

Implementation Program

Introduction

Implementation – taking the Plan recommendations and translating them into concrete and ongoing actions by the Town, landowners, Commonwealth and local agencies, and individuals – is the ultimate purpose of a Comprehensive Plan. The implementation program is based on the goals and objectives of this Plan and the data that was collected and analyzed. As outlined in the various chapters, implementation requires a concerted community effort which begins with community involvement to manage and assist in implementing the recommendations.

Community was the basis for developing this Plan – the members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and the numerous persons who participated in the dozen community meetings, surveys, and over 50 CPAC or subcommittee meetings formed this Plan. Reflecting this community-based approach to development of this Plan, its implementation is also community-based.

Management of the Implementation Process

Management of the implementation of the Plan is to be provided by the Master Plan Implementation Committee created by the Town Meeting at the May 8, 2010 Annual Town Meeting. To ensure the implementation on a year-to-year basis of these actions, CPAC and the Planning Board recommended creation of a Master Plan Implementation Committee. At the May 8, 2010 Annual Town Meeting, the South Hadley General Bylaws were amended to create such a committee. As stated in the General Bylaws, the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) is “responsible for managing and reporting on the implementation of the Town’s current Master Plan”. To be jointly appointed by the Selectboard and the Planning Board, membership of the MPIC is to “consist of no less than five (5) and no more than nine (9) members to be appointed jointly by the Selectboard and Planning Board. While

specific members are not designated in the General Bylaws, membership is to consist of the following:

- (a) At least five (5) members who are town residents who individually apply for membership on the Committee. Three (3) of these initial appointments shall be from persons who served on the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee.
- (b) Up to four (4) members chosen from nominations submitted by various boards, committees, and commissions and other municipal bodies.

Members are to be appointed to three (3) year terms. However, to provide staggering of the terms, the initial membership will be appointed for 1, 2, or 3 years.

The MPIC’s essential mission is to “keep the plan alive” and to keep the community informed about the efforts and requirements for implementing the Master Plan’s recommendations. Accordingly, at a minimum, the MPIC will need to carry out the following tasks:

- (a) Establish annual and multi-year priorities for implementation of Recommended Actions in the adopted Master Plan.
- (b) Report, at least once per year, to the Selectboard, Planning Board, and Town Meeting regarding progress towards implementation of the Plan.
- (c) Identify and report on issues which have impeded or aided in the implementation of the plan.
- (d) Advise appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and other municipal bodies on resource needs and opportunities which would aid in implementation of the Plan.
- (e) Hold public meetings and forums to obtain community input deemed necessary to carry out the committee’s responsibilities.

Other Community Involvement Opportunities

The Plan Chapters recommended creation of new standing boards, commissions, or committees:¹

- Master Plan Implementation Committee
- Community and Economic Development Commission
- Sustainability and Energy Commission
- Open Space Committee
- Municipal Housing Trust/Housing Partnership
- Fair Housing Committee
- Bicycle Committee

¹ Town Meeting, at its May 8, 2010 Annual Meeting, approved General Bylaw amendments creating the first three of these new commissions/committees as well as expanding the roles of the Historical Commission and the South Hadley Cultural Council.

The Plan also calls for expansion of the roles of several existing Commissions:

- Historical Commission
- South Hadley Cultural Council

Additionally, as the Plan is implemented and new tools are adopted or focused planning initiatives are pursued, such as a Design Review Bylaw and planning for the Commercial Focus Areas, additional neighborhood or community boards or committees will be needed.

This approach vests implementation in the community and does not rely on the Town’s administrative leaders. Accordingly, these new structures will afford opportunities for more involvement in Town government by the residents.

Implementation Tools

While community involvement is the basis for implementation of the Plan recommendations, successful implementation will require a variety of tools including:

- Development/ Adoption of new or revised regulations
- Enhanced communications between the Town and the community
- Creation of new partnerships within the town and between the Town and surrounding communities

Development/Adoption of new or revised tools. This Plan requires new tools for achieve the Vision and Goals. Chief among these tools are:

- Updated/ revised Zoning Bylaw
- Design Review Bylaw
- Dedicated resources for economic development including a professional Economic Development Coordinator
- Long-term 5-6 years, integrated capital improvements plan and programming
- Landscaping Bylaw
- Modern sign regulations
- Creation of local historic district
- Demolition Delay Bylaw
- Overlay zoning districts
- New dedicated sources of funding for economic development, housing, historic preservation, recreation facility development, and open space acquisition and management

Each of these tools will need Town Meeting oversight and approval. Some of these regulatory changes will require affirmative votes by 2/3’s of Town Meeting.

