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## Municipal Services & Facilities

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### Introduction

South Hadley's municipal 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 services and facilities chapter 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 services and facilities for the Town, and the Plan's recommendations for future investments and directions, is a function of three important factors:

- The structure, size, and capabilities of the community's local government, fire districts, 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.

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## Identification of Issues

A series of events and outreach efforts, including public gatherings, interviews, and surveys, were undertaken to gain input into the major concerns regarding the provision of municipal services and quality of facilities in South Hadley. Through these efforts, residents, CPAC, consultant team members, and Town staff identified the major municipal service and facility issues for this Plan.

- Fire Districts and their associated water departments
- Municipal buildings including the library and senior center
- Public Safety
- Schools buildings and the School System
- Tax rates
- Town Hall (operations and facility)

In identifying and discussing the foregoing issues, residents and officials also voiced opinions as to the need to consider potential changes in the form of government and government operations. During the course of developing this plan, residents and citizen committees discussed and voted on potential merger of fire districts and transforming the form of government from a Town Meeting-Selectboard structure to a City Council-Mayoral form. The proposed changes were rejected in each case. However, rejection of the proposed changes does not mean further revisions in the structure and operations of the municipal form of governance are not needed.

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## Goals

<b>MSF-1</b>	<b>Utilize the Plan's guiding principles as the primary standards of governance.</b>
<b>MSF-2</b>	<b>Formalize the Town's commitment to sustainability principles.</b>
<b>MSF-3</b>	<b>Coordinate community facilities planning, maintenance, and management across all municipal boards, agencies, departments, and commission.</b>
<b>MSF-4</b>	<b>The delivery of efficient, reliable and environmentally sound public services.</b>
<b>MSF-5</b>	<b>Enhance delivery and management of municipal services through expanded and coordinated communications.</b>

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## 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. 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, 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.

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## Form of Government

South Hadley, for the most part, follows the tradition of decentralized government that exists in a majority of the Commonwealth's towns. Its executive branch consists of a five-member Selectboard and appointed Town Administrator as well as other elected boards and officers including the Town Clerk/Treasurer, Tax Collector, Board of Health, Board of Assessors, and Planning Board. 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, wastewater and other departments into a Department of Public Works has helped the government to operate more efficiently.

Transformation of the form of government has been a matter of concern and debate for a number of years. Much, but not all, of the debate and changes have centered around Town Meeting.

Changing the form of government requires a Charter Commission. In 2008, a Charter Commission was created and subsequently proposed changing the form of government to a Mayor-Council. This proposed charter was defeated in a referendum in 2009. Subsequently, efforts have focused on improving Town Meeting. As a result of a committee created to review Town Meeting, the May 2010 Annual Town Meeting approved the following Warrant Articles to make further changes in regard to the structure and/or operation of Town Meeting:

- ARTICLE 49. Amended the Town's General By-Law by adding a section creating a Town Meeting Electronic Advisory Committee for the purpose of implementing ways and means to ensure that electronic communications to Town Meeting Members is effective and efficient and in general to assist in preparing Town Meeting Members with information that will aid them in carrying out their duties as elected Town Meeting Members.
- ARTICLE 50. Amended the Town's General By-Laws by adding a section which requires each board, committee or commission as defined The Open Meeting Law to post its meeting minutes as soon

as practicable next following the adjournment of their meeting on the Town's website.

- ARTICLE 52. Amended the Town's General By-laws by a section creating a Town Meeting Ad-hoc Review Committee every five years to make recommendations regarding ways and means to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of Town Meeting.
- ARTICLE 53. Authorized the Selectboard to petition the General Court to eliminate the designation and office of all Town Meeting members ex officio with the exception of the Town Moderator.

South Hadley's Town Hall once served as a school, but today, provides administrative offices for much of the Town government. Town Hall, situated on Main Street in South Hadley Falls, currently houses the offices of the Town Administrator, Town Clerk/Treasurer, Tax Collector, Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Building Commissioner, Accounting Department, Information Technology Department, Human Resources and Procurement, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Veteran's Services, and Recreation Commission. The School Department's central offices, including the Office of the Superintendent, Business Office, and Director of Special Education, are also located in the Town Hall. Within easy walking distance of Town Hall are the police station, offices and warehouse for the South Hadley Electric Light Department, and the municipal library.

Town Hall is a stately building. Over the years, it has been converted from a school to its present use. It provides some small meeting spaces for various boards and committees as well as an auditorium which is used for some recreational programs as well as public hearings and the Annual and Special Town Meetings. Due to its age and conversion from its original uses, the building needs some significant upgrading and improvements. Some of these improvements relate to the change in the role of technology while others, such as window replacement are needed to maintain the effectiveness of the building and its energy efficiency and comfort. Town Hall requires additional study to fully define a scope of work for operational improvements and building preservation.

Other municipal facilities are located in several locations. The Council on Aging offices and services are located in the Senior Center on Dayton Street across from the Big Y shopping center on Newton Street. Originally constructed as the Woodlawn School in 1924 with an addition in 1956, it was converted to its current use in 1982. Interior renovations were made in 1997 using Community Development Block Grant funds. However, the roof structure is presently leaking and an architect has been retained to develop plans for replacing the roof.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) administrative offices and garage are located on Industrial Drive adjoining the Town's landfill. Other divisions of the department are located in satellite locations. The Parks Division operates out of a facility off Lincoln Avenue while the wastewater treatment division is located in the wastewater treatment plant off James Street in Chicopee.

