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Municipal Services & Facilities

Introduction and Goals

South Hadley's public services and facilities are a vital but frequently unnoticed part of the day-to-day life of the Town, providing essential services to local businesses, residents and school children. The municipal facilities element of a comprehensive plan can serve as a guide for decision-making about the public buildings, utility services, 'hard infrastructure' such as roads and sewers, and public services that a local government will provide. The adequacy of municipal and school facilities for the Town, and the Plan's recommendations for future investments and directions, is a function of three important factors:

A municipal facility is any property that has been improved for public purposes, such as a town hall, library, fire station or school which is not the subject of another portion of this plan.

It also includes municipal utilities such as water or sewer service, public schools, and cemeteries.

- The structure, size, and capabilities of the community's local government and departments, which affects decision-making and implementation
- The community's population and demographics, land use pattern, environmental conditions, and infrastructure, which determine what types of public investments will be needed most
- The expectations of residents and businesses for types and levels of services, and the relative ability of the Town to raise revenues to meet these expectations.

Meeting expectations for municipal services requires both short- and long-term planning, which is a challenge for local governments. Effective capital planning and asset management policies often are challenged by the constraints on revenue available for operating expenses, which puts long-term investment at risk. Planning and prioritizing short- and long-term investment needs can help build support for long-range management, and so can a well-articulated set of principles and goals for investments in municipal facilities and services.

In planning for South Hadley's municipal facilities and services, several recurring principles have emerged. These principles can help guide short- and long-term planning efforts, and can help make the Town's many investments consistent with

broader, longer-term goals. The core concepts embodied in the municipal services and facilities goals can be applied across departments and programs, supporting broader community goals of efficient and effective municipal services, compatible, attractive growth, a thriving economy that revitalizes the Town’s commercial districts, and improving quality of life. These five core goals organize the recommended actions and strategies in this chapter of the Plan.

Municipal Services and Facilities Goals

MSF-1	A Town that leads by example in its municipal facilities and operations, including SHELD, fostering partnerships, communication, and sustainability principles through its investments and initiatives.
MSF-2	An effective, town-wide communication strategy across departments and services, with a ‘marketing mindset,’ in order to enhance public participation, availability of information, quality of public services, efficiency, and environmental goals.
MSF-3	Efficiency and cost-effectiveness as a guiding principle for delivery of public services, along with considerations for equity in all aspects of South Hadley’s governance.
MSF-4	Creation and maintenance of a long-term vision for each public department in its planning, budgeting and operations, with strong collaboration across departments.
MSF-5	Promoting sustainability in municipal and public operations, starting with a Sustainability Task Force that can advise and support sustainability efforts by Town departments, and bring volunteer energy into beneficial directions for the Town.

Identification of Issues

South Hadley’s residents, the CPAC, and Town staff identified both traditional municipal service areas and one unique aspect of South Hadley’s government as the major community facility and services issues for this Plan. These were gathered through a series of events and outreach efforts: the March 5, 2008 Public Gathering, which included a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats “SWOT” analysis; interviews in November 2007 with selected agents of the Town of South Hadley; responses to the resident survey; CPAC presentations and discussions; and an Issues Gathering hosted by the Municipal Services and Facilities Subcommittee of the CPAC held in July 2008. All of these were intended to gain input into the major concerns regarding the provision of municipal services and quality of facilities in South Hadley. The key issues that were discussed most often, and substantially, were:

Traditional Municipal Services

- Schools and the School System
- Public Safety
- Water and Fire Districts
- Municipal buildings including the library
- Tax rates
- Town Hall (operations and facility)

Concerns Unique to South Hadley

- Potential changes in form of government and government operations

South Hadley's Local Government

The organization and size of a local government has implications for the types of facilities a community needs and the amount of space required for various functions. For example, governments with a “streamlined” central administrative structure need office space, records storage, small conference rooms and a few public meeting halls, but decentralized, participatory governments with many boards and committees need a variety of meeting rooms with access to records, convenient parking, and access for people with disabilities. Today, the public often expects that meetings will be televised, too, which means that some meeting spaces need cable access. South Hadley is a hybrid; it has both professional staff and many volunteer committees, and planning for its present and future space needs must account for the kind of government the Town has chosen for itself.

Form of Government

Representative Town Meetings work in largely the same manner as an Open Town Meeting, except that not all registered voters can vote. The townspeople instead elect Town Meeting Members by precinct to represent them and to vote on the issues for them.

For the most part, South Hadley follows the tradition of decentralized government that exists in a majority of the Commonwealth's towns. Its executive branch consists of a five-member board of selectmen and appointed Town Administrator as well as other elected boards and officers. Several appointed boards and committees also share responsibility for a wide range of programs and services.

South Hadley has a 120-member representative town meeting as its legislative body. Twenty-four town meeting members are elected from each precinct (Precincts A, B, C, D, E), who set the Town's annual operating budget, authorize capital projects and adopt local bylaws. As in many other towns, South Hadley has over time professionalized its local government by hiring administration and finance personnel and staffing functions that used to be handled entirely by volunteers. Consolidating its highway, water, waste and other departments into a Department of Public Works helps the government to operate more efficiently.

South Hadley's government operates primarily out of the Town Hall, which is located on Main Street in South Hadley Falls. The Town Hall building is stately and dramatic, but due to its age, the facility requires substantial upgrading and improvements, including interior renovations.

LEARNING FROM NEIGHBORS

Since 1966, the Commonwealth has operated as a “home rule” state, which means that municipalities have a constitutional right of self-government and authority to design their own form of government – to a point. Long before 1966, however, the General Court approved local government organizational changes petitioned by cities and towns.

The “default” or standard powers and duties of municipal officials appear in the Commonwealth’s general laws. Many of these provisions date to the early 1800s, and most communities in Massachusetts still operate under them to some degree. By law, Massachusetts towns are required to elect a board of selectmen, school committee, board of assessors, board of health, planning board, town clerk, tax collector, treasurer, auditors, highway surveyors, tree warden, constables, and town moderator, but nearly all of these positions can be converted to appointees of the selectmen by majority votes at town meeting and the annual town election (M.G.L. c.41, s. 1B).

A Charter Commission has been established in South Hadley to evaluate the Town’s present form of government and to consider the adoption of a “home rule” charter. Cities and towns seeking to change their form of government have access to three procedures:

- Adopt the provisions of “enabling” or local option statutes—a form of legislative home rule—found variously in M.G.L. c.40N, c.41, or c.43C;
- Establish a charter commission and adopt a home rule charter under the Home Rule Amendment (Article 89), ratified by voters in 1966, and M.G.L. c.43B, the Home Rule Procedures Act, enacted by the legislature in 1967; or
- Petition the legislature for a “special act” charter, or a governmental organization change approved first by a town and thereafter by the state legislature.

In Massachusetts today, 83 cities and towns have home rule charters and 55 operate under special act charters.² Some of the existing special act charters pre-date the Home Rule Amendment, yet even after 1966, many communities continued to choose special act over home rule charters, in part for procedural reasons. In substance, there is little difference between them.

Source: *Municipal Facilities*, Southborough Town Plan, prepared by VHB and Community Opportunities Group, June 2008.

Notes: 1 Municipalities with a town form of government must retain an elected board of selectmen and school committee, but all other officers mandated under M.G.L. c.41, s.1 can be appointed by following the procedures set forth in s. 1B. Planning boards and boards of health also may be converted from elected to appointed positions as well, and a board of selectmen can serve as the board of health, board of assessors or board of water commissioners. Communities may elect their moderator on the floor of town meeting instead of by ballot at an annual town election. Although rare, this practice still exists in a few towns.
2 Massachusetts Municipal Association, “Massachusetts Municipal Directory,” 2006, and Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, “Massachusetts Communities Operating Under Home Rule Charters,” January 2006, both updated by Community Opportunities Group, Inc., through January 2008.

Municipal Finance

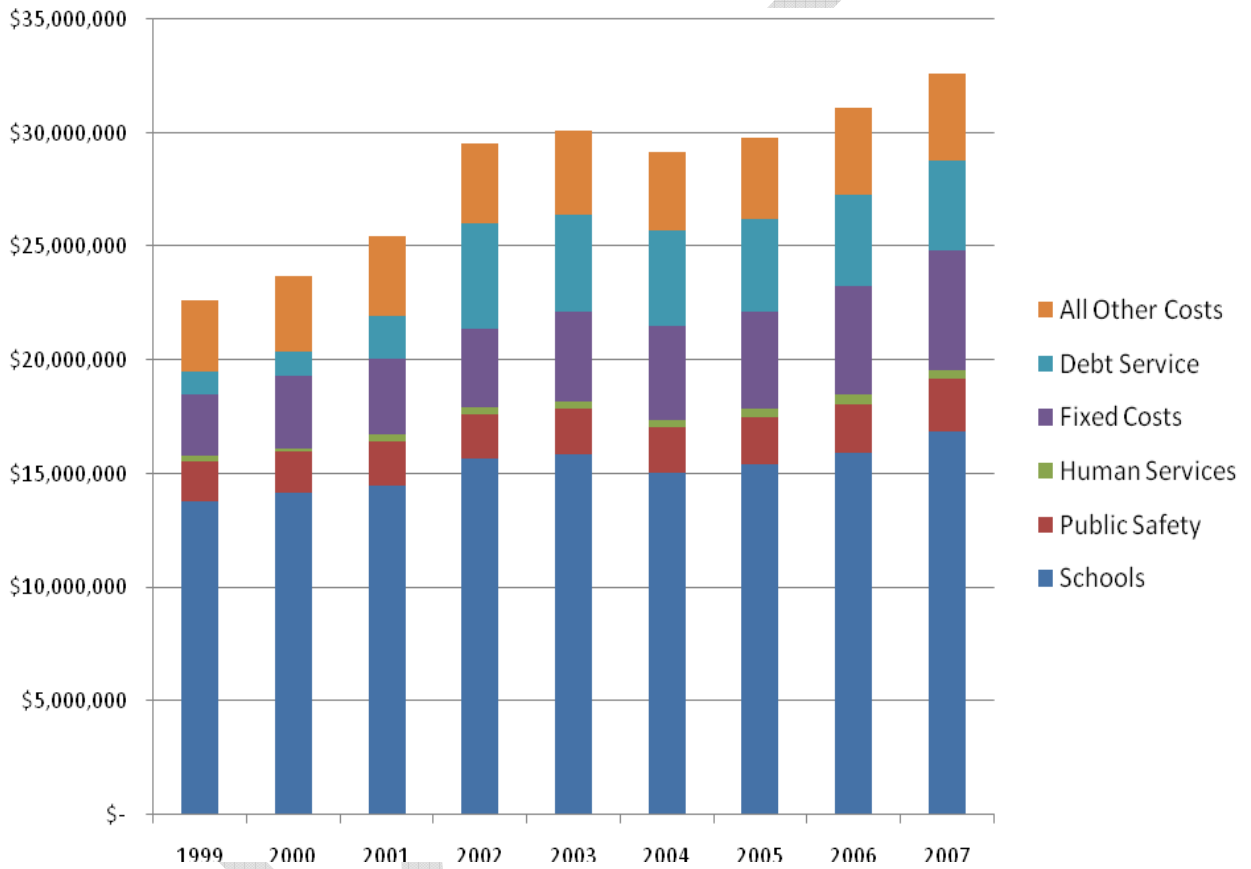
As a rule, less affluent communities rely less on property tax revenue because the state directs most of its aid programs to communities with the greatest financial need.

South Hadley pays for community services with property taxes, state aid, fee-based revenues such as motor vehicle excise taxes, licenses, and permit fees, and available reserves. The same sources form the backbone of local government finance throughout the Commonwealth, yet communities differ in their degree of dependence on each source. In South Hadley, the tax levy has historically supplied 40 and 50 percent of each year’s total revenue, and about 60 percent of general fund revenue.¹ In 2008, the property tax supplied 47 percent of the Town’s total revenue, which puts South Hadley in the lowest quartile of the State’s municipalities for indicators of relative property wealth.

¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), “General Fund Revenue,” 2000-2007, and “Revenues by Source,” 1981-2008.

The general fund is the largest and most important fund for a local government. General fund revenue includes all revenue not restricted for a specific purpose, so the vast majority of a community’s ordinary operating expenditures – from salaries to paper clips – are general fund expenditures. Since 2000, general fund expenditures in South Hadley have increased by 38 percent in constant 2007 dollars. As shown in Chart 9-1, the most noticeable increases have occurred in debt service and fixed costs, such as employee health insurance and general liability insurance.

Chart 9-1
General Fund Expenditures, 1999-2007



Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), "Revenues by Source," 1999-2007.