Enhanced communications between the Town and the community. Development of information and new tools is insufficient to achieve community goals. It is vital that communication between the Town government and within the community be enhanced. Throughout the Plan's Recommended Actions, the need for increased use of the Town's website (and expanding its capabilities), linkage to other websites, and expanded use of the Town's community television capabilities were emphasized to provide interactive forums for communication between the Town and the community. A basic element of this effort is distributing information and maps of the community's resources. Of primary consideration in this regard is use of this communication capability to promote economic development.

Creation of new partnerships within the Town and between the Town and surrounding communities. South Hadley needs to draw upon the regional opportunities to implement the Plan Recommendations. These partnerships offer opportunities for developing resources to collect information and obtain funding to implement new/expanded projects.

Implementation Program

The Plan includes over 300 Recommended Actions. Some of these actions relate to the Commissions, Boards, and Committees discussed above. However, to provide structure to the Recommended Actions, the Plan provides an "Implementation Program" beginning with Key FY 2011 Initiatives.

Key FY 2011 Initiatives. Although there are not "Boards" specifically recommended in the Plan for implementing the following three strategies given their sheer size, complexity, and importance, they will clearly warrant significant input from the town's residents and *immediate* action by the town's decision-making bodies. These recommendations are:

- (1) Prepare and adopt a professionally and thoroughly updated zoning bylaw and subdivision regulations.
- (2) Commission the study and development of a set of design standards
- (3) Creation of an Economic Development professional position, as highlighted in the Economic Development chapter, is of critical importance.

In many respects, these three recommendations are considered to be the 'backbone' of the Plan, as most other Plan recommendations are predicated upon the successful implementation of these recommendations. Therefore, it is critical that these strategies be dealt with immediately by the town departments responsible for implementing this component of the Plan.

The implementation program is often the most difficult component of a Comprehensive Plan. Unlike the goals and objectives of the previous sections, here is where “the rubber meets the road,” where the planning ideals are translated into concrete actions. To retain the focus on the need for implementation, it is recommended that measurable achievements be part of the performance review process for those individuals and Boards assigned responsibility for each designated action.

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee was appointed in December of 2007 and through the community outreach and information gathering process, some initiatives were identified early and already acted upon. For example, an Agricultural Commission has been appointed, revitalization of the Falls is a “hot” topic that is being diligently worked on, Falls' business owners and town residents have initiated clean-up and beautification efforts and a community garden has been created, all despite a poor economy. So, in many ways, beautification projects have been undertaken, and more importantly the shaping of South Hadley’s future has already begun. However, this is just the beginning of what needs to be accomplished.

A “Searchable Implementation Program”. In the matrix that follows as an attachment to the Implementation section, the goals, objectives, and recommended actions for each Chapter are listed, along with the principal coordinating responsibility, timeframe, and local supporting agencies, boards, or individuals who are essential to accomplishing the recommended action. The goals and objectives also have been provided to Town as a searchable spreadsheet matrix that can be reorganized and sorted by Plan chapter, responsible entities, type of action (e.g. pedestrian connections, bylaw amendments, etc.) or goal. The Town and its bodies, and citizens groups with a particular interest, can sort the recommended actions in the Plan to reflect a particular topic of concern, such as open space conservation or documenting natural areas. In this way, the Plan’s recommendations can be a more active and living part of the ongoing planning and actions in South Hadley.

Strategies Matrix

Key Responsible Parties

- SCHOOL – South Hadley School Department
- BDG – Building Inspector
- BOA – Board of Assessors
- BOH – Board of Health
- PVPC – Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- PVTA – Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
- COA – Council on Aging
- Con. Comm. – Conservation Commission
- CPA – Community Preservation Act
- DCR – Department of Conservation and Recreation

- DEP - Department of Environmental Protection
- DPW - Department of Public Works
- HIS - Historical Commission
- MHD - Massachusetts Highway Department
- MWRA - Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
- REC - Recreation Commission
- PB - Planning Board
- PD - Private Developers
- SBD - Selectboard
- TIP - Transportation Improvement Program
- TAX - Treasurer/Town Clerk
- TM - Town Meeting