Fire District Two and its water department are located in the district's fire station facility on Woodbridge Street. Fire District One is located in the district's station on

Newton Street while its water department and associated garage are located on Granby Road adjoining the former Leaping Well Reservoir.

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## Municipal Finance

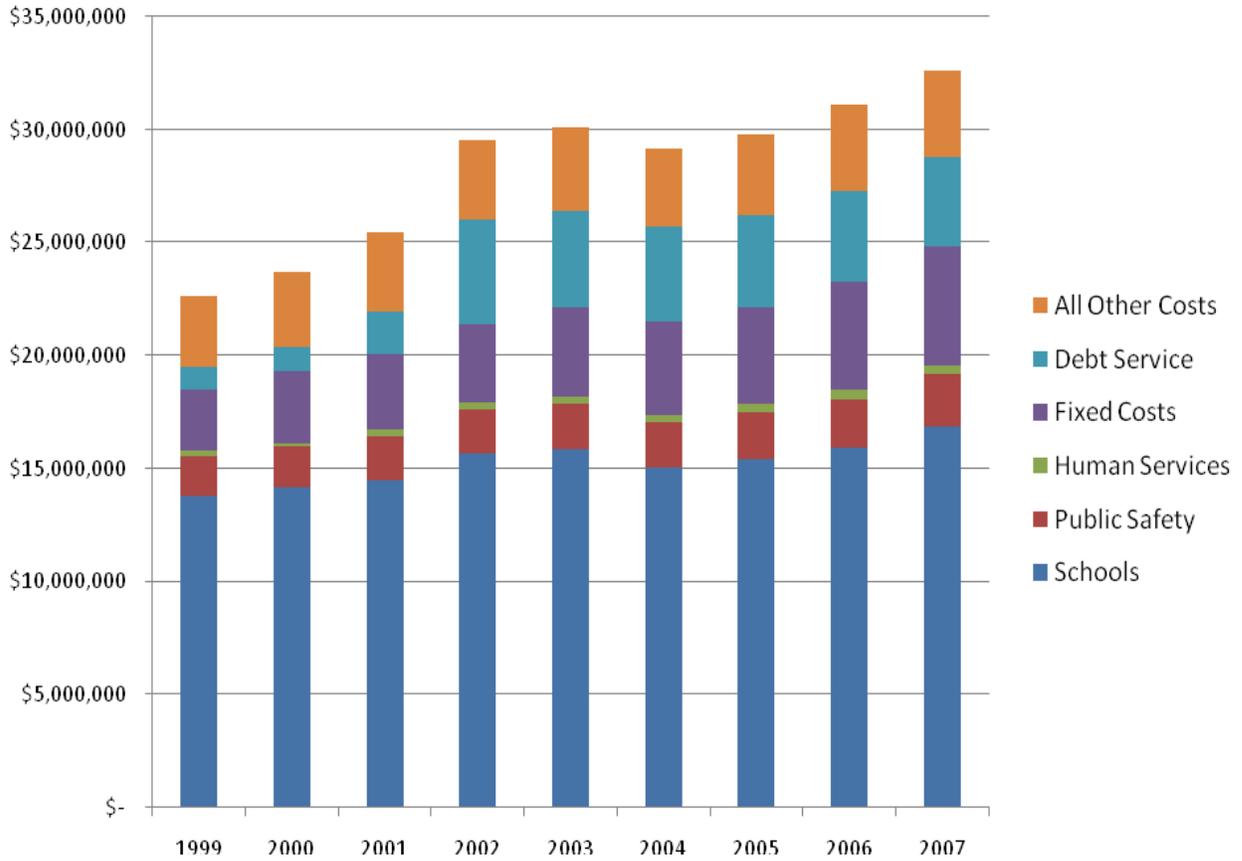
South Hadley pays for community services with property taxes, state aid, fee-based revenues such as motor vehicle excise taxes, licenses, and permit fees, and available reserves. The same sources form the backbone of local government finance throughout the Commonwealth, yet communities differ in their 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

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 3-1, the most noticeable increases have occurred in debt service (principally the school improvement projects and the Ledges Golf Course) and fixed costs, such as employee health insurance and general liability insurance.



<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), "General Fund Revenue," 2000-2007, and "Revenues by Source," 1981-2008.

**Chart 3-1**  
**General Fund Expenditures, 1999-2007**



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

**Table 3-1**  
**Tax Rate 2008**  
**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

Note: the South Hadley tax rate does not include the tax rates of the Fire Districts

South Hadley’s tax rate has varied from year to year. The 2010 rate is 13.99 per \$1,000 which is 16 percent below the 2000 rate. During this same ten year period, the rate has varied from a low of 11.85 in 2007 to a high of 17.86 in 2002. 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 3-1). It is important to note, however, that the South Hadley tax rate in Table 3-1 does not include the levies for fire services. Fire protection service levies are different for the two Districts in town. Fire rates have risen reflecting the services required for a developing 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. 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 3-2). 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 3-2**  
**South Hadley’s Municipal Services**

<b>Administration &amp; Finance</b>	<b>Public Safety</b>	<b>Public Works</b>
Selectboard	Police	Highway
Town Clerk/Treasurer	<i>Fire / Ambulance<sup>1</sup></i>	Engineering
Assessor	Emergency Management	Parks and Athletic Fields
Collector’s Office	Building Inspector	Water Pollution Control Division
Human Resources	Plumbing Inspector	Solid Waste Division
Information Technology	Electrical Inspector	Waste Water Treatment Plant
		<i>Water Supply<sup>1</sup></i>
		SHELD
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Human Services</b>	<b>Culture &amp; Recreation</b>
Planning	Board of Health	Public Library
Conservation	Council on Aging	Recreation
Zoning	Veteran Services	Historical Commission
Agricultural	<b>Education</b>	Cable Studio
	Schools	

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

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

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 fire districts, independent of the Town; these are overseen by Prudential Boards for each district. Within each fire District, the Board of Water Commissioners oversees and operates the respective district’s water services.