**Table 9-1
Tax Rate Comparison**

Municipality	Tax Rate
Hadley	8.84
Easthampton	11.45
South Hadley	12.26
Granby	12.57
Ludlow	13.32
Belchertown	13.44
Amherst	16.02
East Longmeadow	16.06

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue

South Hadley’s tax rate has decreased by 26 percent between 2000 and 2008 from 16.67 per \$1000 in 2000 to 12.26 in 2008. However, due to the rise in housing values during this time period, the average tax bill for a single-family home has increased by approximately \$900 or 42%. This is a common trend that has been observed throughout the state. South Hadley has the third lowest tax rate of its comparable communities in the Pioneer Valley Region (see Table 9-1). It is important to note, however, that the tax rate in Table 9-1 does not include the levies for water, fire, or sewer services. Fire protection service levies are different for the two Districts in town. South Hadley’s fire, water rates and sewer rates have not decreased over time. Sewer rates have risen over the last few years and may continue to do so as they normalize.² Fire rates have also risen gradually to provide the services required for a growing town.

South Hadley has a high Bond Rating (A1) which means that the Town typically receives a very good rate on loans for capital projects.³ Generally, the Town does not have a high level of borrowing compared to other towns.



Municipal Services

The municipal services that South Hadley provides are fairly typical of Massachusetts towns (see Table 9-2). Like most communities, South Hadley does more for its population than it is required to do by law. To residents and businesses in just about every city or town, many local government services qualify as “essential” regardless of whether the state mandates them. For example, municipalities do not have to provide solid waste disposal services, youth services, recreation programs, a senior center or a public library, but the Towns that provide these services often consider them an indispensable part of what it means to be a community.

**Table 9-2
South Hadley’s Municipal Services**

Administration & Finance	Public Safety	Public Works
Selectboard	Police	Highway
Town Clerk/Treasurer	Fire / Ambulance ¹	Engineering
Assessor	Emergency Management	Parks
Collector’s Office	Building Inspector	Water Pollution Control Division
Human Resources	Plumbing Inspector	Solid Waste Division
Information Technology	Electrical Inspector	Waste Water Treatment Plant
		Water Supply ¹



² Conversation with Richard Harris, Town Planner at CPAC Subcommittee meeting on October 22, 2008.

³ “At A Glance Report for South Hadley” Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services and conversation with Judi Barthelette, Town Treasurer on October 22, 2008.

Land Use	Human Services	
Planning	Board of Health	Culture & Recreation
Conservation	Council on Aging	Public Library
Zoning		Recreation
	Education	Historical Commission
	School Department	Cable Studio

Sources: Town of South Hadley website (10/2008) and FY07 Annual Report.

Notes: 1 The Fire Departments (which also operate the ambulance service) and Water Departments are run independent of the Town and taxed separately, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

In addition to its Departments, South Hadley also has several independently elected boards including the Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Library Board of Trustees, Planning Board, and the Board of Commissioners for the Municipal Light Department. South Hadley has two separate water and fire districts, independent of the Town; these are overseen by Prudential Boards and Board of Water Commissioners.

Education

The quality of education in South Hadley has consistently received accolades. The School Committee was deemed “excellent” by the Superintendent of Schools and the taxpayers have consistently supported the schools. Recently, school department budgets have increased approximately 5 to 6 percent each year without the need for a Proposition 2 ½ override. Although sports user fees and transportation fees have been implemented, the School Department has not had to cut any sports programs since FY2003. The total expenditure per pupil in the South Hadley School District has risen slightly since 2006 (\$9,537) to 2007 (\$10,325).⁴

At the same time, the Superintendent indicates that the budget is “adequate” and the Schools continue to face challenges to provide the service, technology and arts and athletic programs that are essential to a well-rounded, modern education. Quality of education curriculum and instruction, while excellent in some areas, is lacking in others. There are faculty positions that need to be filled throughout the four schools, and a need to improve the curricula for special education, advanced learners and children at risk for dropping out of school.

Despite the overall good quality of the schools, some students are not succeeding. Program concerns include reading and mathematics accomplishment in the early grades, a more challenging curriculum, lack of accelerated programs (specifically in math at Grade 7), and inadequate foreign language programs. As a result of program concerns, the most recent trends indicate that more South Hadley parents are choosing to send their children to other schools in the area, such as magnet, charter, religious-based, or language immersion schools.



⁴ Ibid.

School facilities have been and continue to be a cause for concern from both residents and town employees. While the middle and high schools were recently and successfully renovated, the elementary schools are considered to be old, outdated and too small. In addition to requiring more space, these schools need to be outfitted to accommodate advanced technology.

Public meetings, informational surveys, individual discussions with town officials and residents of all ages repeatedly cited education of the Town’s youth as a top priority in guaranteeing the future quality of life for the people of South Hadley. The specific issues described below were identified in this investigatory process as the most compelling issues regarding South Hadley’s educational system.



Public Schools

A public school district consists of one or more public schools operated under the supervision of an elected or appointed school committee and a superintendent. The majority of school districts in Massachusetts serve a single city or town, and are considered a department of the municipal government. This is the case in South Hadley.

South Hadley provides public education for its youth through an operating (status), local school (type) structure, overseen by a five-member School Committee. There is no regional school agreement in South Hadley; however the Town participates in the Inter-District School Choice program. As shown in Table 9-3, South Hadley does not assign children to schools based on geographic districts; all children in the same grade attend the same school regardless of where they live.

Table 9-3
Public School Facilities

School	Grade Configuration	# Teachers	# Staff ²	# Support ³	Enrollment
Plains School	Grades PreK-1	33 (27) ¹	3	7	378
Mosier School	Grades 2-4	45 (29) ¹	4	13	472
Michael E. Smith Middle School	Grades 5-8	60 (25) ¹	7	15	703
South Hadley High School	Grades 9-12	71 (14) ¹	6	14	732
District Wide	n/a	2	14	2	

Sources: Massachusetts Department of Education, School District Profile Series, 2007-2007 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Report Card, Town of South Hadley School Department school websites accessed at <http://www.shschools.com/>, and Superintendent of Schools via email (October 27, 2008).

- Notes:
- 1 Number in parentheses is the number of paraprofessional teachers.
 - 2 Staff includes all administrators, support services and guidance counselors.
 - 3 Support includes nurses, technical support, custodians, cafeteria workers, and transportation/crossing guards.

Facilities

Evaluations and renovations of South Hadley's school facilities are ongoing. In the early 2000s, South Hadley completed major renovation and expansion projects at its middle and high school sites, which modernized the school facilities serving the Town's secondary students. These renovations are anticipated to serve the capital needs of those facilities for the next 15 to 20 years. In 2005, the South Hadley School Committee appointed an Elementary School Facilities Study Committee to assess the conditions of its two elementary schools and to make recommendations to meet the future needs of the Town. In 2007, South Hadley's school buildings were evaluated again; this study found that while facility needs exist, the school buildings are considered "well-maintained." However, as has been indicated often in public forums, the elementary schools both have serious needs. The Mosier School is 40 years old and requires renovations. The Plains School, which is discussed in more detail below, is 75-80 years old and is felt to be inadequate as a primary school.

The Plains School: The Plains School, which has had addition/renovation projects twice before in its history, serves the Town's Pre-School, Kindergarten and Grade 1 students. In 2006, following this preliminary study, the School Committee requested and South Hadley Town Meeting approved the formation of a building needs committee and the appropriation of \$25,000 to obtain architectural services for a closer examination of elementary building needs. In 2007, the building needs committee reported to Town Meeting and offered several options for consideration. It also recommended the appointment of a formal Building Committee that would submit a Statement of Interest and work with Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to complete a building project. The MSBA requested that South Hadley prioritize its needs, as it would not allow work on two schools concurrently; therefore, the Statement of Interest is for the Plains School, which is determined to have the greatest need. That work is now complete and the application has been resubmitted to the MSBA. Replacement of this school is likely to cost \$20,000,000.

The Building Committee developed a list of eleven items that explain why the Plains Schools is inadequate. These include:

- The multi-story building structure is not appropriate for the very young children housed in the building
- Inadequate space for dropping off and picking up students and for parking
- The playground abuts the busiest intersection in town on Route 202
- Inadequate ventilation and fresh air for internal and basement classrooms, that has led to reports of illness
- Portable classrooms are being used that are no longer safe due to their age and condition
- There is no kitchen for preparing or heating food
- There is no existing fire protection system (no sprinklers)
- Insufficient classroom spaces for special programs such as special education, music, and reading instruction has led to the use of non-classroom space for these activities
- Plumbing fixtures are original
- Lack of proper handicap accessibility creates safety issues
- The building roof is nearing the end of its lifetime and will need to be replaced

While the School Department has taken some measures to mitigate these issues, such as staggering bus arrivals, these efforts have not been sufficient. Based on state and School Department standards, the building is approximately 22,000 SF smaller than necessary to reduce overcrowding. While the school does a fair job of maintaining the desired classroom sizes, even a small increase would exacerbate the overcrowding. No further additions can be accommodated on the current site.

In March 2007, the Town was presented with the option of purchasing the Toth land, located on Newton Street, as a school site under the Commonwealth Chapter 61A program. The Selectboard voted to exercise its right to purchase this 22-acre property for future school purposes. The site's physical proximity to both the Mosier and Middle Schools offers the prospect of creating a three-building educational complex to replace the Plains School. While this may increase transportation costs, such a complex provides the greatest degree of organizational flexibility.

A portion of the property at this site has also been identified as an opportunity to provide new housing that is affordable to teachers, town employees, and other middle-income earners, as discussed in Chapter 2, *Housing Plan*. The opportunity for multiple uses at the Toth site means that planning should be coordinated between the School Department, the Housing Authority and the Planning Department, among other town officials. In developing the Comprehensive Plan, the potential has been raised for South Hadley to consider strategic re-use of the Plains site (and building, if feasible) to serve other public needs in the Town, such as a community and/or senior center, arts center, public library, and/or housing. The site is poised to serve more than one function and to provide new trails for hiking or bicycling and additional recreational fields.

School Faculty

Nearly all (98%) of South Hadley's teachers are licensed in their teaching assignment and 96 percent of core academic classes are taught by highly-qualified teachers, which are both slightly higher than Massachusetts as a whole.⁵ The student-to-teacher ratio in Town (13.8 to 1) is only slightly higher than then the state (13.6 to 1). While the teacher to student ratio looks adequate when summarized across the grades, the high number of births in the year 2002⁶ and other years may lead to an inadequate ratio as those students pass through the grades. In addition to the core academic classes, the School District also offers: health assisting, graphic communications, horticulture, carpentry, exploratory, culinary arts, and fashion technology. The faculty decreased by 6 members over the past year. As described under Programs, below, the Superintendent is eager to fill key staffing positions at all levels, including librarian and foreign language teachers in the elementary schools. The Guidance position at the Middle School was added this year, but librarians are still lacking for the Middle School and the Elementary Schools.

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⁵ Massachusetts Department of Education School Profiles at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles> for 2007-08 and the 2007-2008 No Child Left Behind Report Card accessed on the South Hadley School Department website.

⁶ South Hadley Public School Department Enrollment History and 2008-09 Projections, provided by Dr. Gus Sayer.

LEARNING FROM NEIGHBORS

The construction of a new school can use green initiatives and be a leading example of the Town's commitment to sustainable initiatives.

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) have announced funding that will help communities conserve energy and use clean energy technologies to power school projects approved for construction by the MSBA. MTC's Renewable Energy Trust is offering \$15 million in grants to fund solar electric panels, wind turbines, and other clean energy technologies, as well as green building design and planning assistance, at schools that meet new guidelines for energy efficiency. The \$15 million will be available through the Green Schools Initiative as design and construction grants to those school districts approved for MSBA construction assistance. In addition to the MTC grants, MSBA will award qualifying communities up to an additional 2% of the approved, eligible project costs for verified high-performance "green" schools. Green schools are healthy and productive learning environments. They are also cost-effective facilities that conserve energy and use renewable resources.

The reward for that commitment was not only a grant from MTC, but also school buildings that are on average 30% more energy efficient than typical schools and have superior indoor environmental qualities. The energy-efficiency measures will save each of these schools \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year in utility expenses. In addition to the energy savings and clean energy generated by these schools, the pilot phase of the Green Schools Initiative led to the adoption of new state regulations that require all new school or major renovation projects approved for a grant from the MSBA after July 1, 2007 to adopt numerous green design measures. Incremental costs of green schools in Massachusetts range from 1.5% to 2.5% and can provide benefits of up to 8 times the incremental cost over a 20-year lifecycle period.

