

## APRIL 2009 | CPAC South Hadley Natural Resources, Open Space, Park and Recreation Survey Results

Note: Response percentages may not add up to 100% due rounding, blanks and/or multiple responses.

1. Do you consider South Hadley:
 

A rural town	16%
A suburb	25%
A bedroom community	22%
A town in transition	36%
  
2. How important are the following to you:
 

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>
Rural, small town character	65%	28%	8%
Agricultural lands and pastures	54%	44%	1%
Forests and wildlife	66%	27%	5%
Scenic views and vistas	68%	25%	5%
Protecting natural resources	88%	7%	4%
Town recreation facilities	51%	41%	5%
Buildings of historical interest	56%	33%	9%
Cultural/arts activities and events	59%	36%	5%
  
3. Which conservation areas in South Hadley have you heard of, visited or used?
 

	<u>Heard of it</u>	<u>Visited or Used it</u>	<u>Heard/Visited Total</u>	<u>No Response</u>
Bachelor Brook-Stony Brook	49%	34%	84%	16%
Bynan Conservation Area	13%	9%	22%	81%
Bagg-Pierce Wildlife Sanctuary	16%	13%	29%	71%
Warner Conservation Area	26%	21%	47%	53%
Titus Pond Conservation Area	31%	7%	38%	62%
Carver Conservation Area	6%	4%	9%	91%
Jones Conservation Area	5%	5%	9%	91%
Newton Conservation Area	15%	7%	22%	78%
Laurie Avenue Area	4%	5%	8%	92%
LeBlanc Conservation Area	19%	6%	25%	75%
Mount Holyoke Range Areas	15%	75%	91%	8%
Trompke/Stony Brook Area	9%	7%	16%	84%
Hawkins Bird Sanctuary	9%	5%	14%	85%
Gormally Conservation Area	7%	2%	9%	91%
Popp Conservation Area	7%	5%	12%	88%
Black Stevens Area	16%	24%	40%	60%
Bachelor Brook East Area	14%	12%	26%	74%
  
4. If you do not visit or use South Hadley conservation lands, why not?
 

Don't have information about areas and their locations	72%
Don't have information about trails, where to go, what to do	64%
Other	7%
Lack of parking	1%
No interest	2%
  
5. Which community facilities in South Hadley have you heard of, visited or used?
 

	<u>Heard of it</u>	<u>Visited or Used it</u>	<u>Heard/Visited Total</u>	<u>No Response</u>
Judd Park	25%	11%	35%	65%
Bicentennial Canal Park	5%	58%	62%	38%
Buttery Brook Park	20%	75%	95%	5%
Beachgrounds Park/Town Field	40%	51%	91%	9%
School Athletic Fields	39%	45%	84%	16%
South Hadley Town Fields	44%	31%	74%	26%
Ferry Street Town Field	27%	20%	47%	53%
Ledges Golf Course	35%	61%	96%	4%
Council on Aging	32%	49%	81%	19%
South Hadley Public Library	6%	91%	96%	4%
Gaylord Library	21%	72%	93%	7%
Town Hall	6%	91%	96%	4%
Fire House Museum	40%	52%	92%	8%
Woodlawn Park Athletic Field	24%	29%	53%	47%

6. Would you support a central community center for recreation, classes, group gatherings, and general use?	Yes	52%
	Possibly	39%
	No	8%

7. How satisfied are you with South Hadley community resources and activities?

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not at all satisfied	No response
Park facilities	16%	55%	13%	15%
Athletic facilities	29%	41%	7%	21%
Access to natural resources	19%	42%	16%	21%
Community gathering places	8%	58%	18%	16%
Youth Programs	15%	46%	7%	33%
Adult programs	6%	52%	15%	27%
Other	2%	1%	2%	94%

8. Please indicate your TOP FIVE recreational priorities (listed in order of response popularity):

1. Walking and hiking trails	78%	13. Organized youth sports	16%
2. Bike paths	55%	14. Multipurpose athletic fields	13%
3. Natural areas / nature centers	49%	14. Tennis courts	13%
4. Outdoor playgrounds	33%	16. Outdoor spray parks	11%
5. Canoeing / kayaking access	29%	17. Community gardens	9%
6. Wildlife viewing / bird watching	25%	18. Other	8%
7. Park shelters and picnic areas	25%	18. Ice skating	8%
8. Adult classes and activities	23%	20. Youth classes / activities	6%
9. Swimming	22%	21. Fishing	4%
10. Small neighborhood parks	19%	22. Organized adult sports	1%
11. XC skiing and snowshoeing	18%	23. Basketball courts	1%
11. Golf	18%	24. Skateboarding	0%