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## Education

The quality of education in South Hadley has consistently received accolades. 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).<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the Superintendent indicates that the Schools continue to face challenges to provide the service, technology, arts and athletic programs that are essential to a well-rounded, modern education. Quality of the 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 insufficient reading and mathematics competencies 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.

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.

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## 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.



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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

South Hadley is structured as local school system governed 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 3-3, 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 3-3  
Public School Facilities**

School	Grade Configuration	# Teachers	# Staff <sup>2</sup>	# Support <sup>3</sup>	Enrollment
Plains School	Grades PreK-1	33 (27) <sup>1</sup>	3	7	378
Mosier School	Grades 2-4	45 (29) <sup>1</sup>	4	13	472
Michael E. Smith Middle School	Grades 5-8	60 (25) <sup>1</sup>	7	15	703
South Hadley High School	Grades 9-12	71 (14) <sup>1</sup>	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. 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. At the request of the MSBA South Hadley prioritized its needs and submitted the Statement of Interest for replacement of Plains School, which was determined to have the greatest need. 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, 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. Given the size of the building, the school administration strives to maintain the desired class sizes. Even a small increase in the student population would exacerbate the overcrowding. No further building 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 in order to replace the Plains School.

A portion of the property at the Toth site has also been identified as an opportunity to provide new affordable housing, 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 Board, 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.

#### 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 chapters 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](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](http://www.pvpc.org/val_vision/html/toolbox/SmartGrowthStrategy.html).

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## School Faculty

Nearly all (98%) of South Hadley's teachers are licensed in their teaching assignments. Ninety-six percent of core academic classes are taught by highly-

qualified teachers. Both of these statistics are slightly higher than Massachusetts as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

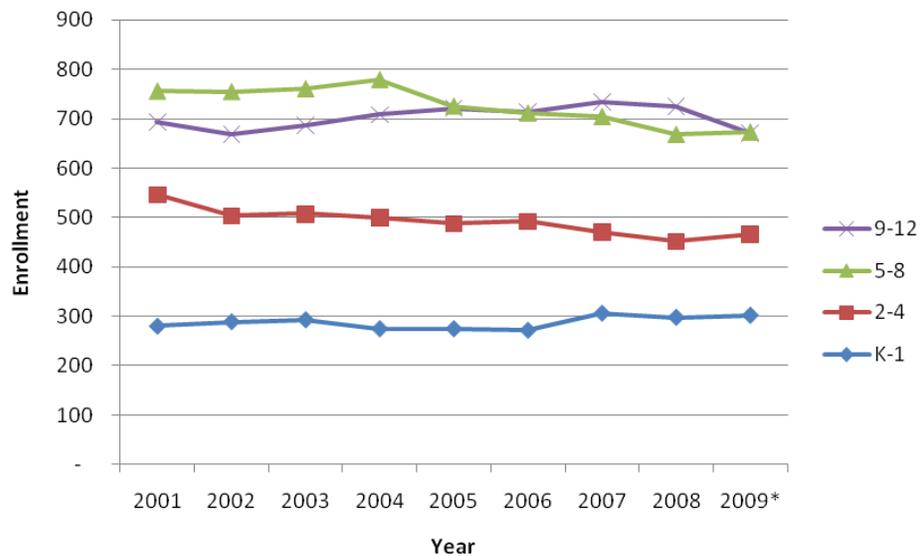
The student-to-teacher ratio in Town (13.8 to 1) is only slightly higher than the state (13.6 to 1). While the student-to-teacher ratio looks adequate when summarized across the grades, population spikes may lead to an inadequate ratio as those students pass through the grades. In addition to the core academic classes, the School District also offers: graphic communications, horticulture, carpentry, exploratory, culinary arts, and fashion technology. The faculty decreased by 6 members over the past year. As described under “Programs”, 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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## Enrollment and Class Size

South Hadley’s current (2009-2010) student population is approximately 2,148 students (including Pre-Kindergarten). The schools have seen a slight decline in population each year for the past several years, as shown in Chart 3-2. Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) projections anticipate a gradual increase over the next 10-15 years.

**Chart 3-2**  
Public School Enrollment, 2001-2009



Source: South Hadley Public School Department (Superintendent Gus Sayer, October 10, 2008)

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



<sup>3</sup> 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.

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.<sup>4</sup> 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. The shifting school population does cause some crowding in the elementary schools. The middle and high schools are believed to be sufficient to accommodate the school population for the next 15-20 years.

As indicated in Table 3-4, South Hadley’s performance generally is consistent with performance measures statewide. 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.

Student retention is of prime importance to the Town and the School Department. 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.

**Table 3-4**  
**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
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.

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 (31%) plan to attend a two-year public college. The remaining graduating

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<sup>4</sup> Email correspondence with Dr. Gus Sayer, October 17, 2008.

seniors plan to enter the workforce (5%), attend another post-secondary institution (3%), or enroll in the military (3%).<sup>5</sup>

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## Programs

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. In their report *South Hadley Improvement Plan, The SHIP of State*,<sup>6</sup> 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

In his interview with 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.<sup>7</sup> Alternative programs within the School District provide other options for students who struggle in traditional learning environments, lessen the need to send students to private special education schools, and can reduce the dropout rate.