Granby Public School District

In 2003, the Granby Public School District utilized the MTC Feasibility Study grant funds to determine the most economically sensible ways to include "green" technologies in its new elementary school building. The study helped Granby to understand the benefits of using an integrated design approach, reducing water demand, and incorporating green design elements that make the school healthier and more productive for students. By investigating the potential for wind power, photovoltaics, biomass, and fuel cells, Granby showed commitment to reducing its reliance on fossil fuels and its energy demands on the electrical grid.

Northampton Solar Project

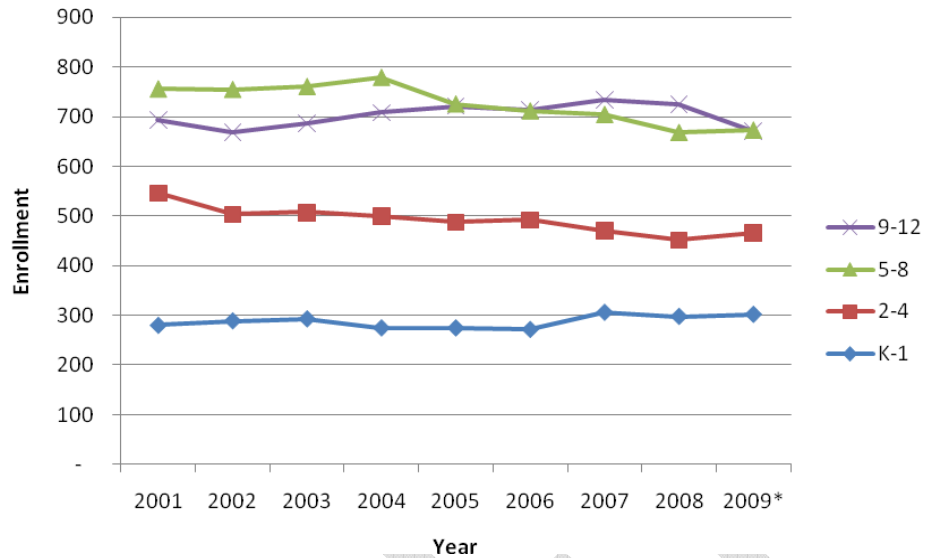
Northampton used a Clean Energy Choice community matching grant to install solar panels on a public building. Northampton purchased a 10 kW solar photovoltaic (PV) system for John F. Kennedy Middle School. To increase educational opportunities, the system also includes a data acquisition system with an active computer display on which students can observe the operation of the solar panels and the environmental impacts of its performance. The total cost of the project was \$92,665, of which \$53,000 will come from Clean Energy Choice community matching grants. The city will apply for MTC's Small Renewables Initiative to help cover the rest of the costs. The town contracted with SolarWorks to install the PV system. MTC's Clean Energy Choice Program provides matching grants for communities, where towns and cities can receive up to one dollar in funding for each dollar residents spend on clean energy. Towns and cities can use this money to fund clean energy projects within their communities.

Sources: Massachusetts Technology Collaborative at http://masstech.org/renewableenergy/green_schools.htm and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission *Valley Vision Toolkit* – Strategy 13, Municipally Owned Renewable Energy at http://www.pvpc.org/val_vision/html/toolbox/SmartGrowthStrategy.html.

Enrollment and Class Size

South Hadley's current (2008-09) student population is approximately 2,300 students (including Pre-Kindergarten). The schools have seen a slight decline in population each year for the past several years, as shown in Chart 9-2. Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) projections anticipate a gradual increase over the next 10-15 years.

**Chart 9-2
Public School Enrollment, 2001-2009 (projected)**



Source: South Hadley Public School Department (Superintendent Gus Sayer, October 10, 2008)
Notes: * 2009 represents enrollment projections calculated by the School Department.

The School Department has discretion over class sizes. The policy is to attempt to limit Primary grades to 20 pupils per teacher and intermediate grades to 25 pupils per teacher. Most classes are in the 20-22 pupil range. However, physical education classes may be as large as 35 pupils. According to the Superintendent, class sizes throughout the District can be considered a good size, at approximately 20-22 students per class.⁷ It is critical that the District maintain this ratio in the future and consider the trends in births and how a high birth rate one year might affect the teacher to student ratio down the line. Additional teachers are not necessarily required. The school population does cause some crowding in the elementary schools, but the middle and high schools are flexible enough to accommodate the school population for the next 15-20 years.

As indicated in Table 9-4, South Hadley performance generally is consistent with performance measures state wide. Note that these are all small differences and higher is not necessarily better, in some situations. South Hadley performs better than the State in the grade 9-12 dropout rate, attendance rate, and graduation rate. South Hadley performs worse than the State in attendance rate, average number of days absent, suspensions (both in- and out-of-school), and retention rate.

**Table 9-4
Performance Indicators (2006-07)**

	District	State
Grade 9-12 Dropout Rate	3.3	3.8
Attendance Rate	94.1	94.6
Average # of days absent	10.2	9.3

⁷ Email correspondence with Dr. Gus Sayer, October 17, 2008.



In-School Suspension Rate	5.2	3.2
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	6.1	5.8
Retention Rate (2005-06)	1.5	2.5
Graduation Rate	87.2	80.9

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education School Profiles at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles> for 2006-07.

It is perhaps these findings in Table 9-4 that lead the CPAC to find that student retention is of prime importance to the Town and that the School Department should emphasize how to retain and attract young, educated people. Specifically, it should be noted that, according to the 2007-2008 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Report Card, Grade 3-5 students in Special Education programs are not making the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English Language Arts and Mathematics for the 2007 school year. In English, this occurred in two consecutive years, which means the School has an accountability status of restructuring in that grade span and subject matter. South Hadley has been taking steps to improve this, including investing in Title I Reading, Reading Recovery and Special Education teachers. However, more resources should be devoted to reading and math needs in the lower grades.

More than half (56%) of South Hadley’s graduating seniors plan to attend a four-year private or public college, which is comparable to the State rate. An additional 31 percent plan to attend a two-year public college. The remaining graduating seniors plan to enter the workforce (5%), attend another post-secondary institution (3%), or enroll in the military (3%).⁸

Programs

Alternative Education includes a number of approaches to teaching and learning other than mainstream or traditional education. Educational alternatives include charter schools, alternative schools, school choice, independent schools, and home-based learning and vary widely. Similarities often emphasize the value of small class size, close relationships between students and teachers, and a sense of community.

Alternative Education can be specifically designed and focused towards students with special needs and/or students at high-risk for dropping out of school. It is considered a means of increasing the graduation and retention rates of students, albeit not in the traditional way.

Despite their quality, the public aspiration for the South Hadley Public Schools is that the overall education quality should be “top notch” and the curriculum should be more challenging.⁹ In their report *South Hadley Improvement Plan, The SHIP of State*,¹⁰ the School Department identified five goals for the state of public schools in South Hadley during the 2007-2008 school year:

- Goal 1: Increase the achievement of all students
- Goal 2: Expand the inclusion initiative, which works to develop a culture of acceptance, diversity, and inclusiveness in the schools.
- Goal 3: Foster positive school culture that respects differences and values achievement
- Goal 4: Increase communication with staff and parents about school goals and their accomplishment
- Goal 5: Plan for the future needs of the schools



⁸ Massachusetts Department of Education School Profiles at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles> for 2006-07. The remaining 3% is noted as “other.”

⁹ NOTE: VHB has a follow-up request into Dr. Sayer regarding his thoughts on this point.

¹⁰ Source: *South Hadley Improvement Plan, The SHIP of State*, 2007-08 at Town of South Hadley Public School Department website.

In his interview with the CPAC, Dr. Sayer indicated that there are education issues that require attention, such as additional programs.

- The School District needs an **Alternative Education** program (see note at left). The increased dropout rate in South Hadley schools may in part be attributed to student frustration with high local and state demands on academic achievement.¹¹ Alternative programs within the School District provide other options for students who struggle in traditional learning environments, obviate the need to send students to private special education schools, and can reduce the dropout rate. The “Twilight” alternative program at the high school began in the 2008-09 school year as a first step.
- Foreign languages are increasingly being introduced to younger students. South Hadley does not have a foreign language program below Grade 8. Instituting such a program will give children a significant advantage in learning a second language and also address the needs of bilingual families.
- The School District has been able to reduce the special education expenses by limiting the number of students that need to be transferred out of the district for education. In order to continue to see savings in this program, the School District needs to improve the in-district programs for students with special needs. These in-district resources include additional special education staff at the elementary level; a special needs teacher at the high school; and the creation of an alternative program (Twilight Program) at the high school.¹²
- According to the Superintendent, students are not reading as well as they should. In the past four years, the Grades 6 through 10, South Hadley students performance on the ‘English Language Arts’ MCAS has generally improved slightly or remained constant.¹³ On the other hand, the performance by Grades 3 through 10 in ‘English Language Arts’ and/or ‘Reading’ has worsened. However, there is still debate as to whether these tests accurately capture the performance of the school system. Striving to improve the reading ability of its students remains a worthy goal. However, generally, the School District ranks High in its Performance Rating for English Language Arts and Moderate for Mathematics.¹⁴
- The Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC) offers programs and services designed to provide accessible education to at-risk students. It provides education and support to students, teachers, and administrators through programs in early childhood, after school, special education, and adult

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¹¹ Email correspondence from Dr. Gus Sayer, Superintendent of Schools, October 17, 2008.

¹² Superintendent’s FY2009 Budget Message, South Hadley Public Schools. January 30, 2008.

¹³ MCAS Annual Comparisons, from the Department of Education School District Profiles accessed at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu> on October 16, 2008.

¹⁴ 2007-2008 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Report Card, accessed at the School Department website www.shschools.com.

education, as well as offering comprehensive professional development for educators.¹⁵ The South Hadley School District is a member of HEC.

Early Childhood Development Resources

The state presently has a Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Pilot Program through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (http://www.eec.state.ma.us/kr_upk.aspx) that provides funding for grants to improve the quality of and expand access to preschool programs and services to children from the age of 2 years and 9 months until they are kindergarten eligible. Services are delivered through a system that includes public, private, non-profit and for-profit preschools, child care centers, nursery schools, preschools operating within public and private schools and school districts, Head Start programs, independent and system-affiliated family child care homes. The South Hadley Family Center provides educational and social activities for children under six years of age and their caregivers. This is done through playgroups, social activities, and educational programs.

School Choice¹⁶

The School Choice program is revenue-positive for the Town of South Hadley; the Town has typically received approximately \$800,000 per year through the program for the 140 students who are enrolled, or 6 percent of the student population. The Town has chosen to limit school choice enrollment to 140 students, though it has the option to increase this number. Most of the school choice students come from Chicopee and Holyoke; the improved educational opportunity is the most likely reason. The establishment of a Charter School in Holyoke and the new high school in Chicopee may reduce enrollments in South Hadley in the future. This may indicate that fewer students are choosing to enroll in South Hadley schools and this could impact the School District's ability to provide the same resources.

Seventy-five students chose to leave the district to attend schools in other districts during the 2008-09 school year; this is an increase of 20 to 25 percent from past years. Additionally, the number of students attending Charter Schools increased from 12 to 19 in FY08. This increase in students leaving South Hadley can also be attributed to the availability of new schools in the area, such as the Pioneer Valley Charter School in Hadley, the Holyoke Charter School, and the Chinese Immersion Center, among others. School Choice is considered an economic gain as the "per student revenue" is less than the "incremental costs" to educate the students. The School Department has studied the reasons students leave the South Hadley schools under School Choice; they include family relationships; smaller, more supportive environments; previously began school in the other district and wish to complete there; and

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¹⁵ <http://www.collaborative.org/content/view/135/121/>, accessed on October 29, 2008.

¹⁶ Superintendent's FY2009 Budget Message, South Hadley Public Schools, January 30, 2008 and CPAC conversation with Superintendent Gus Sayer on June 11, 2008.

conflicts with other students in South Hadley. Observation may indicate that a skeptical public perception of the School District may be another leading cause.

It should be noted that the cost of students leaving the district (approximately \$630,000 in FY09, up from \$480,000 in FY08) is categorized under General Government in the Town Budget. However, the revenue is shown under the School Department. South Hadley does not pay for transportation for students outside of the Town. However, the loss of Choice revenue combined with the additional cost for more students leaving the District will impact the School's budget.

Sustainability in the Schools

The School Department, its schools and students have been embracing sustainability in various ways. A group of students has spearheaded a composting program with support from their teachers. The schools have taken some steps to promote energy conservation in the buildings; however, the primary motivation has been cost and not the environment. Finally, the School Department has availed itself of grants to make capital improvements to the buildings; these improvements have a longer payback.

Private Schools

Private schools, including parochial schools, operate independently of state or regional authority. However some aspects of these programs, such as those involving students with disabilities, are subject to regulation under state law. The following private schools operate in South Hadley.

