4 Actions	Entities Responsible	Priority
G4-34	Create sustainability action sheets for residents, businesses and Town offices. These sheets would focus on sustainable acts that could be carried out in residential, commercial, industrial and municipal environments.	Sustainability & Energy Commission	ST
G4-35	Publish a running list of all green incentives throughout Town using flyers and social media/website.	Sustainability & Energy Commission	ST
G4-36	Collaborate with Tree Committee and Tree Wardens in other towns in the region to share information and form project partnerships.	Tree Committee and Tree Warden	ST/ MT
G4-37	Create more publicity for current recreation programs, including greater outreach online and using social media.	Recreation Department	ST

RESOURCES REQUIRED

Unsurprisingly, the resources required for implementation (as identified by the individual boards, and committees, and departments) included both requests for new funding and pleas to be mindful of the tax burden on residents. Several respondents requested a grant writer, who could serve multiple departments; others suggested shared resources, such as a social worker. However, some requests for help require little to no additional cost, but will need cooperation from other bodies and, most importantly, the sharing of knowledge among boards, committees, and departments.

Because multiple goals and objectives are served by each board, committee, and department, the request for resources has been provided by entity. In some cases, the respondent has not requested resources; instead, they have offered them to others.

Resources requiring operating funds will need to be addressed during the annual budget cycle. The prioritization of resources to address the goals of this Master Plan Update should be an annual topic of discussion during the budget process, led by the Appropriations Committee, and linked to the measurement of successful implementation (see Metrics, below).

Requests for capital resources should be integrated into the capital budget cycle. The Capital Planning Committee should request that departments use the goals and actions identified in this Master Plan Update to prioritize capital requests and the timing of capital investments.

The measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the population have had a significant impact on the regional and national economy. Predictions as to the length and the severity of the downturn vary on a daily basis.

Some of the actions in this plan will need to be taken within the next few years. Given the likely decrease in available resources, the Town will need to show the same ingenuity in meeting these goals as it has shown to date in continuing to function under the restrictions put in place by the pandemic response.

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is a source for technical assistance for the Health Department and the Planning Board.

Bike/Walk Committee

- Funding for copying and printing outreach materials

Board of Assessors

- Participation and cooperation from other entities
- Funding, including and investment in Editor software to meet GIS needs.
- One central repository for data

Bylaw Review Committee

- Additional lead time in order to thoroughly review any proposed bylaws in relation to the goals of this Master Plan Update and to gain possible legal opinions

Council on Aging

- Additional financial resources

Conservation Commission

- Annual funding for stewardship of conservation areas

Cultural Council

- Continued Massachusetts Cultural Council support at current financial levels

Department of Public Works

- Additional funding for both operating and capital needs from the Town
- New equipment and manpower for projects
- Cost estimates for maintenance needs of new projects prior to construction

Health Department

- Resources to participate and create baselines
- Consulting time (PVPC)

Historic District Commission

- Access to resources (records, photos, etc.)
- Volunteers/Interns
- Two additional board members

Human Resources/Admin

- Support from administration, employees, and residents
- Additional funds for professional development opportunities and software platforms

Library Director

- A social worker to share with the Board of Health to support people who are struggling but do not qualify for services provided by the Council on Aging
- Improved technology for training purposes to provide a wider range of workshops

Master Plan Implementation Committee

- Regular consultation with Town Administrator and/or Selectboard to discuss obstacles and progress
- College faculty and students for research on metrics
- Input from each entity assigned action items in the updated plan
- IT support for web-based actions

Planning & Conservation Department

- Continued technical assistance from PVPC to help with priority items where necessary and appropriate
- Climate change and hydrological studies
- Additional professional expertise as needed to address special technical areas that arise in the Board's work

- Funding to subsidize and expand affordable housing opportunities
- Funding to acquire critical Open Space/Agricultural parcels
- Possible grant application support and endorsement of an aquifer study
- Technical assistance from PVPC to map strategic mountain range, agriculture and wildlife parcels and conduct analysis (prioritization; research on ownership and valuation of such parcels)
- Technical assistance from PVPC or Regional Conservation Planning (RCP) about how to talk to landowners about conserving land