9. How important should these priorities be over the next 5-10 years?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	No response
Expand walking/hiking trails	60%	29%	4%	8%
Long range vision/planning	78%	7%	4%	12%
Improve information delivery	71%	22%	0%	7%
Maintenance of town parks/facilities	76%	16%	0%	7%
Quality of recreational facilities	54%	27%	4%	15%
Develop parks/playgrounds	49%	28%	7%	14%
Expand/increase adult programs	25%	41%	18%	15%
Expand/increase youth programs	26%	42%	12%	19%
Plan multi-purpose resources	28%	34%	11%	26%
Develop bike trails	51%	32%	7%	11%
Develop sports fields	16%	42%	22%	19%
Improve water access	47%	27%	11%	12%
Acquire land for passive recreation	51%	22%	7%	14%
Acquire land for active recreation	25%	35%	22%	19%
Encourage private open space presv.	60%	24%	4%	12%

10. How old are you? (age of person filling out survey)	18-25	3%
	25-35	4%
	35-45	17%
	45-55	13%
	55-65	29%
	Over 65	32%

11. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?	Households with children birth to 11	20%
	Households with children age 12-17	5%
	Households with adults age 18-64	65%
	Households with seniors age 65+	39%

12. How many years have you lived in South Hadley?	0-2 years	8%
	3-10 years	26%
	11-20 years	11%
	21-30 years	7%
	30+ years	47%

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### OVERVIEW

Surveys were available to all residents during March and April 2009 at Town Hall, South Hadley Public Library, Gaylord Library, the Senior Center, and the Family Center, as well as distribution via e-mail, public meetings, personal contact, and through the town website. Notices were placed in the Town Crier, Springfield Republican, and Northampton Daily Gazette. A total of 85 surveys were returned to the office of the Town Planner.

### COMMENT SAMPLER

#### 2. WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- I like the openness of Alvord Street farms and fields
- Mt. Holyoke College took away rural, small town character with their mall in the center
- I consider all to be important because it defines the community and it is up to (us) to protect and educate ourselves
- All items are integral attributes to what makes SH a great place to live
- My biggest concern and wish is to preserve our woodlands. I don't think people realize/care enough about consequences.
- We feel that activities/pool access for a greater range of ages is needed.
- It would be nice if what we have could be maintained, not lost; should be able to enjoy forests/wildlife, not be restricted.
- Town recreation facilities, cultural/arts activities and events function to keep community alive.
- We should end big lot zoning and encourage rural, small town character
- Rural character agricultural lands, scenic views—but with significant opportunity for growth, supports tourism, a strength
- Town recreation facilities—best to be first class to compete
- Buildings of historical interest—a strength when college is included
- Cultural/arts activities events—good, but can do more
- Town recreation facilities—need a free (or minimum charge) outside town adult pool.
- Cultural/arts activities, events—Mt. Holyoke College is a great resource; identify, restore buildings of historical interest

#### 3-4. CONSERVATION AREAS

- Wow! I had no idea our town had so many public lands. I would have loved to have gotten a welcome packet highlighting this - when we moved here 5 years ago, perhaps via realtors.
- Judd Park should be listed here (a number of respondents made this observation)
- I don't believe a conservation area must be used, just must be.
- Are these areas well-groomed and monitored for safety?
- I did not know! How does one find out, I wonder.
- We love exploring, but no info is readily available.
- I'm very interested—need a way of finding out about these.
- Since town's recent excavations, Hawkins Bird Sanctuary has become a swamp/breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Why are not all of the areas above listed and mapped on town website?
- Need map that shows needed info plus preservation or recreation? Some areas unreachable/unusable.
- Poor maintenance is discouraging.
- Wow! I had no idea! I'd love a brochure on all of these; could be made available in the Town Reminder?
- Where do you find maps of trails and locations? Not on SH website.
- Would love this info!