The Canal Village School¹⁷ offers a half day program for pre-Kindergarten (ages 3 and 4 separately) and a full-day Kindergarten. Additionally, the School offers before and after school programs for school-age children. The School also offers full and half day summer programs. The Canal Village School is an accredited school with the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Gorse Child Study Center¹⁸ is a community early education and care program located in a state-of-the-art facility on the campus of Mount Holyoke College and combines the former Stonybrook Children's Center. An affiliate of the College, Gorse provides full-day, year-round daycare programs for infant, toddler, and preschool children, half-day Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, and an after school program for children in kindergarten through third grade during the school year. Gorse is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts (PVPA) Charter School, located at 15 Mulligan Drive, is a regional public charter school serving 400 students in grades 7-12, from throughout Western Massachusetts. As its name indicates, the Charter School

¹⁷ Information obtained from www.canalvillageschool.com on October 14, 2008.

¹⁸ Information obtained from www.stonybrookchildrenscenter.org on October 14, 2008 and <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/gorse/experiences.html> on October 23, 2008.

emphasizes both academic and artistic education. Charter schools were mandated to identify and facilitate innovations in educational methods that could impact positively on student learning, and to disseminate these practices to other public schools in the Commonwealth and eventually the nation. PVPA in particular aims to make up for the loss of performing arts programs – typically due to budget cuts – in other regional schools.

The **Horizon School**¹⁹ on Carew Street provides pre-school, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten day care/education for approximately 30 students.

Community Services

South Hadley hosts an unusually broad range of private and public programs, which are administered through different means but function as the Town's leisure/cultural resources and services. South Hadley boasts libraries, parks and recreational facilities, hiking and biking trails, public gathering spaces, senior center, cultural institutions and organizations, and community resources such as Mt. Holyoke College. Throughout development of this Plan, residents have emphasized that a focus on coordination of these extensive community resources, creating vision plans for departments that include greater collaboration, and improving Town communication efforts would produce both operating efficiencies and also a greater utilization of the excellent community resources in South Hadley.

Libraries²⁰

South Hadley has two libraries, the South Hadley Public Library located in the Falls, and Gaylord Library near the Town Common on the Mount Holyoke College campus.

History: Libraries have a long history in South Hadley. In 1897, the Town established a free public library with depositories at the Center Village and the Falls. In 1902, the Gaylord Memorial Library Association began operating the Gaylord Library independently, though it receives some operational funding from the Town today. Four years later, in 1906, the Colonial Revival-style public library, designed by a local architect, was built in South Hadley Falls with a \$10,000 donation from the Carnegie Foundation.

From 1968 to 1995 the two libraries operated under a unified South Hadley Library System, with the Gaylord serving as a branch library. This association was dissolved when the Town could no longer fully fund the staffing and maintenance of two library facilities, and reduced its support to the Gaylord Library.

¹⁹ Information obtained from <http://www.eschoolsearch.com/index.cfm?action=showdetail&id=20543> on October 23, 2008.

²⁰ Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, 2006/2007 Grant Round, Planning & Design Application prepared by Joseph Rodio, Library Director



Today, the two libraries continue to operate independently, but with joint programming. The Gaylord Library operates with limited services and hours. The main public library offers thirteen public internet computers, two word-processing stations, four public access catalogs, and a children's games computer. Use of the public internet computers grew nearly 10 percent between FY05 and FY06.

Facility Planning: While the Public Library continues to strive to serve citizens needs and provide a full range of high quality library services, the undersized and outdated facility in South Hadley Falls poses significant challenges. The main library building in South Hadley Falls was expanded in 1974 with a 5,000 SF addition, but because of financial constraints at the time, the expansion accommodated only the ten-year projected space need, rather than the 20-year need. In spring 2008, the Library secured funds for a new HVAC system in the existing building, its only capital improvement since 1974.

In 2006 and 2007, the Town began assessing and planning for library needs. The newly-hired Library Director obtained a \$40,000 Planning & Design Grant from the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, along with \$20,000 in required matching funds. With funding secured for the planning phase, a Library Needs Study Committee (LNSC) was formed, and the Library Director currently is preparing a twenty-year need projection. The LNSC and Director, through public and department meetings and its own work, will advise the Library Trustees on a recommended design and construction process.

The application for the grant which detailed some of the many physical needs and limitations of the current library, starting with its sheer size:

- The library has less than one-third of recommended seating for a community of South Hadley's size
- The library consists of one large room serving all needs
- Parking is limited
- No community meeting room, even though this is in great demand
- No private staff space (i.e. offices, kitchen or break room)
- Collections are split in different areas for security and space purposes
- Collections are cramped
- No appropriate Young Adult/Teen section
- Inadequate space for children's programming
- The basement, which was once used as public space, is not handicapped accessible
- Circulation area is entirely open to the public like a "fish bowl" and the counter height is not ADA accessible
- There are no private or designated work areas for library staff, including youth services and reference
- There are no computers set aside for use as reference computers (versus public-use computers)
- Due to the physical constraints, the library is often congested and noisy

Library Location: As with the relocation of SHELD, expansion and/or relocation of the main public library raises issues for land use and economic development as well as public services. Several options have been identified to date for combining a new or renovated library building with other community services, such as a senior center, or for using a former school site. However, there is still debate over the most appropriate location for the Public Library. The Planning & Design Grant application recognized these conflicting interests, saying:

“The “Falls” section of town is no longer the commercial center of the community and there are projects being studied to stimulate the economic interest in this neighborhood. The library project can benefit the community in two ways: by designing a new building that moves library services closer to the current demographic “heart” of the community, or by building an expanded library at the current site that might encourage further downtown development.”²¹

The CPAC contends that given the need for redevelopment and reinvestment in the Falls, there would be a substantial adverse impact if the Public Library were relocated out of the Falls. Several options for remaining in the Falls are being evaluated, but as with SHELD, the floodplain issues are challenging. One idea has been to take space in the Falls Center, which is located within a flood plain, by designing a facility that would sit over a parking garage on the lower level and include an integrated access ramp and public landscaping element.²² South Hadley will have to make important decisions, as a community, on the optimal location of public facilities within versus outside South Hadley Falls. Retaining some public functions in the Falls is especially important, and there is an historic tie between the Library and the Falls. Regardless of where the future library is ultimately sited, however, some of the features of the Falls location, notably public transportation access, will need to be assured.



Senior Center / Council on Aging

In the decade from 1990 to 2000, South Hadley’s population of senior citizens over 75 years old grew by 53 percent or roughly 500 residents, as noted in Chapter 2. In 2000, this 75+ cohort represented nine percent of the South Hadley population; those 65 and over represent fully 17 percent of the Town’s population.

To serve the senior citizen community, the Council on Aging provides services and a gathering place in the South Hadley Senior Center, located in the former Woodlawn School building. Services provided by the Council on Aging staff of four full-time and many part-time employees include transportation, ElderCare Nutrition (e.g. Meals on Wheels, onsite meals, etc.), recreation/education/health programs, outreach, and a community nurse. Future goals for the Council on Aging are to include supportive day care services for elders and build a more modern Senior Center.



²¹ Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, 2006/2007 Grant Round, Planning & Design Application prepared by Joseph Rodio, Library Director

²² CPAC Issues Gathering Notes

One of the greatest concerns mentioned in the community process for this Plan was the physical condition of the current Senior Center. The Senior Center is currently located in an old school building. While sufficiently large and partly renovated in 1998, the building requires constant repair work. There is a concern that major renovations and/or relocation of the Council on Aging are needed in order to serve the Town's growing elder population adequately. If such a step were taken, many participants pointed out the potential benefits of co-locating a senior and/or community center with a new or expanded public library.

Other concerns and objectives raised in the public process were:

- Council on Aging/Senior Center would greatly benefit from centralized municipal maintenance and repair oversight. Currently, building management and repair tasks fall upon the program staff, who are not trained in building management or maintenance.
- The elder population is expected to continue to grow and become a larger percentage of the Town's population, requiring planning.
- A modern Senior Center facility is desirable, especially one that can host a broad array of services, such as the library and educational programs, recreational and physical fitness activities, and food service.
- A staff nurse is needed for the Council on Aging
- Better connection and coordination of cultural events, activities, recreational, and educational opportunities for all ages would improve quality of life for all, not just elders.

Public Safety

Public safety and security service – police, fire protection, and ambulance services – are among the most fundamental services provided by any jurisdiction. South Hadley's core goals for municipal services – especially communication efficiency, collaboration, and strategic planning – are especially important to this area of municipal services.

■ Police²³

The Town of South Hadley maintains its own Police Department, which employs 29 officers and 4 dispatchers and is responsible for primary public safety throughout the Town. Ambulance/emergency medical services in South Hadley are currently provided by the Police Department and by both Fire Districts through a cooperative arrangement.

Community partnerships are a high priority for the Police Department. Officers provide support and services for TRIAD, firearms licensing, car seat installations, sex offender information dissemination, Toys for Tots, Drug and Alcohol Task Force, and

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²³ South Hadley Annual Report FY07.

numerous youth-focused activities. The eight-week Citizen's Police Academy provides insight into the requirements and responsibilities of law enforcement officers and an opportunity for residents and officers to find common ground to address problems within the community. The Police Beat is a weekly reporting of departmental activities to the Town Reminder.

The Police Department also continues to upgrade its training and staff to provide more comprehensive services. For example, all members of the Department have received training necessary for the Town to comply with requirements of the Homeland Security Presidential Directive. All officers participated in a school intruder/active shooter training program conducted by the Massachusetts State Police Tactical Operations Unit at South Hadley High School. Grant funds were used to equip officers with replacement bullet proof vests and the first time issuance of expandable batons and chemical spray. This established uniformity in department officers' equipment. Promotions and new staff have allowed the Department to transfer an officer to the Detective Bureau, providing immediate investigative response.

South Hadley's police department also works collaboratively with other jurisdictions. The Department has entered into a multi-agency information sharing agreement with other Hampshire County Departments for laptop inter-agency access to stored information. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Police Department, South Hadley Public Schools and the Northwestern District Attorney's Office allows for a sharing of information for a coordinated response to violent, delinquent, or criminal acts by students, including weapons reporting and alcohol and drug use.

The Police Station is relatively new and should be adequate for staffing needs over the next twenty years. However, despite its relative newness, the Police Station has a poorly-performing and inefficient HVAC system that wastes energy, yet would be costly to change. The experience with this poorly-performing system builds the case for a town-wide centralized Facilities Maintenance Plan and dedicated staff, and for avoiding this type of situation in future building construction and renovations.



Fire Protection and Ambulance Services

Fire protection, and some ambulance/emergency medical services, is provided by the Town's two fire districts. Since the 1800's the Town of South Hadley has operated with two Fire Districts, each providing fire protection and water supply services to their respective areas. Fire District #1 supplies the southern portion of the Town from the Chicopee line northward to Stony Brook and the intersection of Mosier and Newton Streets, Parkview East and Parkview Drive, portions of Cypress and Westbrook and across East Street into Granby. From this point to the northernmost limits of the Town, including Mount Holyoke College and a portion of Granby, fire protection and water supply is provided by Fire District #2. While the Districts are roughly equal in terms of geographic scope, Fire District #1 serves two-thirds of South Hadley's population living in the more densely-settled areas to the south. Fire District #2 serves about one-third of the population in the less developed northern half of town, but also serves Mount Holyoke College, which has a daytime population of approximately 3,000 people.

Both Fire Departments are operated through a specific tax levy on residents within the respective district. While each fire tax has increased in recent years, the revenue generated generally meets the needs of the Districts. When expenses are incurred by the Town on behalf of both Districts, expenses are typically shared based on the population breakdown.

This separation of services has been the topic of some debate. Numerous studies have been conducted on the potential merger, including by Financial Advisory Associates (2003) and Municipal Resources Inc. (2007, on the ambulance services specifically). These reports noted the strained relationships between the Districts and the 2003 report recommended a merger to create synergies. On June 12, 2008, the Prudential Committee and the Water Commission of District #2 voted to support efforts toward a merger.

While there are varied opinions on whether or not to merge the two entities, in general there is widespread consensus among residents that the Town needs to be run efficiently and that there is a need for increased coordination and collaboration not only between the two fire districts, but also within the Town of South Hadley and with neighboring communities in the Pioneer Valley region.

Facilities and Equipment

Fire District #1

Fire District #1 serves the northern half of town, areas of Granby, and Mount Holyoke College. The District #1 Fire Station, located at 144 Newton Street, was built in 1984 and is in good condition. The facility is maintained adequately with a maintenance budget and the firefighters. More space will likely be needed at some time in the future, but currently the District's needs are being met. The Department employs 18 full-time firefighting staff and up to 18 on-call firefighters. Most of the Fire District #1 firefighters are EMTs and/or paramedics, and all firefighters will be required to receive certification as paramedics in the future.