Police Department

- Funding for supervisors to attend Incident Command Training
- IT web consultant that could re-vamp police website
- Additional funding in capital appropriation is needed to accomplish purchasing each new hybrid police vehicle
- Grant writer
- An additional sworn position (30th) to oversee and guide traffic enforcement

Recreation

- New facilities (pickleball and tennis courts, playgrounds, and public meeting space)
- Funding for new programs
- Policy change to promote programs not within the Recreation Department
- Discretionary revenue for pickleball
- More revenue sources
- More community involvement/participation
- Collaboration with other town groups and committees

Redevelopment Authority

- Funding and staff

School Department

- Collaborate with UMass, CES for diversity
- Continued increased communication with the Town, including the Police Department
- Communication technology and IT support

Selectboard

- Commitment from boards and committees to remain mindful of operating within our budget to ease the tax burden on residents

SHCTV

- Addition of part-time staff

Sustainability & Energy Commission

- Guidance on operating a social media page
- Support to keep South Hadley's MassEnergyInsight data current and accurate so that fact-based decision making can occur
- Funding for an annual quick reference mailer to be included in the SHELD or tax bill that provides resources for energy reduction and sustainable actions
- More interaction with fellow town boards in furthering sustainability goals

Tree Committee and Tree Warden

- Access to a part-time/full-time trained arborist

METRICS FOR SUCCESS

Metrics are a way of measuring progress against a goal with data. To be successful, the data collected must be relevant to the goal, and must be easy to collect in the course of operations. In addition to the suggestions made by the boards, committees, and departments below, other metrics could include the AARP's Livability Index, WalkScore and ParkScore. Examples of community-derived metrics include the following:

- Number of miles of sidewalks installed/repaired
- Number of miles of trails installed/maintained
- Number of hits on a social media post
- Number of attendees at a community event
- Number of people signing up for notifications from CivicReady
- Increase in the acres of land bought for preservation
- Reduction in the area of impervious paving
- Increase in uses of Town facilities

The initial base of these metrics was the responses to the questionnaire for the boards, committees, and departments. They identified the types of data each could collect to be used in a metrics-based assessment of progress towards the goals and objectives listed in this plan. Because the data collected may address more than one objective, the suggestions have been listed by department.

In order to create an effective analysis, each department would have to collect all the data relevant to its identified metric in the same year (2021) to establish as baseline metric. Future results would be compared to that year, creating an indexed trend line to compare the results on an annualized basis.

The Town has several options for tracking metrics. The first would be to let each department track its own metrics (as identified below) and report the results as part of an annual cycle. The most likely cycle would be to tie the reporting into the budget process.

Another possibility is for a single entity to request all the data and track the changes over time. This could be an existing department, such as Administration, an existing board or committee, such as MPIC, or a new entity.

Reporting to the public could be done as a regularly updated dashboard on the Town's website, an annual report to Town Meeting, or both.

Finally, there are providers of municipal dashboard platforms, such as ClearPoint Strategy which has additional resources for understanding dashboards.

Administration

- Number of responses to requests for resident feedback in person at meetings or on social media

Board of Assessors

- Number of maps created from GIS data
- Ratio of positive feedback from consumers, both internal and external, on improvements to access of public data

Bike/Walk Committee

- Change in participation in public Treks, mailing list members, and other event metrics

Bylaw Review Committee

- Record of bylaws passed or defeated at Town Meeting and whether said bylaws were recommended or not recommended in our report to the Selectboard and Town Meeting

Council on Aging

- Change in people aging-in-place in South Hadley
- Change in people able to access places that they need to stay healthy
- Change in access for seniors to a health professional for essential health needs, including medication management
- Change in age friendly opportunities being utilized
- Ratio of positive feedback from participants attending intergenerational programming on challenges and best practices
- Change in the opportunities available for the integrated cultural events in South Hadley

