

Background Materials – September 15, 2025 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 9/12/25

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<https://www.southhadley.org/1274/Agenda-Background-Materials>

AGENDA ITEM #1 Open comment Period

This 10-minute period is set aside for the public to offer comments on items not on the posted agenda, in accordance with the adopted policy, as amended 9/11/23, posted on the Town of South Hadley Planning and Conservation Department webpage here:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/11705/Policy-on-Open-Comment-Period---As-Adopted-2023-09-11>

Action Needed: Allow members of the public to offer comments to the Board.

AGENDA ITEM #2 Minutes

Planning and Conservation Coordinator Colleen Canning will forward minutes separately.

Action Needed: Vote to approve the minutes.

AGENDA ITEM #3 Correspondence

Planning and Conservation Coordinator Colleen Canning will forward correspondence separately.

Action Needed: No action needed.

AGENDA ITEM #4 298, 300 and 302 Newton Street ANR

Application online: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14283/Marios-Lot-1-ANR-plan-dated-8-5-2025?bidId=>

Landowner Joe Marois is seeking endorsement of the ANR plan that combines three (3) adjacent parcels under his ownership into one. The parcels are in the Business A-1 zoning

district. These parcels include Carey's Flowers/Ben and Meg's Garden Center and a single-family dwelling.

The ANR as proposed creates a 3.85 acre landlocked parcel, which technical is a subdivision. I have consulted with the Town's legal counsel Mead, Talerman and Costa on this matter and they have offered the following guidance:

*There would be two possible actions for the Planning Board to take. First, the Board can reject this as an ANR based on the absence of any frontage for the new lot itself. Second, the Board can approve it as an ANR plan, **however** notate that the new landlocked parcel is "not a buildable lot" or "not a buildable lot without further relief".*

The ANR plan as submitted includes a statement on it "Sufficient frontage and area exists to satisfy zoning requirements based on frontage on Newton Street parcels...". This statement is problematic. I am following up with legal to see if the board can cross that out with a sharpie marker and write the new "not a buildable lot without further zoning relief" statement.

Other criteria for ANR endorsement:

1. Type of Way: Newton Street, also known as State Route 116, and both are public ways maintained by the Town. Therefore, this standard is met.
2. Minimum frontage requirements for the zoning district: The minimum frontage required for the Business A-1 district is 125'. The proposed ANR provides 267.95' of frontage. Therefore, this standard is met.
3. Vital access: The combined frontage will not alter access to Newton Street, a publicly owned and maintained way. Therefore, this standard is met.

Action Needed: Discuss proposed ANR, motion to endorse the ANR, and sign the ANR.

Recommended Motion: *I move to endorse the proposed ANR for Assessor's parcels 17-18, 17-19 and 17-20, and add a notation "Not a buildable lot without further zoning relief, and stricken statement about sufficient frontage.*

6:30 PM -- PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUANCE

AGENDA ITEM #5 Route 202/33 Corridor Re-Zoning Public Hearing Continuance

The proposed zoning and zoning maps are online: <https://www.southhadley.org/1400/Route-202-33-Corridor-Re-Zoning>

The public hearing was opened on 9/8/25. The Director of Planning and Conservation gave a presentation describing the proposed rezoning, followed by approximately 2 hours of public questions and comments. Additional correspondence submitted since the hearing area attached.

For the public hearing continuation, the Director of Planning and Conservation will give a presentation responding to the comments and questions. Additionally, Assistant Assessor Missy Couture Rimold will give a brief presentation on the status of new growth assessments over the past decade, and how new growth assessments impact the tax levy.

Thereafter, the Director will present proposed changes to the draft zoning bylaw and zoning map. The Board will then discuss the proposed changes, and at their discretion, accept additional public comment.

PROPOSED CHANGES:

Zoning Map

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14362/Rezoning-Map---Street-Map---Revised-91225>

- Remove Residential Core Expanded
- Remove from Residential Mixed Use - 84 Willimansett Street, Assessor's Map 14, Parcel 43

Zoning Bylaw

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14360/Corridor-Proposed-Zoning---Revised-91225>

- Add "Story" definition
- Modify Height definition
- Reduce max height for RMU-Multifamily from 45' to 40'
- Reduce max height for RMU-Mixed Use from 55' to 40'
- Add allowance for Special Permit to request max height modifications for mixed use buildings.
- Add Development Standard requirement for screening for side and rear parking lots.
- Add Development Standard requirement for sound screening incorporation for rooftop mechanicals on mixed use and multifamily buildings.