Fire District #1 has sufficient apparatus to conduct its firefighting duties, including a primary pump engine, primary ladder truck, a reserve engine, brush trucks and rescue trucks. Fire District #1 is currently seeking to replace the pump engine and has submitted a number of funding requests, including a grant application to FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration Office. Fire District #1 also will be seeking to purchase two ambulances, as the District recently took over ambulance operations from the Town (discussed below). Fire District #1 is evaluating whether to acquire another of the Town's ambulances and/or to add new staff to meet this additional ambulance need.

Fire District #2

Fire District #2 serves the southern half of town, including South Hadley Falls. Fire District #2 has expanded from one full-time firefighter in 2005 to five full-time firefighters today. The force is supplemented by a large volunteer/on-call staff that is very reliable, but there are concerns that the number of permanent full-time staff is



not sufficient to meet the needs of a growing community unless a merger were to occur with Fire District #1. As firefighting becomes increasingly sophisticated, with greater technical and training requirements, training both full-time and volunteer firefighters becomes more and more of a challenge for the Department.

Fire District #2 has two Class A pumpers, one all-purpose rescue vehicle and other minor vehicles (cars and trucks). The pumpers should last through 2016-2022 and the rescue vehicle will last through 2014. The District is currently looking for grant funds to acquire a self-contained breathing apparatus, which has become a major expense for fire services (approximately \$130,000-\$150,000).

Fire District #2's station is located at 20 Woodbridge Street. Recently, in response to Town-wide growth that has led to an increase in staff at the Department, the District spent \$1.3 million upgrading the Fire Department building to add much-needed office space and storage space. Plans to add space for new apparatus were delayed due to financial limitations, but Fire District #2 does anticipate needing to add more space for apparatus, sleeping quarters, and a kitchen to the Fire Station unless a merger occurs. The Fire District #2 Chief currently is preparing a Capital Plan for the Prudential Board to lay out the Department's future needs and discuss options for accomplishing them.

Ambulance Services

Ambulance/emergency medical services in South Hadley currently are provided by both Fire Districts and by the Police Department through a cooperative agreement that has been the subject of much discussion and revision in the past several years. At the present time, all emergency medical services are funded from an enterprise fund that derives its revenues from ambulance calls. No property tax/general fund revenues are used to support the service at this time.

Discussions about how best to provide emergency services have been ongoing. District #2 started to provide ambulance service several years ago after adding Emergency Medical Technicians to its staff. District #1 received a separate license to provide paramedic services to the Town more recently, after the 2007 purchase of an ambulance. The decision by Fire District #1 to provide ambulance service exclusive of Fire District #2 and the Town was reviewed by the Selectboard in FY07.

After dozens of meetings and discussions, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was executed by the Town, Police Department, and both Fire Districts in June 2007. This MOU provided for services for the next year and allowed Fire District #1 to assume the role as primary provider of ambulance services. As a result of these changes, the average response time has been cut substantially to about 4 - 6 minutes per call. Moreover, there is less reliance on the South Hadley Police Department, Holyoke or Granby to provide emergency services. The new arrangement complemented the long-established, high quality services provided jointly by the Police Department and both Fire District #1 for over 60 years.

The provision of emergency medical services in the community is of ongoing importance. In February 2008, the Town engaged a firm to undertake a financial review of various options available to the Town in the provision of both basic and

advanced life support services. This issue will continue to remain at the forefront as the community grows and ambulance service needs increase.

Water Supply and Wastewater Management

Since the 1800s, South Hadley has operated with two Fire Districts, Fire District #1 and Fire District #2, which also incorporate the water supply departments serving the Town's potable water supply needs. The Town's water sources include wells and the Quabbin Reservoir. Fire District #1 supplies water to the southern portion of the Town, from the Chicopee town line northward to Stony Brook, and the intersections of Mosier and Newton Streets, Parkview East and Parkview Drive, Cypress and Westbrook, and across East Street into Granby. From this point to the northernmost limits of the Town, residents (including Mount Holyoke College) are supplied water by Fire District #2. Both districts maintain separate water systems to serve their respective geographical areas. However, the two systems are interconnected at seven locations for emergency situations only.

Implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1974 (and subsequent amendments) enhanced water quality, and established more stringent standards for public water supplies. Water is provided through a fee-based water rate. Water rates are separate from the tax rate.

Leaking underground storage tanks are a particular threat to water supply. The Town should consider reinstating an underground tank regulation. Although underground tanks are regulated by the State, a local regulation through the Board of Health would supplement and can be more stringent.

Water consumption has dropped substantially over the years as residential builders and commercial properties become more efficient and as InteliCoat has diminished its operations. For example, Fire District #1 consumption decreased by one-third from 1987 to 2007.

Merging the two Fire Districts has been a frequent topic of conversation. Funding for the public water supply function of the Fire Districts is through a separate enterprise fund entirely funded by water receipts. Among other technical challenges, a merger may require the Town's water lines to be sized sufficiently so as to work together. A more detailed discussion of the two Fire Districts can be found later in this chapter under Public Safety and Utilities.

Fire District #1

With the exception of about twenty or thirty homes near Riverboat Village, which are serviced by private wells, Fire District #1 receives its water supply from the Quabbin Reservoir and serves approximately two-thirds of the Town population. Superintendent Cyr indicated that the District "has not consumed nearly as much as

South Hadley – Fire District #1 can withdraw daily from the Quabbin Reservoir”.²⁴ The District has re-negotiated a ten-year water supply continuation agreement with the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) which provides a capacity of 3.8 million gallons/day, thus ensuring that the supply is stable for Fire District #1. The MWRA Chicopee Valley Aqueduct (CVA) serves not only South Hadley – Fire District #1, but also Chicopee and Wilbraham.

In addition to the 1.5 million gallon water storage tank located on Alvard Street., a second 1.5 million gallon water tank on was constructed in 1992 on Industrial Drive to accommodate both the water demand and fire protection storage capacity for the current and future growth the District had experienced. No mandatory water conservation plan exists in Fire District #1. Rather, the plumbing code addresses measure to conserve water demand.

Fire District #2

Fire District #2 is supplied by the two Dry Brook wells. There appears to be no shortage in this supply and it would seem capable of supporting additional residential development at the present time. However, it has not been determined how much development this source will ultimately supply. One well, developed in 1963, has a depth of 139 feet and a pumping capacity of 1.3 million gallons per day (MGD). The second well is more recent, has a depth of 129 feet and a pumping capacity of 3.0 MGD. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will not allow the District to pump at the latter rate. Due to the sensitive nature of this supply, the Town and Fire District #2 have worked to develop a regulatory framework to protect the groundwater supply (aquifer protection).

The Zoning Bylaw now includes a Water Supply Protection District which encompasses an area one-half mile in size. The area around the wells has excellent soils for drainage. A recently approved residential development will sit atop a portion of Dry Brook Hill in the well recharge zones but will take special precautions, negotiated with the Town and Fire District #2, to ensure that groundwater is not adversely affected.

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Wastewater Treatment System^{25,26}

The Department of Public Works manages the South Hadley wastewater treatment system, including the wastewater treatment plant. Other major components of the wastewater treatment system include five pump stations, 1,500 manholes, and 82 miles of sewer line. Sewer or wastewater projects are funded by the Sewer Enterprise Fund and do not contribute to additional borrowing by the Town.



²⁴ CPAC interview with Jeffrey Cyr, Water Superintendent, Fire District #1 and Bill Selkirk, Water Superintendent, Fire District #2 on May 14, 2008.

²⁵ South Hadley Open Space and Recreation Plan (2007), CPAC interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent on March 12, 2008, and phone interview by Darlene Wynne (VHB) with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent on October 10, 2008.

²⁶ NOTE: a 5-year plan has been prepared and submitted to the Selectboard. Once approved by the Selectboard and on public record, DPW Superintendent Reidy will be prepared to share this plan with the CPAC and VHB.



Infiltration & Inflow (I & I) refers to water from storm events and elevated groundwater tables entering the sanitary and combined sewer systems.

Infiltration occurs as a result of groundwater or stormwater entering the system through cracked or broken sewer lines, open joints, or leaky manhole covers.

Inflow is water directly piped or channeled into the system. Direct inflow occurs when clean water from roof leaders (downspouts), foundation and yard drains, and stormwater catch basins discharge into the sewer system. Delayed inflow refers to water that continues to enter the system days after a storm event has ended. Delayed inflow is usually the result of basement sump pumps.

The South Hadley Wastewater Treatment Plant is an activated sludge, or secondary treatment, wastewater facility located in Chicopee just south of the Town Hall. The Plant serves a total of 7,300 households including 289 in neighboring Chicopee and approximately 327 homes in Granby. An average of 2.5 million gallons of influent is treated daily. Sludge is disposed of at the Town's landfill.

The facility is currently operating at approximately 65 percent of its permitted capacity, and has the potential of treating 4.2 million gallons per day (MGD), with the limiting factor being the primary treatment tanks. The treatment plant is currently undergoing a \$4,200,000 upgrade focused on the replacement and repair of old equipment, but that will not increase plant capacity. The plant's estimated excess capacity is 1.7 million gallons, and provided progress is made on sewer infiltration and inflow problems (see "Issues and Needs" below), there should be no capacity concerns in the immediate future. Full use of the permitted capacity of the wastewater treatment facility is expected by the year 2020; a planned expansion to 5.1 MGD capacity could be implemented to increase capacity if needed.

Installation of a 30-inch sewer trunk line parallel to the Connecticut River in 1976 resulted in the expanded residential development of the Alvard Street corridor in an area of prime farmland. This led to development of five larger subdivisions with over 175 approved lots, a 170-unit apartment complex, a 165-unit free standing condominium complex and a 200 unit retirement community, and approximately 50 other single-family homes. A Planning Board study in the early 1990's reported that a maximum build-out of this Alvard Street corridor would produce an added 200,000 gallon per day increased flow to the existing sewer system, which was within the capacity of the existing collection and treatment system.

Although most of the Town is serviced by the public sewer system, private on-site wastewater (septic) systems handle all of the area north of Bachelor Brook. A primary reason for the lack of public sewer north of Bachelor Brook include the prohibitive cost of installing sewer infrastructure along the radically changing topography in the northern areas at the foot of the Mount Holyoke Range. Not wishing to repeat the development boom which followed the Alvard Street interceptor, the Town has taken the proactive position of discouraging sewer service in this area as a means of minimizing the likelihood of development disrupting the character of the area and views of the Mount Holyoke Range.

Issues and Needs

Two major concerns regarding the wastewater treatment system include:

Age of the System

The age of South Hadley's wastewater treatment system is a critical issue that will continue to occupy the Department of Public Works time and money in the coming years as they continue to upgrade and replace components at risk of failure. Concern includes the pipes and joints settling, deterioration, and other aging issues. Older sewer mains and joints are prone to leaks and root damage.

Infiltration/Inflow (I/I)²⁷

Storm drainage and groundwater, which do not require sanitary treatment, take up capacity in the sewer system, particularly during rain storms. Conveying and treating these inflows to the sewer system costs the Town money. This Infiltration/Inflow (I/I) into the sewer system from groundwater and rain events takes up capacity in the sewer system, and significant amounts of groundwater and rain in the system can disrupt the operation of the Wastewater Treatment Plant when it must handle more flow than it is designed or permitted to handle. This can result in overflows to the environment, which is a violation of the Town's Discharge Permit that must be reported to the State and US EPA (see note at left).

Combined Sewer Overflows

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued South Hadley a fine for the flow of untreated sewer waste into the Connecticut River. This one-time fine involved a \$20,000 payment to EPA and a \$83,000 Supplemental Environmental Project composed of two parts: \$24,000 of brook and stream water quality monitoring in Buttery Brook and Stony Brook. \$59,000 of drainage improvements on Hillside Avenue, including a stormceptor installation. Now that all the CSOs are managed, the Town anticipates no future problems and no additional fines.

The deliberate discharge of storm drainage and groundwater to the municipal sewer system is prohibited under the Sewer Use Rules and Regulations for the Town of South Hadley. One component of the I/I Control Plan is to develop a formal program for addressing residential I/I in accordance with these regulations. While it was not illegal in the distant past (up to the mid 1980's), it is now illegal for homes and businesses to have roof drains and sump pumps connect to the sewer system. Removing these connections will help to solve this problem.²⁸ Another solution the Town should explore is lining the inside of the five interceptor sewers to prevent infiltration and subsequently unnecessarily treating more clean water.²⁹

Key Wastewater Findings:

- There is sufficient wastewater capacity to serve anticipated growth in South Hadley.
- Some of the Town's wastewater infrastructure is aging and requires maintenance or replacement.
- Infiltration and inflow into the system is a major problem, resulting in permit compliance and operational issues.
- Loan payments for capital improvements are high as a relative share of the annual budget, reducing flexibility for other needed improvements³⁰

Solid Waste and Recycling

While waste disposal is certainly far from glamorous, it is an essential service provided by the Town. The disposal of residential and commercial waste includes the landfill, and recycling. These services are all managed by the Department of Public Works, Solid Waste Division. These critical elements of the community infrastructure have the potential to produce increases in revenues from taxes and fees.