Conservation Commission

- Change in Enforcement Orders issued
- Change in number of acres of new protected land

Cultural Council

- Change in number of funded events that take place in South Hadley
- Change in number of applicants
- Change in number of multi-generational events
- Change in access to Cultural Resource Guide
- Amount of citizen participation in funded events

Department of Public Works

- Ratio of positive feedback from the Town residents and business owners on various projects
- Number of miles of roadways and sidewalks maintained and/or replaced
- Anticipated maintenance needs for new projects compared to actual costs

Fire District 2, Board of Water Commissioners

- Change in consumers attending our annual district meeting
- Increased interest in becoming a water commissioner

Health Department

- Change in health data for the community over time

Human Resources/Administration

- Annual snapshots of our applicants/hired staff
- Ratio of positive feedback from employees on professional development
- Number of employees completing surveys

IT Department

- Measurable change in the use of technology platforms.
- Change in subscriptions to web platforms including CivicReady, CivicPlus and online payments
- Change in responses to surveys or other questionnaires to measure public expectations regarding the use of technology
- Change in consultation with users
- Change in content creation by users

Library

- Change in attendance at public events
- Feedback from surveys of those attending
- Change in people accessing the information we provide
- Feedback from evaluations used to modify/enhance actions

Planning & Conservation Department

- Ratio of affordable (workforce) housing available to goal of 10% of dwelling units
- Change in affordable housing available
- Change in preservation of open space, including small green spaces and undersized lots
- Increases/decreases to baseline climate data (carbon, number of trees, solar, etc.)
- Number of proposals and applications that come before the Board that are consistent with the goals and objectives
- Implementation of aquifer study
- Change in intra-board and cross-board participation in grant discussions and applications
- Number of trainings for climate/resiliency completed
- Change in membership of email list for Planning Board

Police Department

- Measure supervisory response to scene management at critical incidents, if even the duration is minimal (wandering elder, serious vehicle crash that impacts traffic flow, weather related incident)
- Change in community feedback and traffic on improved website
- Change in call volume

- Ratio of vehicle fuel usage for conventional and hybrid vehicles
- Number of grants submitted and awarded annually
- Change in number of traffic complaints, traffic crashes, and traffic violations

Recreation

- Change in activity/involvement of community/volunteers
- Change in sign-ups/registrations

Redevelopment Authority

- Number of redevelopment projects initiated

School Department

- Change in statistics for discipline, attendance, programming, Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and Advanced Placement (AP) scores, SPIFFY Coalition survey results, participation rates in listed activities, student enrollment and school choice enrollment

Selectboard

- Change in residents signed up for Civic Ready
- Change in numbers of interested applicants for boards and committees
- Change in demographics of persons recruited to committees

SHCTV

- Feedback on programming
- Number of views videos received
- Change in number of committees served

SHELD

- Change in fiber installations by number of business and number of homes compared to the total of each within South Hadley
- Change in number of people with access to online connectivity

Sustainability & Energy Commission

- Percentage reduction per capita electricity usage. SHELD would serve as data source
- Percentage reduction in municipal energy usage. MEI would serve as data source
- Change in public participation rates in SHELD sustainability efforts such as MuniHelps, energy star rebates, solar PV, and electric card programs
- Number of public inquiries to the SEC



Glossary

6



6. GLOSSARY

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

- **CES:** Collaborative for Educational Services
<https://www.collaborative.org/who-we-are/board-directors>
- **OSHA:** Occupational Safety & Health Administration
- **DLS:** Department of Labor Statistics or Division of Local Services
- **FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Administration
- **JLUS.:** Joint, Land Use Study; specifically the *Westover Joint Land Use Study*;
- **M.G.L.:** Massachusetts General Laws
- **MPIC:** Master Plan Implementation Committee
- **MPUAC:** Master Plan Update Advisory Committee
- **OSRP:** Open Space and Recreation Plan
- **PVPC:** Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- **PVTA:** Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
- **SPIFFY Coalition:** <https://www.collaborative.org/services/healthy-families-and-communities/spiffy-coalition>
- **SWOT:** Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats
- **TRIAD:** Community policing initiative between seniors, law enforcement and service providers.
<https://www.southhadley.org/334/TRIAD>