Action Needed: Conduct the public hearing, review proposed zoning edits, Planning Board deliberations, accept additional public comment if desired, motion to accept the final proposed zoning and zoning map and submit to the Selectboard for placement on the November 5, 2025 Special Fall Town Meeting Warrant.

AGENDA ITEM #6 Other New Business (topics which the Chair could not reasonably expect to be discussed/considered as of the date of this notice)

No additional business has been submitted to me as of the date of this notice.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

9/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Public Hearing • Route 202/33 Zoning – Draft Report to Town Meeting • 478 Amherst Road SPR – Public Hearing Continuation
10/6 <i>Columbus Day</i> <i>10/13</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 506 Granby Road – Apartment Community – Site Plan Review and Stormwater Permit Public Hearing • 27 Ludlow Road (Lots 1 and 2) – ADUs - Site Plan Review • Route 22/33 Zoning – Approve Report to Town Meeting • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Draft Report to Town Meeting
10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Approve Report to Town Meeting
November 5th	Special Fall Town Meeting
11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodplain Bylaw Update – Introduction • Subdivision Regulations Update Discussion
11/24	
12/8	
12/22	
1/12/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subdivision Regulations Public Hearing (??)

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD
LIST OF ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCES
SEPTEMBER 15, 2025, REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

- Letter (attached) from Steve LaPlante, President of the South Hadley/Granby Chamber of Commerce, memorializing comments from the September 8 Public Hearing regarding the Routes 202/33 Corridor re-zoning proposal.
- September 9 letter (attached) from Linda Scahs, 193 Woodbridge Street, regarding the Routes 202/33 Corridor re-zoning proposal.
- September 11 email (attached) from Ryan Kile, 23 Colombia Street, regarding the Routes 202/33 Corridor re-zoning proposal.
- September 11 email (attached) from Cari Dodge, 15 Cornell Street, regarding the Routes 202/33 Corridor re-zoning proposal.
- September 11 letter (attached) from Marie Rohan, 16 S Sycamore Knolls, regarding the Routes 202/33 Corridor re-zoning proposal.
- September 12 letter (attached) from Brain Morris, 14 McDowell Drive, regarding the Routes 202/33 Corridor re-zoning proposal.

Legal Notices

Amherst

- Notice from the Amherst Planning Board for filing decision of approval to modify previously approved Site Plan Review to allow additional floor of residential units, and increased building height for development at 5 University Drive.

Chicopee

-

Granby

-

Hadley

-

Holyoke

-



RE: Speech
South Hadley Planning Board Meeting
September 8, 2025

Hello!

My name is Steven Laplante, 2 Lyman Street.

For those who do not know me, I'm the current President of the South Hadley Granby Chamber of Chamber of Commerce. Thank you to Anne Capra, and the Members of the Planning Board for allowing me the opportunity to say a few words this evening.

I'm here on behalf of the Chamber's Board of Directors to speak in support of the proposed zoning changes that are currently under review.

I want to begin by saying that I understand the concerns being raised, especially about traffic, and preserving the character of our neighborhoods. These are valid and important issues. But I also believe that thoughtful, well-planned zoning changes are not only necessary, they are essential to our community's long-term success and sustainability.

The fact is: people want to live here.....and that's a good thing, something we should all be very proud of! It means we're doing something right. But if we don't plan for growth now, we'll face even greater pressure later — with skyrocketing housing costs, and development under outdated zoning rules that do not reflect today's vision and needs!

Zoning changes are a tool, and not a threat. They give us the ability to guide growth intentionally, to decide *where* and *how* new development should happen, and to make room for more diverse housing options, businesses, and services.

As for traffic, sure, it's a challenge. But avoiding zoning changes won't solve it. By encouraging smart, mixed-use development closer to where people work, shop, and attend services needed for daily living, we can reduce commuting times!

Running a town takes money. And that money has to come from somewhere.

When residents drive out of town to shop, dine, or work elsewhere.....when businesses choose neighboring towns because we've made it too hard to grow or operate here.....we lose. We lose jobs, we lose investment, and most

importantly, we lose revenue that could be funding better schools, better infrastructure and better services right here at home.

Zoning changes are one of the options we have to stop that leakage.

They allow us to: Attract and retain local businesses, support small business growth, and encourage housing options, so people live, work, and spend their money in town, and keep property tax burdens from falling entirely on homeowners by expanding the commercial tax base.

Zoning doesn't mean building recklessly. It means building strategically, in ways that support our local economy, and keep dollars circulating in our own community.