The School District attempted to introduce a “Twilight” alternative program in the 2008-2009 school year as a step towards addressing the drop out rate. However, since students were not interested in later hours for school, the School District implemented a new school day Alternative Program in 2009-2010. This new program is also designed to support students who would otherwise be likely candidates for dropping out. During its first year, this new program has eight (8) students enrolled.

- Foreign languages are increasingly being introduced to younger students. South Hadley does not have a foreign language program below Grade 8. A Chinese

**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.

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<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education School Profiles at [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles\\_for\\_2006-07](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles_for_2006-07). The remaining 3% is noted as “other.”

<sup>6</sup> Source: *South Hadley Improvement Plan, The SHIP of State*, 2007-08 at Town of South Hadley Public School Department website.

<sup>7</sup> Email correspondence from Dr. Gus Sayer, Superintendent of Schools, October 17, 20008.

instruction program was introduced in Grade 6 during the 2009-2010 school year with plans to expand it to Grade 7 in 2010-2011. A Chinese Club was introduced in 2009-2010 at Mosier Elementary School as an “after school” program. Instituting such programs 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 at the high school.<sup>8</sup>
- According to the superintendent, students are not reading as well as they should. In the past four years South Hadley students' performance on the English Language Arts MCAS have improved at the elementary and high school levels and remained constant at the middle school level. While there is still debate as to whether these tests accurately capture the performance of the school system, striving to improve the reading abilities of its students remains a worthy goal. Generally, the school district ranks at or above State Averages for English Language Arts and for Mathematics.

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 education, as well as offering comprehensive professional development for educators.<sup>9</sup> The South Hadley School District is a member of HEC.

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## Early Childhood Development Resources

The State presently has a Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Pilot Program through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care 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



<sup>8</sup> Superintendent's FY2009 Budget Message, South Hadley Public Schools. January 30, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.collaborative.org/content/view/135/121/>, accessed on October 29, 2008.

six years of age and their caregivers. This is done through playgroups, social activities, and educational programs.

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## School Choice<sup>10</sup>

The School Choice Program provides an opportunity for students to attend school in a district different from the one in which they reside. The receiving district can limit the number of students allowed to use this program. One-hundred forty (140) students are enrolled in South Hadley through this program – the limit set by the South Hadley School Committee. With a payment of \$5,000 per student for tuition (plus some reimbursement for special needs expenses), at the current enrollment level, the School Department typically receives approximately \$800,000 per year in tuition. By comparison, the average cost per School Choice student in South Hadley schools is estimated at approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000. The Schools do not have to provide transportation for School Choice students and if a student requires Special Education services, the School District is reimbursed for those additional costs. While there are other costs associated with education (administration, nursing, library services, etc.), the school administration has determined that the schools do not incur additional costs associated with these functions as a result of the School Choice students' enrollment.

Most of the school choice students come from Chicopee and Holyoke. The establishment of a Charter School in Holyoke and the new high schools in Chicopee may reduce enrollments in South Hadley in the future.

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 over 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 Performing Arts School, the Holyoke Charter School, and the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion School, 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; and determined that they include

- family relationships
- smaller, more supportive environments
- previously began school in the other district and wish to complete there
- conflicts with other students in South Hadley.

**Revenue Analysis.** 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. Reductions in School Choice revenue, combined with the



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<sup>10</sup> Superintendent's FY2009 Budget Message, South Hadley Public Schools, January 30, 2008 and CPAC conversation with Superintendent Gus Sayer on June 11, 2008.

additional cost for more students leaving the District, would adversely impact the School's and the Town's General budgets.

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## 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.

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## 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 School**<sup>11</sup> 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 Center** at Stony Brook<sup>12</sup> is a community early education and care program located on the campus of Mount Holyoke College and includes 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 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.



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<sup>11</sup> Information obtained from [www.canalvillageschool.com](http://www.canalvillageschool.com) on October 14, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Information obtained from [www.stoneybrookchildrenscenter.org](http://www.stoneybrookchildrenscenter.org) on October 14, 2008 and <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/gorse/experiences.html> on October 23, 2008.

The **Horizon School**<sup>13</sup> on Carew Street provides pre-school, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten day care/education for approximately 30 students.

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## Community Services

South Hadley hosts 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 Mount 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.

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### Libraries<sup>14</sup>

South Hadley has two libraries, the municipal Public Library located in the Falls, and independent Gaylord Library near the Town Common across from the main entrance to 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.

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.



<sup>13</sup> Information obtained from <http://www.eschoolsearch.com/index.cfm?action=showdetail&id=20543> on October 23, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, 2006/2007 Grant Round, Planning & Design Application prepared by Joseph Rodio, Library Director

**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 Library obtained a \$40,000 Planning & Design Grant from the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, (which required \$20,000 in matching funds). With receipt of these funds, the Library formed a Library Study Committee (LSC), prepared a twenty-year need projection, and initiated the process for designing an expanded or new library facility. The Library has retained an architect who will advise the Library Board of Trustees on whether to expand the existing facility or construct a new facility during 2010. Applications to the State Library Construction Program are only accepted every 5 years and the next application deadline is January 2010.

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. 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. There is 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."<sup>15</sup>*

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 issues, including addressing floodplain requirements pose challenges to locating facilities on Main Street. Among the ideas which have been offered is designing a facility that would sit over a parking garage at ground level with integrated access for persons with disabilities and public landscaping chapter.<sup>16</sup>

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 public functions in the Falls is especially important. There is a historical neighborhood tie between the Library and the Falls. Regardless of where the future library is ultimately sited, public transportation access will need to be assured.