GENERAL PLANNING TERMS

- **Adaptive Reuse:** The reuse of an existing building for a use that was not originally intended. For example, a school that has been converted to housing.
- **Comprehensive Planning:** A process of developing a vision for a community's future and the steps required to realize that future. In Massachusetts, master plan and comprehensive plan may be used interchangeably that is not true in other states.
- **Dashboard:** As used in this plan, a method of seeing multiple data points about municipal activities in a way that clearly explains the information and its relevance to the user.
- **Diverse population:** One that is inclusive of (but not limited to) different ages, races, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender identifications, and a wider range of incomes, including those who are economically disadvantaged.
- **Vision vs. Goals vs. Objectives vs. Actions:** A community's **vision** is a statement of desired future condition. **Goals** are the high-level paths to achieve that vision and are community-wide. Objectives are divide the goals into more specific paths that may affect a subset of boards, departments and committees. **Actions** are the individual steps that must be taken to achieve the goals and implement the vision.
- **Master Plan vs. Master Plan Update:** A **master plan**, in Massachusetts, is enabled by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Section 81D. The plan must include certain elements (defined in **Chapter 2. Introduction**). the original goal of the master plan is to ensure that the use of land within the municipal boundaries is consistent with community goals. The planning

process for a master plan expands beyond that to consider almost all aspects of municipal operations that have an impact on land use. A **master plan update** is a planning process that reviews the previous master plan(s) and updates them based on current data and goals and expectations for the future of the community.

- **Meetings-in-a-Box:** The public engagement process used during this planning process to expand community engagement beyond the single-night meeting. This process is described in more detail in Appendix A.
- **Mixed-Use Development:** A development in which more than one land use is present on a lot. Mixed use may be any combination of office, residential commercial, and industrial. Some communities do not allow residential in some mixed use zoning districts.
- **Nonconforming Lots:** Lots that do not conform with the zoning of the district in which they are located.
- **Placemaking:** The re-imagination and reinvention of public spaces in a community to create a unique sense of place responsive to the community's understanding of its identity.
- **Revitalization:** Creating incentives for economic growth in an area that has experienced a significant decline in terms of jobs and population. Often accompanied by regulatory changes; the provision of grants or tax incentives; and public infrastructure improvements and/or placemaking initiatives to attract private investment.
- **Smart Growth:** Growth that takes advantage of existing development patterns, primarily infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) and access to public transit. The goal is to preserve undeveloped area by encouraging development or rehabilitation and reuse within existing developed

areas. Often accompanied by an increase in the allowable square foot or units of land use, often housing, per acre.

- **U. S. Census:** A count of the population of the United States every ten years. The most recent census count is happening during 2020; the data from this count will not be available until 2021.

CIRCULATION

- **Complete Streets:** The design of streets to safely accommodate multiple users (pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers) simultaneously. See the link for Smart Growth America in **Chapter 8. Resources** for more information.
- **Multi-modal:** Infrastructure that provides access to more than one mode of transportation, for example, a road that provides safe access, marked access for private vehicles, public transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. May also refer to multiple methods of providing public transit, such as bus or train.
- **Streetscape:** The design of a street, including the natural and built environment; the quality and components of that design.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Maker space:** A collaborative workspace which provides tools and space for multiple uses. May require a membership and may be used as an incubator for small businesses.

HOUSING

- **Affirmative Action:** Policies or practices in which an individual's color, race, sex, religion or national origin are taken into account to increase representation in groups and opportunities for (among other aspects of society education, jobs,

and housing for an under-represented part of society.