²⁷ Sources: Town of Hadley Department of Public Works, Water Pollution Control Division Website and CPAC interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent on March 12, 2008.

²⁸ CPAC interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent and Yem Lip, Town Engineer on April 2, 2008.

²⁹ CPAC interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent and Yem Lip, Town Engineer on April 2, 2008.

³⁰ NOTE: DPW Superintendent unable to confirm this fact; VHB will follow up with Town Treasurer.

LEARNING FROM NEIGHBORS

Chicopee hired the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to help with the Chicopee Stormwater Pilot Program, which served as a model for the state. After significant background research and due diligence, Chicopee passed an ordinance to collect fees from residents specifically for the purpose of managing stormwater and created a Stormwater Utility Bureau in the Department of Public Works. Fees are charged monthly per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) based on impervious area, and were expected to generate \$500,000 annually for stormwater management programs.

Chicopee’s experience highlights key determinants of success. Community involvement is crucial, and the Department of Public Works attributes the lack of customer complaints to a strong foundation of public education. A comprehensive stormwater management ordinance helps to organize the program and build community support. The fee structure should be rational, fair, and transparent. An advisory committee with members representing relevant municipal departments, the business community, advocacy/environmental groups, state agencies, elected officials, and ratepayers can build a broad base of support for the stormwater utility. Chicopee’s experience also identifies potential pitfalls. In particular, it is important to develop a well-organized billing and organizational process, since billing and rate assessment can be surprisingly complicated. Ongoing community outreach and involvement is also essential.

Sources: The Pioneer Valley Planning Council *Valley Vision Toolbox – Strategy 12, Stormwater Utilities* at http://www.pvpc.org/val_vision/html/toolbox/PDFs/building%20blocks/Stormwater%20Utilities.pdf and *Water Wise Communities: A Handbook for Municipal Managers in the Ipswich River Watershed* at <http://www.ipswichriver.org/waterwise/tool13.htm>, both last accessed on October 9, 2008.

Landfill

Every 1 ton of mixed paper recycled can save the energy equivalent of 185 gallons of gas.

Recycling just 1 ton of aluminum cans rather than throwing them away conserves the equivalent of 36 barrels of oil or 1,655 gallons of gasoline.

Source: *US EPA Municipal Solid Waste Division Fact Sheet*

The Solid Waste Division of the DPW oversees the Town-owned landfill located at 12 Industrial Drive, which has been managed by Interstate Waste Services (IWS) since 2003. The landfill takes in 156,000 tons of waste per year. South Hadley contributes approximately 8,000 tons per year and the rest comes from other communities and business that pay a fee to the contracting company. Through the agreement with the landfill operator, the Town gets free disposal of the first 4,000 tons of waste brought to the landfill each year, roughly half the Town’s annual waste.³¹ The Town pays the landfill’s lowest rate for municipal solid waste (currently \$53 per ton) for all tonnage over the 4,000 ton limit, or approximately \$212,000 per year, to the landfill contractor. This overage equates to approximately 1.25 pounds of trash per resident, per day.

The contract to operate the landfill—an enterprise fund—states that South Hadley must accept trash through December 31, 2010. At that point, the landfill will close unless the Town can develop a viable plan for a landfill expansion. Early in 2007 the Board of Health held site assignment hearings for an additional 2.9 acres of landfill space at 12 Industrial Drive. The Selectboard also appointed a Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) to study options available to the Town if the landfill closes. As of August 2009, the Town has negotiated a contract with the Landfill operator which will allow the operator to pursue a vertical expansion permit. If approved, this permit will extend the life of the landfill by three years. The Town also has been negotiating a contract with the landfill operator which would allow an horizontal expansion, requiring far more rigorous permitting. If the horizontal expansion

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³¹ Phone interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent on October 27, 2008

permit were approved, the life of the landfill could be extended an additional 13 years beyond the three additional years of the vertical expansion.

One of the SWAC's major tasks is to evaluate the best use of the Town-owned lands that could be used for expansion. Formerly part of the Bynan property, the landfill property was acquired under a Self-Help grant. 101 acres were set aside for conservation land, 40 acres were designated for landfill expansion, and 21 acres had no identified use. If the Town expands the landfill in this location, the area will need to be dug out, lined, and gas/leachate collection systems must be installed. This is an expensive undertaking, which is why the Town decided to have the private company take over the landfill service in the first place.

There also are ongoing discussions about the financial arrangements that will be addressed by the SWAC as well. The SWAC is also looking at a Pay-As-You-Throw policy, which would replace the fixed fee for trash pick-up (regardless of amount). With the current policy, there is little incentive for residents to recycle.³² Also, while the Town receives about \$500,000 per year in landfill host fees, many taxpayers still question why a trash fee is imposed for a town-owned landfill. The Town is currently negotiating a new contract which addresses the potential for expansion of the landfill and a new agreement to obtain increased host benefits for the Town and taxpayers.

Other community concerns regarding the landfill include:

- Community survey findings and public meetings indicate that taxpayers perceive the present landfill contract to be unfavorable to taxpayers.
- Intermittent odors emanate from the landfill.
- Trash imported from out-of-state causes concerns about public health and safety both due to the trash itself and the vehicular traffic and resulting pollution. In their 2008 Master Plan, Granby also reported higher truck traffic in the streets near its landfill.³³
- The landfill is anticipated to be at full capacity in 2010. What are the options for expansion or alternative destinations for trash?

Intermittent odors continued in the area of the landfill throughout 2007, mostly undetermined in origin and not be directly linked to the operation of the landfill. DEP continues to work closely with town officials in responding to residents' concerns about these odors.

As South Hadley strives to develop a more sustainable environment in the next twenty years, the future of the landfill must be addressed. In addition to sustainability and public health issues, concerns about the potential financial implications of the landfill to taxpayers have been voiced by the public. Survey returns showed widespread resistance to new taxes and the voters recently demonstrated their resistance to increased costs by voting down the Community

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³² CPAC interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent and Yem Lip, Town Engineer on April 2, 2008.

³³ *Granby Master Plan (2008)* prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, last accessed at http://www.pvpc.org/granby/docs/Draft_Plan_FINAL.pdf on October 16, 2008.

Preservation Act in spring 2008. Given the relatively short timeline in which this issue must be resolved, the landfill has generated significant concern and interest.

LEARNING FROM NEIGHBORS

Granby has a similar situation as South Hadley: The Town does not manage its own landfill, but rather contracts with Waste Management to do so. Granby's Plan recommends the Town appoint an energy committee that could work with Waste Management to document the recycling rate in town as part of an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) generated from processing waste.

During a facilitated conversation on the landfill with a DEP representative, participants raised the goal of zero waste. This is a visionary goal some communities (Los Angeles, CA, Boulder, CO) are starting to adopt. The upcoming Granby Sanitary Landfill contract renegotiation process provides possible sustainable business development opportunities for the community. If the existing landfill mound is capped, it could be a site for solar panels. And, the Town will be renegotiating their contract with Waste Management in 2009, yielding an opportunity for the Town to push for a share of the benefits from the sale of electricity generated by the landfill.

NOTE: The Granby Master Plan does not reference the South Hadley Landfill.

Source: *Granby Master Plan* (2008) prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, last accessed at http://www.pvpc.org/granby/docs/Draft_Plan_FINAL.pdf on October 16, 2008.

■ Recycling

Since 1989, South Hadley by-laws have required that all residents, including businesses, recycle. Recycling saves the Town money, reduces the amount of trash sent to the landfill, prevents pollution, and conserves natural resources. Residents in South Hadley receive curbside pickup of their recyclables every other week. All of South Hadley's recyclables go to the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Springfield, MA, which is owned by DEP, but operated by Waste Management Recycle America. There are two separate recycling streams collected in South Hadley, one for paper and cardboard, and another for mixed containers.

Trash disposal has now become a materials management process and as such, cities and towns across the United States have had to find new ways to manage certain waste materials which were formerly landfilled or incinerated. South Hadley does this at its Recycling Center and Compost Area, located next to the Landfill and Department of Public Works offices at 10 Industrial Drive. A list of these materials can be found on the Town's website.

Recycling can result in significant revenue for the Town. Therefore, increasing resident recycling should be a high town priority. While there has been an education effort, more detail on financial aspects should be available to residents. Most may not realize that as the Town pays for some of the trash that goes into the landfill, the Town makes money from both recycled goods and reduced disposal fees.

South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD)

SHELD's History and Operations

SHELD Principles:

There are no outside stockholders to pay, so customers come first.

All utility benefits flow back to customers in the form of improved service, lower rates, and other community advantages.

Customers have a say in how their utility operates.

Policy is set by an elected Board of Commissioners which meets regularly in meetings that are open to the public.

South Hadley voters founded the South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD) in 1914 because they believed that electric service works best for all customers when it is locally owned and controlled. South Hadley is fortunate to have its own local electric company, SHELD. Having this resource provides good services to the community and keeps electric rates relatively low.

The Light Board, which governs SHELD, is composed of three residents elected by the Town's voters. The Board sets utility policy and oversees operations through the Department's Manager. Decisions are guided by the traditional municipal utility values of outstanding service and low, competitive rates. SHELD has operated effectively and is economically stable, with an "A" rating and no long-term debt.

A number of innovative strategies have been undertaken by SHELD, including a Dark Skies initiative designed to reduce the impact of light pollution.

SHELD's Building and Relocation Issues

Currently located in its historic home at 85 Main Street in South Hadley Falls, SHELD has made public its plans to relocate. Due to site and building issues, including the building's location within the 100-year flood zone of the Connecticut River, SHELD has discussed and considered relocation to a new facility located on property it owns off Old Lyman Road, near the Highway Department. These discussions have been tabled while SHELD constructs its new substation. At the completion of the substation, however, SHELD will renew its relocation efforts.

As discussed in several sections of this Comprehensive Plan, SHELD's potential relocation raises a number of issues. For example, the Town's land use and economic development strategies focus on the need to use and re-use structures in South Hadley's developed areas and to draw visitors and employment into South Hadley Falls. SHELD's current building and location support these goals, and there is concern about the impacts, and example, if a major public presence moves out of the Falls. However, the flood zone and other physical limitations make operations a challenge for SHELD, and the Department's ongoing innovation and services are essential to the Town's future progress. As SHELD initiates new discussions about its future location and operations, the discussions and decisions will need to reflect the many considerations that the Department's unique services and current location represent to the Town of South Hadley.



Five-College Fiber Optic Network

SHELD completed installation of the South Hadley portion of the Five-Colleges Fiber Optic Network in early 2008. The fiber optic is running at One Federal in Springfield, being offered to the South Hadley Schools and a drop has been provided to the Police Department. The Fiber Optic Network can be run through to the Town Hall, if requested. Two “unofficial” goals of the Fiber Optic Network are: (1) run underground from the Center to South Hadley Falls; and (2) reduce light pollution. The Fiber Optic Network was funded with help from the five colleges. This is a unique opportunity for South Hadley, as few other towns have this level of bandwidth.

Municipal Facilities Summary

Note to readers: Detailed information on South Hadley’s parks and recreation facilities is incorporated in Chapter 6, Open Space and Recreation.

Planning for and investments in public facilities have a tremendous impact on a community. South Hadley’s strong base of public facilities, taken in the context of the Town’s regional setting, combination of public and private resources, demographics, and economic development needs, have the potential to become a key asset that supports multiple Town goals. The next step is for individual plans and investments to be related to a larger vision, such as a revitalization strategy for South Hadley Falls; greater marketing of the Town in regional tourism efforts; improved coordination with public and non-profit agencies in the region; improved visual appearance; and better overall quality of life. The strategies for public buildings, parks, recreation facilities, and common spaces (e.g. sidewalks, streetscapes, etc.) are based upon these facility summaries, and related to the larger municipal facilities goals.



Public Buildings

South Hadley, like many communities, has substantial facilities needs. The elementary schools, senior center, public library, Town Hall, and even the new Police Department, along with SHELD’s headquarters, either require replacement or substantial renovations and expansions. A town-wide strategy promoting good facility planning utilizing sustainable technology and efficiency can prepare the community for technology upgrades and maintenance needs. Furthermore, a Plan will help the Town avoid situations like the Police Station, where a relatively new facility does not perform at an appropriate standard. The breadth of facility upkeep and improvement needs in town builds the case for a town-wide centralized Facilities Maintenance Plan and a dedicated town staff person to oversee facility maintenance.