#### 5. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Grew up in town, used everything at one time
- OTHER: South Hadley Family Centre—a wonderful resource (cited by a number of respondents)

#### 5. COMMUNITY CENTER

- We need a town gathering place—perhaps in combination with a new senior center, library, or school?
- I use one now in Holyoke.
- It would make for a stronger community and would help bring community together.
- If run properly and advertised well, a community center would be fantastic.
- Would need a more organized and visible recreation department first Town hall? Senior Center?
- SH had needed this type of center for years!
- Greater need for funds in existing areas (schools)
- Yes!!! What a wonderful way to bring together community and be strategic about community offerings.
- Depends on cost... I'd rather put tax \$\$ into better public schools
- Depends on cost to taxpayers and location
- What about using facilities we already have, such as schools, libraries, museum, parks, golf course, etc.
- How about some organized dancing!
- Have one—golf clubhouse
- Need more information!
- Yes, if at part with Amherst and Northampton; if not an issue to town
- Use existing facilities, esp. schools—schools should be more integrated into community anyhow.

- Fund raising campaign?
- I think the recreation department is going in this direction; not sure a "center" is needed.
- A new building to house the COA and used for other activities also.

## 7. SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

- Not much youth programming available for preschoolers; not much variety or arts programming for adults
  - Playground at Senior Center has most of its equipment broken (can walk to this, conveniently located)
  - Programs like Amherst Leisure Services would be great if it were possible
  - With our high tax rate, you'd think we'd have a nice park for the kids to play at.
  - Park facilities/community gathering places—need improvement; Natural resources—need more info to public
  - Good rec program, offers a nice selection of activities
  - As usual, everything could be upgraded with more funds available
  - Would be nice if we had our own track; community gathering areas are too small.
  - Directions to parks not clear; maintenance could be better
  - Availability and locations of recreation programs could be communicated better.
  - Park facilities—dirty and not current for child play.
  - Recreation Department not visible
  - Park facilities--Need more information, also public playground would be great?
  - Community resources need to be streamlined, communicating with each other and community beyond schools
  - SH Family Center and both libraries are great; libraries could use renovation and parking.
  - Buttery Brook Park is great (although it needs ore playground equipment)
  - Parks are rundown, uninteresting, poor facilities for children; do we have athletic facilities? Trails? Where!
  - There really has not been as much attention to community gathering places, as there should be.
  - There appears to be a great deal I don't know.
  - Of the facilities we use, we are impressed w/cleanliness, accessibility and safety.
  - Adult programs should be more challenging and interesting.
  - Need more community play areas.
  - No CT River access above Brunelle's
  - Need tennis courts; golf well covered, but need brochure; support recreation/community center as a goal
- OTHER: Transportation for seniors (see [www.itamerica.org](http://www.itamerica.org)), need to plan for Falls area, outdoor summer swimming for adults

## 8. TOP FIVE RECREATIONAL PRIORITIES

- Would love activities for kids who are not into sports
  - Access to swimming's become a class issue; must pay to join SH or Holyoke Canoe Clubs.
  - Only canoe/kayak access is at Canal Park; no bike paths now available in town
  - Present canoeing/kayaking access—unsafe area, no parking
  - Walking/hiking trails need to be clearly marked, with good signs
  - Safety is important in walking/hiking trails
  - Maybe Recreation Department could organize kayaking/kayaking outings?
  - We need at lest one really nice playscape!
  - Need marked XC skiing/snowshoeing trails, warming center with food
  - Need bike paths—and sidewalks!
  - Would like adult classes in art, social dancing, enrichment
  - Need a summer pool/water
  - Need basic recreation department offerings, and promoted
  - Walking and hiking trails; more info needed re: where they are!
  - There are virtually no clean playgrounds apart from elementary schools, not available during school hours
  - A summer outdoor swimming pool is sorely needed
  - Please, more playgrounds!
  - More adult classes, but better ones than at Senior Center.
  - Bike paths—alternative routes around town? Access to conservation lands?
  - Organized youth sports—nobody should be put on a waiting list or otherwise discouraged from participation
  - Recreational priorities: Fair play, brotherhood, friendship, mutual respect, and generosity of spirit
  - Hiking—most important; develop a SH trail organization; better signage needed on existing trails
- OTHER: Boating on the CT River; music; art; dancing; snowmobile trail; horseback riding trails; small open fields for flying radio-controlled airplanes, dog park

## 9. PRIORITIES OVER NET 5-10 YEARS

- Many good walking/hiking trails available now; need to improve water access for boating
- Always be on the lookout for resources—the town should have a grant writing committee
- Improving quality of town parks/facilities is more important than maintaining existing quality
- Promote/improve information delivery
- Improve information deliver—this is perhaps priority #1!
- Parks/playgrounds--Improve current more than build new
- Developing parks/playgrounds is sorely needed
- Just moved here from NZ, a country that sets a GREAT example for developing community-based resources