- **Affordable/Workforce Housing:** “Housing that is affordable to households earning 60 to 120 percent of the area median income.” (Urban Land Institute)
- **Cost Burdened:** According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), cost-burdened families pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing. See the link for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in **Chapter 8. Resources** for more information.
- **Severely Cost Burdened:** According to the U.S. HUD, cost-burdened families pay more than 50 percent of their income for housing.
- **Low income households:** Defined by U.S. HUD as a four-person family at 1.6 times the very-low income limit and .adjusted by family size.
- **Very-low income households:** Defined by U.S. HUD based on a four-person family at 50% of the area median income and then adjusted by specific formulas.

MUNICIPAL FINANCE

- **Municipal budget process:** The annual process by which the Town’s operating and capital budgets are developed and approved by Town Meeting.
- **Tax Base:** The total assessed value of all property in the Town, including real estate, motor vehicle, and personal property.
- **Non-Tax Base revenue sources:** All non-tax sources or revenue, including grants, loans, bonds, and gifts.

- **Operating Funds vs. Capital Funds:** **Operating funds** are spent on the day-to-day operations of a municipality, such as staff salaries and supplies. **Capital funds** are investments in long-term physical projects or assets, such as roads, vehicles and computer equipment.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

- **Active/passive recreation:** **Active** recreation includes playgrounds, sports fields, and other areas that have special facilities or equipment. **Passive** recreation, by contrast, does not require such facilities and include such uses as wading, mountain biking birding, snow shoeing canoeing, hunting fishing, and riding,
- **Aquifer:** A body of permeable rock which can contain or transmit ground water. May be the source of a community’s water supply.
- **Aquifer Protection/ Water Supply Protection District:** Aquifers which serve as the source of a water supply must be protected from contamination and from overuse. In Massachusetts, this is known as Source Water Protection. See the link for Source Water Protection in **Chapter 8. Resources** for more information. South Hadley has a Water Supply Protection District that provides protection to its aquifer.
- **Greenway Trail:** A trail within a linear corridor that links water and land to natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- **Pocket Park:** Small outdoor space (less than 1/4 acre) which may be owned publicly or privately but is open to the public. Often found in urbanized areas to provide a public gathering space and usually a mixture of impervious surfaces (hardscape) and permeable landscaped

areas.

- **Protected Open Space:** Open space that is protected from development by acquiring the land by fee simple (buying the land) or by buying either a conservation or agricultural easement. The acquisition of easements by the state is authorized under M.G.L. Chapter 184, Sections 31-33 and is protected under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution. Chapter 61 programs allow landowners to reduce their property taxes by donating easements on their land for forestry (61), agriculture (61A), or open space and recreation (61B). See the link for MassWoods in **Chapter 8. Resources** for more information.
- **Urban forest:** All trees and vegetation growing within an urbanized area. This would include street trees in South Hadley Falls but exclude the Mount Holyoke Range.
- **Viewshed:** The geographic area visible from a specific location, including all elements within sight and excluding those that are blocked from view.

municipality for permitting housing within those districts. Also allows the community to enact design standards for development in the 40R district. See the link for Massachusetts Smart Growth Toolkit in **Chapter 8. Resources** for more information.

REGULATIONS AND REGULATORY TOOLS

- **40B:** Refers to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B which enables the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve a development providing affordable housing as long as certain standards are met. A community with 10% or more of its the housing units in town on the Subsidized Housing Inventory are exempted from certain requirements of this provision.
- **40R Smart Growth District:** Refers to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40R which allows municipalities to create zoning districts for housing in areas that meet certain criteria and provides a financial benefit from the state to the

- **Section 81D:** Refers to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 81D which is the enabling legislation for master plans.
- **Design Standards:** As used in this document, the use of specific requirements to control the visual and construction aspects of a building and site as part of the local approval process for an building or use. May also be used to refer to road or streetscape design.
- **Flood plain:** An area defined by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) as susceptible to flooding on a regular basis and at a given level of severity. See the link for FEMA in **Chapter 8. Resources** for more information.
- **Massachusetts General Law vs. Regulations vs. Bylaws:** **Massachusetts General Laws** provide the enabling legislation for many of the tools mentioned in this plan. Regulations are created by state and federal agencies to provide interpretation of legislation and to state how the legislation will be applied. **Bylaws** or ordinances are approved by the municipality and govern the functions and authority of the municipality and its departments. Zoning regulations are part of South Hadley’s bylaws.
- **Overlay districts:** A zoning district that does not replace the current zoning but provides for different land uses or development standards within a specific area as long as the development meets certain conditions.
- **Zoning:** The control of land use by means of a local ordinance. In South Hadley, such as ordinance is approved by Town Meeting.