**Table 5-6
Condition and Needs of Town Facilities**

	Location	Condition / Status	Needs
Town Hall	116 Main Street	Inadequate to meet the needs of the Town	Renovation of interior spaces; Accommodation of technology; Maintenance
Council on Aging / Senior Center	45 Dayton Street	Last renovations in 1998; Meets basic needs but space could be improved and/or expanded	Significant maintenance and repairs, including attention to graffiti on outdoor playground; possible relocation
Public Library	27 Bardwell Street	Inadequate to meet the needs of the Town	HVAC improvements currently underway; Planning Study underway for new facility
Waste Water Treatment Plant	2 James Street, Chicopee	Good Condition; Capacity upgrade currently underway	None
Police Department	41 Bridge Street	Good Condition; New Facility	HVAC system functions poorly and requires a costly fix
Fire Station (District #1)	144 Newton Street	Adequate Condition; 20-25 years old	None
Fire Station / Water Department (District #2)	20 Woodbridge Street	Recently renovated	Additional space needs were not met in recent upgrade due to cost concerns
Department of Public Works Offices	10 Industrial Drive	Adequate; 30-40 years old	n/a
Department of Public Works Barn	28 Lincoln Street	Fair Condition	Building needs upgrade
Department of Public Works Maintenance Buildings	Buttery Brook Park	Adequate Condition	May relocate Parks Department to this site
Plains School (PreK-1)	Granby Road	Inadequate to meet the needs of the Town	Planning Study underway for new facility
Mosier School (2-4)	101 Mosier Street	Inadequate to meet the needs of the Town	Renovation anticipated
Michael E. Smith Middle School	100 Mosier Street	Good Condition; Recently upgraded	Maintenance
South Hadley High School	153 Newton Street	Good Condition; Recently upgraded	Maintenance

Moving Ahead: Recommended Strategies

Because of the high degree of inter-dependence of Municipal Services and Facilities goals and recommendations with other elements, such as transportation, open space, recreation, and economic development, the Goals and Recommended Actions in this chapter are organized differently from other Plan elements. The background of each goal is described below. Recommended actions are grouped by topic area, following the outline of this chapter, with a matrix noting the relationship of each action to the five MSF goals:

Municipal Services and Facilities Goals

MSF-1	A Town that leads by example in its municipal facilities and operations, including strategic municipal budgeting and investments, and by fostering partnerships, communication, and sustainability principles through its investments and initiatives.
MSF-2	An effective, town-wide communication strategy across departments and services, with a 'marketing mindset,' in order to enhance public participation, availability of information, quality of public services, efficiency, and environmental goals.
MSF-3	Efficiency and cost-effectiveness as a guiding principle for delivery of public services, along with considerations for equity in all aspects of South Hadley's governance.
MSF-4	Creation and maintenance of a long-term vision for each public department in its planning, budgeting and operations, with strong collaboration across departments.
MSF-5	Promoting sustainability in municipal and public operations, starting with a Sustainability Task Force that can advise and support sustainability efforts by Town departments, and bring volunteer energy into beneficial directions for the Town.

Taken together, these strategies and recommended actions will support the economic development, sustainability, and open spaces strategies elsewhere in the Plan. Aspects of this inter-dependence could include:

- Completing vision plans for open space and recreation in a manner that supports transportation and economic development goals;
- Promoting, through various municipal departments and investments, a recreation-based strategy for revitalization of South Hadley Falls and the re-use of vacant and under-market properties;
- Potential partnerships with a chamber of commerce or other organization(s) to support a position or other staff support to advance various strategies; or
- Encouraging more systemic leadership on goals and principles in all aspects of town government.



MSF-1: Leading by Example

Widespread support has been voiced for the Town of South Hadley to take a leadership role through its operations, governance, and management. This is particularly true with respect to municipal buildings and facilities. As examples, a new elementary school is likely to be built within the next ten years, and the Council on Aging, SHELD and the Public Library are considering relocation and/or expansion. These are substantial projects that can serve as models for making cost-effective, sustainable planning and building practices part of project design, planning, construction, and operations.

The heart of this goal is to make communications and a green mindset seamlessly integrated into all government functions, providing strong leadership to residents, the business community, and organizations within South Hadley. As an example, some purchasing could be shifted to green or sustainable products; or the Town could provide incentives for employees to use alternative transportation to get to work. The Sustainability Task Force is recommended as a way to bring forward ideas where the Town can show leadership, in addition to evaluating its own operations.



MSF-2: Communication with a Marketing Mindset

The importance of communications, a theme in many elements of this Plan, runs through all of the Municipal Services and Facilities recommendations. There is a very strong desire to see an effective, town-wide communication strategy with a 'marketing mindset' to enhance participation, the availability of information, the quality of public services (e.g. E911, etc.), and key environmental and financial objectives (e.g. landfill, recycling, redevelopment, business recruitment, etc.). Communications and an information-based approach to municipal governance can enhance public participation, service delivery, and ultimately, residents' satisfaction with their own government and community life.

The CPAC stressed that communication efforts should have a "marketing mindset:" that communication, outreach, and information resources should be intentionally designed to provide better customer service for greater efficiency and equity; promote South Hadley's resources and facilities to improve the Town's economic and redevelopment goals; and reflect both department visions and an overall sustainability focus for the Town.



MSF-3: Efficiency, Cost-Effectiveness, and Equity

One of the core concepts in this chapter concerns management and budgeting for outcomes. Rather than a goal of running the Town 'more like a business,' the intent of this goal is to coordinate resources towards community goals. There is strong support in the community for helping the Town manage and leverage its resources strategically towards specific outcomes that are related to the Town's vision. If South Hadley's budgeting and decision-making are goal oriented, the level of financial and

staff effort can be adjusted around which activities bring the community towards its desired goals - rather than looking only at year-over-year spending levels or total department costs, without regard to how these expenditures relate to specific, achievable goals. The idea is not efficiency for efficiency's sake, but managing resources towards desirable outcomes, and increasing cooperation along the way.

The potential change to a mayor/council form of governing structure could offer a chance to do more regular and strategic budgeting towards long-term goals, such as sustainability, building re-use, or a partnership to staff an economic development program, without making these individual, annual Town Meeting appropriations. However, regardless of the Town's governing structure, vision planning, along with training on this Plan's goals and objectives, is recommended for all Town staff and officials to encourage a greater focus on budgeting and management for long-term outcomes.



MSF-4: A Long-Term Vision for Municipal Departments

Another persistent theme in this process is the need to help South Hadley's departments complete vision plans that can help direct investments, expenditures and actions towards better outcomes through coordinated plans. Participants in the issues gatherings for this Plan hoped to see greater efficiency and quality in municipal services achieved through more holistic planning and 'visioning' for South Hadley's departments and services. This process is envisioned to include all departments, including Recreation, Public Works, Planning and zoning, SHELD, the Fire Districts, and Schools. This goal would include not only developing a guiding vision for each department or services, but working towards much greater internal and external communication, sharing of resources, and efficiency in how South Hadley's public and non-profit organizations provide the services discussed in this Chapter. Department visions also should include principles of efficiency, sustainability, and supporting other crucial Plan goals, such as a revitalization effort for South Hadley Falls.

As addressed in Chapter 6, Open Space and Recreation, developing a vision for parks, public spaces, and recreation facilities was a particular concern and focus in Plan development. Landscaping and maintenance practices for all types of public spaces - from street planters and trees to Buttery Brook Park and playing fields - have a subtle but very important impact on a community's property values, business climate, resident satisfaction, and 'self-image.' Quality landscapes and maintenance can be very important to business retention and community marketing efforts. Developing a vision for South Hadley's public spaces, and managing budgets and other potential resources towards this vision, is a key objective and recommendation of this Plan.



MSF-5: Becoming a Sustainable Community

Threaded throughout this Plan is the goal of embracing sustainability principles throughout Town governance and operations, with a special focus on leading by example as expressed in MSF-1. With the urgency of energy costs and use, and other

long-range environmental concerns, this is viewed as an essential component of planning for the next twenty years. This Plan gives the Town a prime opportunity for adopting a 'green mindset' that can educate, empower, and challenge residents, demonstrating how sustainability practices can

Beyond the Town's leadership through facilities and operations, including SHELD, and a focus on sustainability partnerships and communication, this Plan calls for the Town to establish and foster a sustainability task force that can help bring forward ideas and channel volunteer energy into beneficial directions for the Town. Many communities in New England and throughout the US have realized multiple benefits from having a sustainability task force that can seek grant funding for new projects, advise the Town on energy and sustainability strategies, and help build partnerships with other agencies and towns. Given the strong interest on the part of the public, CPAC, and Town officials for weaving sustainability into all of South Hadley's municipal operations, establishing this task force is a priority recommendation of the Plan.



Recommended Actions

Specific recommended actions are organized by the topic areas in this Chapter – Local Government, Education, Water Supply and Wastewater Management, Solid Waste, Public Safety, SHELD, and Community Services. The strategies and recommended actions all point to ways that South Hadley's municipal services and can support complimentary goals for economic development, sustainability, open space, and land use. Because these five overall goals above are strongly inter-related, the Plan Appendix includes a matrix with the strategies and recommended actions cross-referenced to indicate the overall goals that are supported by each one.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Objective 1: Begin managing, budgeting and investing towards the goals and outcomes of this Plan

- Continually seek ways to collaborate with non-government agencies and other towns to provide government, utility, cultural, and human services.
- Develop long-term strategic visions for each department, board, and commission, possibly through external staff or consulting support.
- Consider using "Full Cost Accounting" principles and procedures as a compliment to municipal budgeting, examining social and environmental costs in addition to monetary pricing.
- Working with the sustainability task force, make sustainability initiatives and practices part of standard procedures through such action as including renewable energy or materials usage goal and efficiency standards in Requests for Proposals, bid invitations, and contract specifications.
- Consider adopting regulations that recommend or incentivize the use of LEED standards for new construction, particularly for municipal buildings.



Objective 2: Increase the effectiveness of all Town communications and use of technology for improved customer service and government efficiency

- As a priority action item, engage in town-wide training of municipal employees on public communication skills and strategies.
- Continually evaluate the potential for new technology to improve service delivery and efficiency, and provide information on technology options to the public as part of budgeting and planning.
- As part of each municipal department's core priorities and responsibilities, ensure that there is a staff person or team directly responsible and accountable for updating the municipal website's content and architecture, keeping the site current.
- Continually evaluate the website's content and architecture with a focus on how the site and the information are providing customer service, public participation, and efficient service delivery.
- Evaluate whether "Virtual Town Hall" is continuing to meet the Town's needs, and seek other providers if this is not being met.
- Continue to increase the amount and quality of information provided through the website, public notices, Channel 15, and other methods.
- Ensure that bylaws, services, regulations, and opportunities can be easily accessed on the website.

SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

Objective 1: Establish a Task Force and formal Town commitment to sustainability principles

- The Select Board and Planning Board should establish a Sustainability Task Force for the Town of South Hadley by developing a mission statement and bylaws that will enable the Task Force to carry out the specific recommendations set out in this Plan.
- Develop and present to the Select Board a resolution on becoming a sustainable community, for potential formal adoption at Town Meeting.

Objective 2: Develop a Sustainability Plan for South Hadley

- As a priority recommendation of this Plan, with the Select Board, explore ways to have a sustainability 'champion' for South Hadley within Town government, whether part-time, contractual, or cooperative with another agency or initiative. Coordinate this effort with plans and strategies to establish an economic development or South Hadley Falls 'champion,' as described in the economic development element of this Plan.
- Working with the Select Board, develop a Sustainability Strategic Plan for South Hadley. Include staff and officials from all departments in Plan development of the plan and subsequent training on its recommendations.
- Within the Sustainability Strategic Plan, develop a set of sustainability principles, including but not limited to energy and water conservation, green building materials, use of alternative energy sources, and minimizing waste, which can be incorporated into Town operations such as requests for proposals, area plans, and maintenance contracts.
- Working with the Planning Board and Town departments, review and evaluate the Town's current ordinances, bylaws, and policies for sustainability issues such as water, energy, materials, and waste, and identify steps to improve or amend these over time.