If we want our town to be vibrant, competitive, and financially stable, then we need to make room for smart growth. And that starts with updating our zoning to reflect the economic realities we face.

Let's give people more reasons to live, shop, work, and invest right here, and not in the next towns over.

Let's move forward with confidence, with open minds, and with trust in the leaders we've elected to guide the way. Together, we can ensure our town thrives.....not just today, but for generations to come.

Thank you!



Steven Laplante
2025 President
South Hadley Granby Chamber of Commerce

September 9, 2025

Linda Sachs
193 Woodbridge St.
South Hadley, MA

Planning Board Members
Planning Director Anne Capra
Town of South Hadley
116 Main Street
South Hadley, MA 01075

Re: 202/33 Rezoning Recommendations

Dear Planning Board Members and Planning Director Anne Capra:

Thank you for your efforts to harmonize and improve the zoning of the 202/33 corridor.

I support the stated goals of the rezoning: 1) enabling small scale economic development while maintaining community character; 2) supporting residents' quality of life; 3) creating a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment.

I would like to suggest a few changes to the draft recommendations relating to the Residential Mixed Use Zone to help achieve these goals.

First, I urge you to increase the setbacks to at least 20 feet in the Residential Mixed Use Zone, the same as in the Residential Core. I understand that where there are sidewalks, the setback would be measured from the sidewalk and not the curb. But even that is not enough space and there are many areas along the corridor with no sidewalks.

Economic development is going to worsen the traffic on 202/33. Heavy traffic plus walkers and bicyclist is an unsafe mix. Commercial buildings set back only 10 feet will increase the danger. With only a 10 foot setback, there will be no shade for walkers or bicyclists, nor room to plant trees. Increasing the setback would enhance safety and comfort for pedestrians and create a more visually appealing corridor. I can't think of a reason not to do it.

While the proposed Supplemental Regulations/Development Standards for Multi-Family housing (of more than 3 families) require that rooftop mechanical equipment have screening for sound control, or construction that mitigates equipment noise, there is no such requirement for commercial or residential mixed use buildings that abut homes. This requirement ought to be extended to those buildings and also to ground level mechanical equipment. Why subject a homeowner to preventable noise pollution?

The Supplemental Regulations/ Development Standards also state that for Multi-family buildings, "A "New England style roof line" with pitched roofs, gables or parapets is preferred to flat roofs.

Why not make this roof style mandatory? A preference can be ignored by a builder.

For commercial and residential mixed use buildings there is not even a stated preference regarding flat roofs. So a 45 or 55 foot tall commercial building could have a flat roof and construction of concrete and glass.

I urge you to strengthen the Standards, incorporating some of the elements from the unenforceable Guidelines. Without stronger Standards, the proposed development will not achieve what the Planning Board Chair said it would do when she spoke to the Select Board on September 2nd – support the town goal of maintaining community character.

Lastly, the Supplemental Regulations require that surface parking next to a public sidewalk be screened by a landscaped buffer of sufficient width to allow the healthy establishment of trees, shrubs, and perennials, but no less than 6 (six) feet..."

Why not extend this to side and back parking lots of large commercial and residential mixed use buildings that abut people's residential properties? I think homeowners deserve the same consideration and buffer that you seem to be offering to pedestrians.

Thank you.

Linda Sachs

Route 202&33 corridor

Ryan Kile <rkile33@gmail.com>
To: shplanboard@southhadleyma.gov

Wed, Sep 10, 2025 at 3:14 AM

Good Morning,

I was not able to attend the Planning Board meeting on 9/8/25. I live at 23 Columbia st. This new planning is going to change the complete dynamics of the neighborhood I bought into on March 2025. I do not approve this change and I would like to be heard on this matter.

This is a family neighborhood and your planning is not taking into account the children or families in this neighborhood. This appears to be offering financial investors an opportunity rather so than an improvement for the town of South Hadley.

Please contact me to discuss this further.