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## 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+ age group 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. Services provided by the Council on Aging staff of four full-time and many part-time employees include Education/health programs/recreation, ElderCare Nutrition (e.g. Meals on Wheels, onsite meals, etc.), transportation, outreach, transportation, and a community nurse. Future goals for the Council on Aging are to include supportive day care services for elders and develop a more modern Senior Center.

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 the former Woodlawn 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:



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<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, 2006/2007 Grant Round, Planning & Design Application prepared by Joseph Rodio, Library Director

<sup>16</sup> CPAC Issues Gathering Notes

- 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.

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## 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 Master Plan principles are especially important to this area of municipal services.

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### Police<sup>17</sup>

The Town of South Hadley maintains its own Police Department, which employs 27 officers and 4 dispatchers and is responsible for primary public safety throughout the Town. While the Town no longer provides ambulance/emergency medical services, all officers are certified as first responders and in the use of Automated External Defibrillators.

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 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 South Hadley Police Log is a sampling of weekly police reports in 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




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<sup>17</sup> South Hadley Annual Report FY07.

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 inadequate system helps to build 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.

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## Fire Protection and Ambulance Services

Fire protection and ambulance/emergency medical services, are 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).

Financial Advisory Associates were engaged for the purpose of an evaluation and recommendation on a conceptual merger between all or a portion of the functions within the two fire Districts. In this report, the consultants reported that the level of spending for fire services in the community is not outside of the norm, but the level of spending on police was below the norm. While Financial Advisory Associates did not find a single compelling economic reason for merging the fire Districts, their report made a finding “that the merged fire departments will generate a synergy that will make the whole much greater than the parts”. Similarly, the report also states “that the synergy created by the merged water utilities could be substantial”.<sup>18</sup>

Municipal Resources, Inc’s 2007 report provided an analysis of possible options for delivery of ambulance service and a recommended strategy for implementation of a new structure for delivery of ambulance services. The 2007 report also noted that the long term cooperative relationship between the districts appeared to be strained.<sup>19</sup>

On June 12, 2008, the Prudential Committee and the Water Commission of District #2 voted to support efforts toward a merger. On April 27, 2009, the voters of Fire District No. 1 and their annual meeting voted against the merger of the two fire Districts.

There are varied opinions on whether or not to merge the two entities. However, 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.

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## Facilities and Equipment

### Fire District #1

Fire District #1 serves the southern half of town, including South Hadley Falls. The District #1 Fire Station, located at 144 Newton Street, was built in 1984 and is in good condition. The facility is maintained adequately. 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 21 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 acquired a new pump engine in November of 2009. Fire District #1 purchased two ambulances and acquired another of the Town’s

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<sup>18</sup> South Hadley Fire Districts Merger Study, Financial Advisory Associates, Inc., May 16, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Study on Conceptual Plan for Ambulance Services, Municipal Resources, Inc. 2007.

ambulances and added new staff, as the District recently took over ambulance operations from the Town (discussed below).

## Fire District #2

Fire District #2 serves the northern half of town, areas of Granby, and Mount Holyoke College. 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 growing needs of the district. 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) which may require replacement in the next decade. The pumpers are anticipated to require replacement in 2016 and 2022, respectively while the rescue vehicle is anticipated to require replacement in 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). In 2009 the District was awarded a grant to purchase self-contained breathing apparatus.

Fire District #2's Fire Station is located at 20 Woodbridge Street. Recently, in response to Town-wide growth that 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 and storage space. Additionally the Department continues to annually upgrade their facility, equipment and systems including the purchase of a generator to service the communications system for police and fire.

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## Water Supply

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 Quabbin Reservoir. Residents (including Mount Holyoke College) are supplied water by Fire District #2 from the Dry Brook wells. 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. Funding for the public water supply function of the Fire Districts is through a separate enterprise fund entirely funded by water receipts.

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 the State requirements and can be more stringent.

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

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## Fire District #1 – Water Services

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”.<sup>20</sup> 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 Alvord 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.

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## Fire District #2– Water Services

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).



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<sup>20</sup> CPAC interview with Jeffrey Cyr, Water Superintendent, Fire District #1 and Bill Selkirk, Water Superintendent, Fire District #2 on May 14, 2008.

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.

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## Wastewater Treatment System<sup>21,22</sup>

The Department of Public Works manages the South Hadley wastewater collection system and treatment plant. The major components of the wastewater collection 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.

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 296 in neighboring Chicopee and 328 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. A \$4,200,000 treatment plant upgrade was recently completed. The project focused on the replacement and repair of old equipment, but did not increase plant capacity. The plant's estimated excess capacity is 1.7 million gallons. If 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 Alvord 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 Alvord 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

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<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

wishing to repeat the development boom which followed the Alvord 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.

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## Issues and Needs

Two major concerns regarding the wastewater treatment system include:

### Age of the System

The age of South Hadley's wastewater collection system is a critical issue that will continue to occupy the Department of Public Works' time and money in the coming years as it continues to upgrade and replace components at risk of failure. Older sewer mains and joints are prone to leaks and root damage. Concerns include pipes settlement, root infiltration, deterioration, and other issues attributable to the age of the system.

### Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO)

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) involve the combined use of sanitary sewers for stormwater collection and discharge. These were common during the early 1900's but became major sources of river pollution due to the discharge of untreated or improperly treated sewage. Consequently, communities are required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to separate the two systems.