Objective 3: Carry out specific projects to increase local awareness of and participation in sustainability actions

- Develop strategies to promote reduced consumer demand, such as a light bulb swap or the use of 'smart meters'
- Inventory the energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives completed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, SHELD and others, and communicate the results to the town.
- Seek grant funds to complete other innovative projects that increase public awareness and support municipal leadership on sustainability issues.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS and COMMON AREAS

Objective 1: Develop a goal-oriented, unified management strategy for public buildings and lands

- As a priority recommendation of this Plan, as part of visioning for government services, develop a unified management strategy for maintenance and repair of all town buildings, landscapes, and common areas, incorporating the sustainability, efficiency, vision planning, and customer-service goals of this Chapter.
- With the Sustainability Task Force, evaluate Town standards and requirements and recommend changes to promote energy efficiency and reduce energy demand wherever feasible
- Assess options for alternative and renewable energy sources to be used within existing and new buildings and infrastructure.

Objective 2: Use building and renovation projects as opportunities to lead by example and support Plan goals.

- In new building and renovation plans, including but not limited to the Plains School and Public Library, consider meeting LEED standards as a way to lead by example
- As a priority recommendation of this Plan, move forward with plans to renovate and expand the Public Library, or build a new one. Carefully evaluate the potential to maintain a location in South Hadley Falls, where the Library's location has historic ties and important community benefits. Ensure that any chosen location is well-served by public transportation so that all residents can continue to enjoy access to library services.

Please also see the recommendations in Chapter 6, Open Space and Recreation

EDUCATION and SCHOOL FACILITIES

Objective: Develop and implement a plan to replace the Plains School and promote effective re-use of the current school site.

- In planning for a new elementary school, consider early in the process the option of constructing the building to LEED or other equivalent sustainability standards. Provide the same consideration to incorporating sustainability principles into the site (e.g. parking, landscaping, low-impact design features, etc.)
- In the school facility planning process, ensure that South Hadley has an advocate or responsible party to ensure sufficient follow up, and that the application is closely tracked in the State process.



- Following up on the Statement of Interest to be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, establish a local committee for the Plains School replacement to pursue next steps such as additional grant or donation funding, school siting, and sustainability models.
- In conjunction with economic development efforts, develop a reuse plan for the Plains School site that incorporates sustainability and economic development principles of this Plan.

WATER SUPPLY

Objective: To ensure efficient and environmentally sound water supply services for all South Hadley residents.

- As a priority recommendation of this Plan, continue to evaluate, monitor, and consider the appropriateness of a merger of the two Fire Districts.
- Investigate the merits of reinstating the underground tank regulation in the Town's General Bylaw.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Objective: To ensure continued provision of efficient and effective public safety services.

- Upgrade public communications systems to provide consistent, reliable two-way communications and emergency notification systems.

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT, SOLID WASTE and RECYCLING

Objective: Improve the efficiency and environmental outcomes of wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste/recycling services.

- As a priority recommendation of this Plan, develop and implement a comprehensive outreach and education program encouraging residents and businesses to increase recycling; MassDEP materials may be used to help accomplish this goal. Include examples and explanation of the financial costs of solid waste disposal, and benefits of recycling
- As discussions proceed around expansion of the Town Landfill, examine strategies being used by the Town of Granby and other communities to maximize South Hadley's economic and environmental return on the landfill as closure occurs.
- Evaluate the feasibility and options for establishing a separate stormwater services enterprise fund or program, as has been done in Chicopee, to address the stormwater issues affecting South Hadley.
- Continually seek ways to work with neighboring communities to address regional infrastructure and waste management needs.

SHELD

Objective: Increase coordination between the Town and SHELD to maximize the benefit of SHELD's fiber optic network and building plans for the community.

- Work with SHELD to explore ways to maximize the benefits of its fiber optic network, initially to the Town and School facilities, and long-term through the examination of SHELD's charter and ability to serve and support non-public uses.

- Improve communication between SHELD and Town government regarding fiber optic network progress made by SHELD and Mount Holyoke College so that the Town is fully informed of the status of this project.
- Establish a collaborative line of communication or process between SHELD and the Town regarding SHELD's relocation and strategies for re-use of the existing building, to support the Town's economic development and revitalization goals for South Hadley Falls.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Objective: To coordinate Town and community services to the benefit of South Hadley's residents.

- As appropriate, use Town information resources such as the website to raise local awareness of community recreation, civic, and service resources.
- The Town should work to increase information sharing and partnerships with Mount Holyoke College, the Five College network, and other regional universities and organizations to improve service delivery and information exchange in all areas of community services.

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	MSF-1: Leading by Example	MSF-2: Communications	MSF-3: Equity & Efficiency	MSF-4: Department Vision	MSF-5: Sustainability
LOCAL GOVERNMENT					
<i>Objective 1: Begin managing, budgeting and investing towards the goals and outcomes of this Plan</i>					
Continually seek ways to collaborate with non-government agencies and other towns to provide government, utility, cultural, and human services.	✓		✓		
Develop long-term strategic visions for each department, board, and commission, possibly through external staff or consulting support.			✓	✓	
Consider using "Full Cost Accounting" principles and procedures as a compliment to municipal budgeting, examining social and environmental costs in addition to monetary pricing.	✓		✓		✓
Working with the sustainability task force, make sustainability initiatives and practices part of standard procedures through such action as including renewable energy or materials usage goal and efficiency standards in Requests for Proposals, bid invitations, and contract specifications.	✓		✓		✓
Consider adopting regulations that recommend or incentivize the use of LEED standards for new construction, particularly for municipal buildings.	✓		✓		✓
<i>Objective 2: Increase the effectiveness of all Town communications and use of technology for improved customer service and government efficiency</i>					
As a priority action item, engage in town-wide training of municipal employees on public communication skills and strategies.		✓	✓	✓	
Continually evaluate the potential for new technology to improve service delivery and efficiency, and provide information on technology options to the public as part of budgeting and planning.		✓	✓		
As part of each municipal department's core priorities and responsibilities, ensure that there is a staff person or team directly responsible and accountable for updating the municipal website's content and architecture, keeping the site current.		✓	✓	✓	
Continually evaluate the website's content and architecture with a focus on how the site and the information are providing customer service, public participation, and efficient service delivery.		✓	✓		
Evaluate whether "Virtual Town Hall" is continuing to meet the Town's needs, and seek other providers if this is not being met.		✓	✓		
Continue to increase the amount and quality of information provided through the website, public notices, Channel 15, and other methods.		✓	✓		
Ensure that bylaws, services, regulations, and opportunities can be easily accessed on the website.		✓	✓		

	MSF-1: Leading by Example	MSF-2: Communications	MSF-3: Equity & Efficiency	MSF-4: Department Vision	MSF-5: Sustainability
SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE					
<i>Objective 1: Establish a Task Force and formal Town commitment to sustainability principles</i>					
As a priority recommendation of this Plan, the Select Board and Planning Board should establish a Sustainability Task Force for the Town of South Hadley by developing a mission statement and bylaws that will enable the Task Force to carry out the specific recommendations set out in this Plan.	√				√
Develop and present to the Select Board a resolution on becoming a sustainable community, for potential formal adoption at Town Meeting.	√			√	√
<i>Objective 2: Develop a Sustainability Plan for South Hadley</i>					
Working with the Select Board, develop a Sustainability Strategic Plan for South Hadley. Include staff and officials from all departments in Plan development of the plan and subsequent training on its recommendations.	√				√
Within the Sustainability Strategic Plan, develop a set of sustainability principles, including but not limited to energy and water conservation, green building materials, use of alternative energy sources, and minimizing waste, which can be incorporated into Town operations such as requests for proposals, area plans, and maintenance contracts.	√		√	√	√
With the Select Board, explore ways to have a sustainability 'champion' for South Hadley within Town government, whether part-time, contractual, or cooperative with another agency or initiative. Coordinate this effort with plans and strategies to establish an economic development or South Hadley Falls 'champion,' as described in the economic development element of this Plan.			√	√	√
Working with the Planning Board and Town departments, review and evaluate the Town's current ordinances, bylaws, and policies for sustainability issues such as water, energy, materials, and waste, and identify steps to improve or amend these over time.	√		√		√
<i>Objective 3: Carry out specific projects to increase local awareness of and participation in sustainability actions</i>					
As a priority project, develop strategies to promote reduced consumer demand, such as a light bulb swap or the use of 'smart meters'	√	√			√
Inventory the energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives completed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, SHELD and others, and communicate the results to the town.	√	√			√
Seek grant funds to complete other innovative projects that increase public awareness and support municipal leadership on sustainability issues.		√	√		√

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PUBLIC BUILDINGS and COMMON AREAS					
<i>Objective 1: Develop a goal-oriented, unified management strategy for public buildings and lands</i>					
As part of visioning for government services, develop a unified management strategy for maintenance and repair of all town buildings, landscapes, and common areas, incorporating the sustainability, efficiency, vision planning, and customer-service goals of this Chapter.			√	√	√
With the Sustainability Task Force, evaluate Town standards and requirements and recommend changes to promote energy efficiency and reduce energy demand wherever feasible.	√		√		√
Assess options for alternative and renewable energy sources to be used within existing and new buildings and infrastructure.	√		√		√
<i>Objective 2: Use building and renovation projects as opportunities to lead by example and support Plan goals.</i>					
In new building and renovation plans, including but not limited to the Plains School and Public Library, consider meeting LEED standards as a way to lead by example	√		√		√
Move forward with plans to renovate and expand the Public Library, or build a new one. Carefully evaluate the potential to maintain a location in South Hadley Falls, where the Library's location has historic ties and important community benefits. Ensure that any chosen location is well-served by public transportation so that all residents can continue to enjoy access to library services.			√		

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EDUCATION and SCHOOL FACILITIES					
<i>Objective: Develop and implement a plan to replace the Plains School and promote effective re-use of the current school site.</i>					
In planning for a new elementary school, consider early in the process the option of constructing the building to LEED or other equivalent sustainability standards. Provide the same consideration to incorporating sustainability principles into the site (e.g. parking, landscaping, low-impact design features, etc.)	✓		✓		✓
In the school facility planning process, ensure that South Hadley has an advocate or responsible party to ensure sufficient follow up, and that the application is closely tracked in the State process.			✓		
Following up on the Statement of Interest to be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, establish a local committee for the Plains School replacement to pursue next steps such as additional grant or donation funding, school siting, and sustainability models.	✓		✓		✓
In conjunction with economic development efforts, develop a reuse plan for the Plains School site that incorporates sustainability and economic development principles of this Plan.	✓		✓		✓
WATER SUPPLY					
<i>Objective: To ensure efficient and environmentally sound water supply services for all South Hadley residents.</i>					
Continue to evaluate, monitor, and consider the appropriateness of a merger of the two Fire Districts.			✓		
Investigate the merits of reinstating the underground tank regulation in the Town's General Bylaw.			✓		
PUBLIC SAFETY					
<i>Objective: To ensure continued provision of efficient and effective public safety services.</i>					
Upgrade public communications systems to provide consistent, reliable two-way communications and emergency notification systems.		✓	✓	✓	

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WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT, SOLID WASTE and RECYCLING					
<i>Objective: Improve the efficiency and environmental outcomes of wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste/recycling services.</i>					
As a priority action item, develop and implement a comprehensive outreach and education program encouraging residents and businesses to increase recycling; MassDEP materials may be used to help accomplish this goal. Include examples and explanation of the financial costs of solid waste disposal, and benefits of recycling.	✓	✓	✓		✓
As discussions proceed around expansion of the Town Landfill, examine strategies being used by the Town of Granby and other communities to maximize South Hadley's economic and environmental return on the landfill as closure occurs.	✓		✓	✓	
Evaluate the feasibility and options for establishing a separate stormwater services enterprise fund or program, as has been done in Chicopee, to address the stormwater issues affecting South Hadley.			✓	✓	✓
Continually seek ways to work with neighboring communities to address regional infrastructure and waste management needs.			✓		
SHELD					
<i>Objective: Increase coordination between the Town and SHELD to maximize the benefit of SHELD's fiber optic network and building plans for the community.</i>					
Work with SHELD to explore ways to maximize the benefits of its fiber optic network, initially to the Town and School facilities, and long-term through the examination of SHELD's charter and ability to serve and support non-public uses.			✓		
Improve communication between SHELD and Town government regarding fiber optic network progress made by SHELD and Mount Holyoke College so that the Town is fully informed of the status of this project.		✓	✓		
As a priority action item, establish a collaborative line of communication or process between SHELD and the Town regarding SHELD's relocation and strategies for re-use of the existing building, to support the Town's economic development and revitalization goals for South Hadley Falls.		✓	✓		

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As appropriate, use Town information resources such as the website to raise local awareness of community recreation, civic, and service resources.		√	√		
As a priority action item, the Town should work to increase information sharing and partnerships with Mount Holyoke College, the Five College network, and other regional universities and organizations to improve service delivery and information exchange in all areas of community services.	√	√	√	√	