Best,
Ryan Kile
Sent from my iPhone

Route 202 & 33 Corridor Re-Zoning

Dan <danobac16@gmail.com>

Thu, Sep 11, 2025 at 11:17 AM

To: "acapra@southhadleyma.gov" <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>, "ccanning@southhadleyma.gov" <ccanning@southhadleyma.gov>, shplanboard@southhadleyma.gov, selectboard@southhadleyma.gov, "jcyr@southhadleyma.gov" <jcyr@southhadleyma.gov>, ncasolari@southhadley.gov, "cconstant@southhadleyma.gov" <cconstant@southhadleyma.gov>, "amiles@southhadleyma.gov" <amiles@southhadleyma.gov>, "rsweeney@southhadleyma.gov" <rsweeney@southhadleyma.gov>, "lwong@southhadleyma.gov" <lwong@southhadleyma.gov>, "kmaher@southhadleyma.gov" <kmaher@southhadleyma.gov>
Cc: Cari Dodge <cmd450@gmail.com>

Daniel T. Dodge & Cari M. Dodge

15 Cornell St South Hadley, MA 01075

Danobac16@gmail.com

413-218-7344

September 11, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the South Hadley Planning Board

c/o Town Council & Board of Selectmen

Town of South Hadley Town Hall

116 Main Street

South Hadley, MA 01075

Subject: Strong Opposition to Residential Core Expansion into our College Streets Neighborhood – September 15th Hearing

Dear Town Planner and Planning Board Members,

Thank you for your time and for holding the continued Zoning Amendment hearing on Monday, September 15, 2025. I am writing to you today to expand upon the points I plan to make during my three minutes of testimony at the upcoming hearing.

During the September 8th hearing, you heard significant community pushback on the proposed zoning amendment, and I urge you to take this feedback to heart. This is especially critical regarding the proposed Residential Core Expansion into our college streets neighborhood. The purpose of our current Residence A-1 district is to "allow residential and compatible uses, including new development that is in character with existing single-family housing." Our neighborhood was established and has been developed under this exact principle.

Our community predates any zoning bylaws and, as Anne Capra noted, is pre-existing non-conforming. Despite this, everything fits together nicely. Changing this zone to the so-called Residential Core District, which is, as you know, simply the Planning Board's new name for the Residential B zone, is damaging to our community. It's notable that your exhibits for this amendment omitted the Residential B Bulk Area Requirements. This omission prevented a direct, side-by-side comparison that would have clearly shown the similarities between the zones.

I must ask: if the board is truly a "caring board," as one member stated, why was there no community dialogue on this for three years? Why was our neighborhood only included in this amendment in June or July? And why were we not given the same respect for community review and guidance as other areas? The sudden inclusion of our neighborhood has forced our

community into a defensive position with no time to act. You've heard our concerns; now, please do the right thing and remove the Residential Core Expansion from the zoning amendment.

Being a former Town of South Hadley, MA Planning Board member and given my 37 years of experience in national and local real estate development, including building single-family homes, group homes, cluster developments, industrial, and government facilities, I have a strong understanding of the potential impacts of loose zoning bylaws. My last 10 years have been spent working on a much smaller scale, right here in South Hadley, and I know all too well how damaging poor zoning can be and how developers can exploit these loopholes.

Please consider removing the Expanded Core Residential Zone from this application. A spot-zoned Residential B character does not fit within our community.

I look forward to speaking with you on Monday the 15th.

Sincerely,

Daniel Dodge
Cari Dodge

On Tue, Aug 26, 2025 at 9:22 AM Dan <danobac16@gmail.com> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]



I am a town meeting member and live at 16 sycamore knolls.

I actively participated in almost all of the planning group exercises. I looked at the town and the rezoning of its 202 and 33 with other town citizens. We listened to each other and discussed our ideas.

I zoomed in to a recent select board meeting and heard about the budget

crisis. I listened to plans for action. Including the urgent need to pass these proposed zoning changes.

I did not hear about finishing incomplete projects like plans for the falls redevelopment or a target date for completing the library project, or when the collapsed brick building will be removed.

I have read comments on line about what ever is being built next door to Rocky's. The comments are not very welcoming or positive.



Changing zoning is one small but important step in making the town attractive to new comers who hopefully would contribute to improved financials. Some pieces that might contribute to fiscal stability are not in the towns control...the ones that are or seem to be to be: include looking at the contract with ledges management and the suggestions made by the current consultant to increase cash flow...improved bus service; families currently need more than one car to access anything, finally , stability in the management of the school system.

Yes these new zoning guidelines are important. However, it is hard to appreciate some of the proposals.

I share three photos to capture my concerns, one from the Mount Holyoke campus to show how a tall building might overshadow a smaller one, i.e. a 55 foot building next to an established home; Riverboat Village-the design is in keeping with the look of South Hadley. The set backs are wide, and there are green spaces and more than one play area, I looked at Loomis communities villas **the newer ones** have minimal frontage but are not facing high use roads.

I believe the town is not sure of its identity and is trying to be all things to all people. This usually doesn't work, As the people said at the planning board meeting last night, they moved to South Hadley to be part of a community. To risk destroying affordable housing, heritage homes, in the hope of attracting business in the future is asking a lot of people.