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 BATTERY Brook and Stony Brook.
- \$59,000 of drainage improvements on Hillside Avenue, including a stormceptor installation.

In December of 2009, the Town capped its last CSO. Since there are no more active CSOs, the Town anticipates no future problems and no additional fines.

### Infiltration/Inflow<sup>23</sup>

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 can disrupt the operation of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The I/I can produce flows greater than the plant is designed or permitted to handle. This can result in



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<sup>23</sup> 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.

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).

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 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.<sup>24</sup> Another solution the Town should explore is lining the inside of the five interceptor sewers to prevent infiltration and unnecessarily treating more clean water.<sup>25</sup>

#### 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 improvements<sup>26</sup>

#### 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](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.



<sup>24</sup> CPAC interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent and Yem Lip, Town Engineer on April 2, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> CPAC interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent and Yem Lip, Town Engineer on April 2, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> NOTE: DPW Superintendent unable to confirm this fact; VHB will follow up with Town Treasurer.

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## Solid Waste and Recycling

While waste disposal is certainly far from glamorous, it is an essential service provided by the Town. The major components of the Town's Solid Waste Program include the curbside collection, Recycling Center, and Landfill. These services are all managed by the Department of Public Works. These critical elements of the community infrastructure have the potential to produce increases in revenues from taxes and fees.

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### 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 DPW oversees the Town-owned landfill located at 12 Industrial Drive, which has been managed by Interstate Waste Services (IWS) since 2003. The landfill is permitted to take up to 156,000 tons of waste per year. South Hadley contributes approximately 7,500 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.<sup>27</sup> The Town pays the landfill's lowest rate for municipal solid waste (currently 3 \$48 per ton) for all tonnage over the 4,000 ton limit, or approximately \$168,000 per year, to the landfill contractor. This overage equates to approximately 1.12 pounds of trash per resident, per day.

The active landfill today reflects modern construction methods and operates in compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations designed to be protective of human health and the environment. The Town's Board of Health continues to monitor the landfill and surrounding area to help ensure acceptable levels of air quality and minimal overall environmental impact. With anticipated construction of a vertical expansion on a portion of the existing cells, the present landfill is scheduled to be able to continue to operate through June 2014. Options to further expand horizontally and increase the capacity of the landfill are being explored by the Town. One such option would extend the landfill's life as much as 10 additional years.

The Department of Environmental Protection recently approved the construction of Cell 2C, a vertical expansion within the landfill's current footprint. Once this cell becomes operational, the terms of the new landfill operation agreement take effect. The new agreement increases the Town's free tonnage to 8,000 tons per year and significantly increases the Town's host fees.

The Selectboard appointed a Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) in 2007 to study options available to the Town if the landfill closes.

Formerly part of the Bynan property, the landfill property was acquired under a Self-Help grant in 1978. The grant and Town Meeting actions set aside 101 acres for conservation land and 40 acres for landfill expansion; however, 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

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<sup>27</sup> Phone interview with Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent on October 27, 2008

expensive and complex undertaking, a principal reason the Town decided to hire a private company to develop and operate the landfill.

The SWAC is also looking at a Pay-As-You-Throw trash billing policy, which would replace the fixed fee (per person) system that is currently in place. The current policy provides little incentive for residents to recycle.<sup>28</sup> 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 recently signed a new contract which allows the company to seek approval for the landfill expansion and increases the host benefits for the Town and taxpayers.

Community survey findings and public meetings indicate that taxpayers perceive the present landfill contract to be unfavorable to 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.<sup>29</sup>

Intermittent odors continued in the area of the landfill throughout 2007. 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 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.



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

<sup>29</sup> *Granby Master Plan* (2008) prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, last accessed at [http://www.pvpc.org/granby/docs/Draft\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.pvpc.org/granby/docs/Draft_Plan_FINAL.pdf) on October 16, 2008.

## 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 renegotiated their contract with Waste Management in 2009.

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](http://www.pvpc.org/granby/docs/Draft_Plan_FINAL.pdf) on October 16, 2008.

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## Recycling

Since 1989, South Hadley General 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.

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## South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD)

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### SHELD's History and Operations

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. 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.

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## 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. With the recent completion of the new substation and the Library seeking alternative locations for a new library facility, the SHELD Board of Commissioners began the process of developing the architectural planning for a new facility.

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.

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## Five-College Fiber Optic Network

Five-College Network is a collaboration of Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. To enhance services to the College students, the Five College Network established a fiber optic network linking all five of the institutions to the main communications hub located at One Federal Street in Springfield. The system has a very high level, state of the art bandwidth. In South Hadley, Five-College Network contracted with SHELD to install the South Hadley portion of the system which was completed in 2008. Under the installation agreement, SHELD retained use of a portion of the fiber and provided "drops" at various municipal buildings.

The network installed by SHELD provides the basic structure for a town-wide fiber optic system. SHELD cannot use electric rate payer funds for installation or

operation of non-electric services. Therefore, the fiber optic system will need to be self-sustaining. Due to the quality of the fiber and its connection to One Federal, this system has the potential of providing state of the art data and voice communication services.

Communities, such the City of Holyoke, are effectively utilizing this quality of fiber optic in their economic development efforts. Thus, the Five-College Network system through South Hadley affords the community a unique opportunity to capitalize on the high level of bandwidth built into the network.