SUSTAINABILITY/RESILIENCY

- **Brundtland Commission:** Created in 1983 by the United Nations and formerly know as the World Commission of Environment and Development (WCED) and replaced by the Center for Our Common Future. Developed the standard definition of sustainable development.
- **Renewable energy:** Energy production that does nor rely on fossil fuels; for example energy derived from wind turbines or solar panels.
- **Resiliency:** Community resilience is a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. (RAND) See the link for RAND in **Chapter 8. Resources** for more information.
- **Sustainability:** Defined as “development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). See the link for United Nations - Sustainable Development in **Chapter 8. Resources** for more information.

Resources

7



7. RESOURCES

LIST OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANS

Town of South Hadley

All Town plans and the Town's zoning bylaws can be found through the website of the Planning & Conservation Department:
<https://www.southhadley.org/209/Planning-Department>

2010 Master Plan

2016 Housing Production Plan

Open Space and Recreation Plan 2019-2026

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

2019-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

<http://www.pvpc.org/plans/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy-ceds>

Westover Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)

http://www.pvpc.org/westover_jlus

WEBSITES

Town of South Hadley

<https://www.southhadley.org/>

AARP Livable Communities

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/>

American Planning Association

www.planning.org

Bloomberg City Lab

<https://www.bloomberg.com/citylab>

Congress for the New Urbanism

<https://www.cnu.org/>

Cornell Small Farms Program

<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/>

Curbed

<https://www.curbed.com/>

Esri

<https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/en/home/>

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

<https://www.lincolnst.edu/research-data/data/place-database>

National Low Income Housing Coalition

<https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/massachusetts>

MassWoods

<https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/Ch61-v2.pdf>

Park Score

<https://www.tpl.org/parkscore>

Planetizen

<https://www.planetizen.com/>

Project for Public Spaces

www.pps.org

RAND - Community resilience

<https://www.rand.org/topics/community-resilience.html>

Route Fifty

<https://www.route-fifty.com/>

Strong Towns

<https://www.strongtowns.org/>

Smart Growth America

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/>

Trust for Public Land

<https://www.tpl.org/>

Urban Land Institute

<https://uli.org/>

UMass Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment

<https://ag.umass.edu/>

Walk Score

<https://www.walkscore.com/>

REGIONAL, STATE, FEDERAL, AND INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES**Federal Emergency Management Agency**

<https://www.fema.gov/>

<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>

East Coast Greenway

<https://www.greenway.org/states/massachusetts>

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation>

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/housing-and-community-development>

MassDevelopment

<https://www.massdevelopment.com/>

Massachusetts Division of Local Services

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-local-services>

MassGIS/Oliver

http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/oliver.php

Massachusetts Housing Partnership

<https://www.mhp.net/>

Massachusetts Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit

<https://www.mass.gov/smart-growth-smart-energy-toolkit-information-and-resources>

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

<http://www.pvpc.org/>

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>

Source Water Protection

<https://www.mass.gov/source-water-protection>

Westover Airport/AFB

<https://westoverairport.com/>

United Nations - Sustainable Development

<https://sdgs.un.org/>

U.S Census

<https://www.census.gov/>

U.S Census - American Community Survey

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

U.S Economic Development Administrations

<https://www.eda.gov/resources/economic-development-directory/states/ma.htm>

U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development

<https://www.hud.gov/>

U.S. Forest Service

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests>