Also I recommend, if you haven't already, taking a look at the city of Holyoke's office of planning and development. The city merged several related departments under one roof-planning and Development, it seems to consolidate the staff who manage similar issues. I especially like the approach to engaging the city in planning,



Marie Rohan

Members of the South Hadley Planning Board,

I write to you an additional time before reaching out to the Precinct E Town Meeting Members as well as my many neighbors that live in proximity. I can appreciate the work you have done regarding the Route 202 & 33 Corridor; however, by including the neighborhood to the south of Granby Road at such a late time was an overreach in a transparent process that I have been in support of up to this change.

After the September 8th, 2025 meeting, I felt that more research was necessary to understand the change in zoning that is being presented including the reasoning that was offered. The facts that I found were presented in the “Hybrid” Meeting from August 11, 2025, where this area was first presented. It was presented by Anne Capra as an opportunity to satisfy the Town Meeting members with the “affordable” housing that has been requested. At the same time, it was mentioned that perhaps this area since it had not been discussed would be more appropriate for a “Phase Two” project rather than being rolled out during this phase. Discussion ensued which since the meeting was hybrid had absolutely no input from any residents including the property owners of this neighborhood. Of course, why would there be since the agenda for that meeting held an “Open Comment Period” first with “Item 4: Discussion of Route 202/33 Corridor” to follow later in the meeting and a vote to change the zoning map despite as accurately predicted “possible resident backlash” from this late change. All voted in favor. Much was discussed and I do appreciate the thought process that took place even though at times it felt like I was listening to an elected board discuss how to sell the residents on this instead of being openly honest. That honesty being as initially stated; this change to a single-family neighborhood would allow an area to be developed that would allow for more affordable housing within this plan.

I have researched the SouthHadley.org website at nauseum and I have found out more about planning within South Hadley than I ever imagined. This helped me understand the “proposed benefits” to accepting this change; however, I have seen many neighbors directly near me on McDowell, Hickory, and the likes put decent sized additions on and have renovations to update. Perhaps, special permits have been needed but I applaud the use of these special permits and at a cost of a small percentage of building costs these days, I’m in favor of keeping them. It honestly hasn’t seemed to hinder the additions or renovations in the neighborhood, and I feel it allows the town the ability to review, reflect, and alter if need be.

Ultimately, my concern over the past four weeks has shifted and that is that there are many reasons this change would be detrimental to the neighborhood (traffic, infrastructure, safety, property values, spot-zoning, etc.) and those far out way the positives presented.

The shifted reasoning from I'm not a fan to **REJECTING** this proposal so strongly is because the following is true.

The planning board started the Route 202/33 Corridor project approximately five years ago and the only instance that I can find this neighborhood mentioned was within the Final Report from 2022 in the Westover Airforce Base "Airport Proximity and Developmental Potential" portion. All maps, discussions, surveys, and illustrations include property directly on the main corridors and these neighborhoods shaded out. Perhaps there was internal or live discussions regarding this area but from witnessing the entire meeting from August 11th, 2025, it was apparent this neighborhood was **NEVER** a priority. This fact has not allowed any of the property owners time to reflect, converse, and/or weigh-in on all changes whether positive or negative. The rush to add this neighborhood within a **one month's time frame over a five-year period** is a tragic blow to this plan and I believe that it might be the blow that if continued halts this plan from moving forward in town meeting or otherwise. The property owners, towns people, and constituents all had the right to discuss this plan change prior to the August 11th meeting and vote, just as every other part of the plan had been previously discussed in many open forums. So, what is the remedy?

The remedy to this issue is exactly as Ms. Capra stated in her response to my original email on Aug 26th, ***"However, I expect after the 9/8 public hearing to have the proposed "expanded residential core" areas REMOVED from the rezoning proposal."*** This unfortunately never happened as the meeting was continued to September 15th, 2025.

Therefore, on September 15th, please remove this proposal and continue it to "Phase Two" when all those who wish to be heard would have time to make informed arguments and gather all relevant thoughts regarding the positives and negatives and the board could then be properly informed prior to a vote.

Thank you for your time and please consider the above. I believe the proposal from July 28th, 2025, along with the minor changes from August 11th to residences before the reservoir and at the East Street intersection were acceptable minor changes as some were requested from property owners like Pine Grove, Hadley Village and one even in Granby is strong, fair, transparent, and well thought-out. I would support that proposal based on the process.

Brian Morris 14 McDowell Drive, South Hadley, MA 01075