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## Public Meeting Facilities

South Hadley has a participatory form of government which extends beyond the representative Town Meeting and the various independently elected officials and boards. Local government is invigorated by an involved citizenry serving on its numerous boards and commissions. As this plan was developed, different subcommittees noted the need for further committees and commissions.

Active citizen involvement requires meeting facilities. The Open Space and Recreation Chapter noted that the schools, Police Station, Library, Town Hall, Senior Center, and Fire District 1 and 2 buildings offer indoor public meeting space. Many of these spaces were used for various meetings in developing this plan.

While South Hadley has a number of meeting facilities, the comments received during the public involvement process (including the surveys) demonstrated that there is a lack of awareness of the spaces available for community meetings. For example, few people indicated they were aware of the indoor public meeting spaces at the Police Station, library, or the fire districts' buildings. To alleviate the expense of construction of new public meeting spaces, the community can make better utilization of the existing spaces.

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## Public Facilities Analysis

South Hadley, like many communities, has substantial facilities needs. As previously described in this chapter, 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 (see Table 3-6). A town-wide strategy promoting good facility planning utilizing sustainable technology and efficiency can prepare the community for technology upgrades and maintenance needs. This type of planning will help the Town avoid problems such as those encountered at the Police Station, where a relatively new facility does not perform at an appropriate standard.

**Table 3-6  
Condition and Needs of Municipal Facilities**

	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Needs</b>
Town Hall	1913	116 Main Street	Inadequate to meet the needs of the Town	Renovation of interior spaces; Accommodation of technology; Maintenance, masonry
Council on Aging / Senior Center	1924 - addition in 1956	45 Dayton Street	Renovated in 1998; Meets basic needs but space could be improved and/or expanded	Roof, Significant maintenance and repairs, including attention to graffiti on outdoor playground; possible relocation
Public Library	1906	27 Bardwell Street South Hadley Falls	Inadequate to meet the needs of the Town	Design and Site Selection Study underway for new facility
Waste Water Treatment Plant (5 buildings)	1959 and 1979	2 James Street, Chicopee	Good Condition; Capacity upgrade currently underway	Boiler needs upgrade
Police Department	1994	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
Water Department (District #1 – Administrative Office)	1988	Granby Road	Good	None
Water Department District #1 – Maintenance Facility	1963 - addition in 1979	Granby Road	Good	None
Fire Station / Water Department (District #2)	1963 - addition in 2006	20 Woodbridge Street	Recently renovated	Additional space needs were not met in recent upgrade due to cost concerns
Department of Public Works Offices	1973	10 Industrial Drive	Adequate	None
Department of Public Works Barn		28 Lincoln Street	Fair Condition	Building needs upgrading
Department of Public Works Maintenance Buildings	1970's	Buttery Brook Park	Adequate Condition	May relocate Parks Department to this site
Plains School (PreK-1)	1930 – been remodeled	Granby Road	Inadequate to meet the needs of the Town	Planning Study underway for new facility
Mosier School (2-4)	1965 – been remodeled	101 Mosier Street	Inadequate to meet the needs of the Town	Renovation needed
Michael E. Smith Middle School	1960 – remodeled in 1996	100 Mosier Street	Good Condition; Recently upgraded	Maintenance Plan
South Hadley High School	1955 – remodeled in 1997	153 Newton Street	Good Condition; Recently upgraded	Maintenance Plan
SHELD – Offices, Garage, & Warehouse	1923 – 1 <sup>st</sup> floor 1941 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor 1968 – Garage & Warehouse	Main Street	Okay	Does not meet commercial building code.

Source: South Hadley Planning Board, April 2010.

At present, maintenance of the school facilities is centrally coordinated. However, maintenance of the non-school facilities is left to the department occupying the building and the case of Town Hall, left to the Town Administrator and a custodian. The breadth of facility upkeep and improvement needs in town highlights the need for a coordinated and well funded Facilities Maintenance Plan. Implementation of such a plan will require employment of town personnel devoted to overseeing facility maintenance, coordinated with the school maintenance personnel.

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## Why the Plan's Guiding Principles are Central to Municipal Services and Facilities

The Plan Principles as described in the Introduction and Vision Chapter apply to the entire Plan. However, as the area of Municipal Services and Facilities involves the bulk of the Town's major investment decisions (i.e., construction of a new library, a new school, rehabilitation and/or replacement of the senior center, sewer infrastructure, etc.), it is therefore important to emphasize what citizens requested of the Town in carrying out such important tasks. Throughout the public engagement process, members of this community continually reiterated that town business be conducted with the following in mind:

1. *Managing Towards a Vision* . . . a clear vision and plan which promotes efficiency and budgets towards desired outcomes;
2. *Communications* . . . effective communication and collaboration with the public and among Town departments;
3. *Sustainability* . . . a sustainability mind set on all issues (ranging from energy use and construction to purchasing and water usage) so that addressing our present needs does not jeopardize our ability to provide for future generations, and
4. *Leading by Example* . . . leading by example (via the Selectboard and all municipal institutions) by using these Plan Principles by which to govern.

Given that these principles are the backbone of this Plan, it is crucial that they be taken seriously and formally adopted as “practical ways of doing business” by all elements of municipal government. While it is easy to agree with such sensible principles, it is also easy to continue to do business as usual unless leadership is employed and protocols are developed to insure consideration of the principles at each step in the process of investment, decision, planning and implementation. It is strongly suggested that the governing boards devote time to determine how these principles will be more consciously and routinely addressed at every stage in conducting the Town’s business. One approach would be to assure that appropriate questions are systematically asked and answered prior to decision-making. Examples of such questions are as follows:

- What is your vision for your department? Is it consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan? How does this project help the Town address your vision and the overarching goals of the Comprehensive Plan?
- What are the opportunities for better cooperation and collaboration with other Town entities to better achieve this particular outcome?
- What are the options to reduce energy consumption in the project and how are we achieving that goal?
- How are we promoting “green” in our purchasing of supplies and materials?
- What are the life cycle costs for this particular project?
- What do citizens need to know and understand so that they can cooperate with what you are trying to do? What is your plan for communicating with them?

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## Municipal Services and Facilities Goals

MSF-1	<b>Utilize the Plan's guiding principles as the primary standards of governance.</b>
MSF-2	<b>Formalize the Town’s commitment to sustainability principles.</b>
MSF-3	<b>Coordinate community facilities planning, maintenance, and management across all municipal boards, agencies, departments, and commission.</b>
MSF-4	<b>The delivery of efficient, reliable and environmentally sound public services.</b>
MSF-5	<b>Enhance delivery and management of municipal services through expanded and coordinated communications.</b>

### **MSF-1 Utilize the Plan's guiding principles as the primary standards of governance.**

**Objective 1-1:** Manage, budget and invest towards the goals and outcomes of this Plan

**Recommended Action 1-1-1:** Develop a consolidated, community Capital Improvement Program which integrates the 5-10 year Capital Plans of the various municipal entities and departments.

**Recommended Action 1-1-2:** Develop project plans proactively to implement the long-term Capital Plans.

**Recommended Action 1-1-3:** Collaborate with regional agencies, community organizations, and other municipalities to achieve common community objectives.

*Recommended Action 1-1-4:* Develop long-term strategic visions for each department, board, and commission.

*Recommended Action 1-1-5:* Use “Full Cost Accounting” principles and procedures as a compliment to municipal budgeting, examining social and environmental costs in addition to monetary cost.

*Recommended Action 1-1-6:* Use Life Cycle Costing as a means of assessing major municipal investments.

*Recommended Action 1-1-7:* Make sustainability principals part of standard procurement procedures.

*Recommended Action 1-1-8:* Incorporate LEED or other comparable green building standards into all municipal building projects.

*Recommended Action 1-1-9:* Adopt regulations that encourage the use of LEED or other comparable green building standards for new construction.

## **MSF-2 Formalize the Town’s commitment to sustainability principles.**

**Objective 2-1:** Establish South Hadley as a sustainable community.

*Recommended Action 2-1-1:* Establish a Sustainability and Energy Commission to provide a forum to achieve high levels of energy efficiency, energy and natural resource sustainability and guard against the effects of energy and natural resource disruption/depletion and climate change in accordance with the Town’s Master Plan.

*Recommended Action 2-1-2:* Develop and present to the Selectboard a resolution on becoming a sustainable community, for potential formal adoption at Town Meeting.

**Objective 2-2:** Develop a Sustainability Plan for South Hadley

*Recommended Action 2-2-1:* As a priority recommendation of this Plan, establish/designate a sustainability champion.

*Recommended Action 2-2-2:* Involve staff and officials from all departments in developing a sustainability plan, with plan implementation, and subsequent training on its recommendations.

*Recommended Action 2-2-3:* Adopt 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.

*Recommended Action 2-2-4:* Review and evaluate the Town’s current bylaws and policies for sustainability issues such as water, energy, materials, and waste, and identify steps to improve or amend these over time.

*Recommended Action 2-2-5:* Amend Town bylaws and policies to reflect the review/evaluation of sustainability issues.

**Objective 2-3:** Increase local awareness of and participation in sustainability actions

*Recommended Action 2-3-1:* Develop strategies to promote reduced consumption, such as a light bulb swap or the use of 'smart meters', reduced flow fixtures, reduced roadway asphalt.

*Recommended Action 2-3-2:* Inventory the energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives completed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, SHELD and others, and communicate the results to the town.

*Recommended Action 2-3-3:* Implement innovative projects that increase public awareness and support municipal leadership on sustainability issues.

### **MSF-3 Coordinate community facilities planning, maintenance, and management across all municipal boards, agencies, departments, and commission.**

**Objective 3-1:** Develop a goal-oriented, unified management strategy for public buildings and lands

*Recommended Action 3-1-1:* Undertake a comprehensive analysis of all municipal facilities.

*Recommended Action 3-1-2:* Develop a unified management strategy for maintenance and repair of all town buildings, landscapes, and common areas, incorporating the goals of this Chapter.

*Recommended Action 3-1-3:* Establish a central entity for facilities management to implement the unified management strategy.

*Recommended Action 3-1-4:* Evaluate Town standards and requirements and recommend changes to promote energy efficiency and reduce energy demand.

*Recommended Action 3-1-5:* Assess options for alternative and renewable energy sources to be used within existing and new buildings and infrastructure.

**Objective 3-2:** Use public building and renovation projects as opportunities to lead by example and support the Master Plan goals.

*Recommended Action 3-2-1:* In new public building and renovation plans require meeting LEED or other green building standards.

*Recommended Action 3-2-2:* Move forward with plans to renovate and expand the Public Library, or build a new one.

*Recommended Action 3-2-3:* Ensure/evaluate the potential to maintain a location in South Hadley Falls, where the Library's location has historical 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.

*Recommended Action 3-2-4:* 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.

**Objective 3-3:** Develop and implement a plan to replace the Plains School and promote effective re-use of the current school site.

*Recommended Action 3-3-1:* In planning for a new elementary school, require meeting LEED or other green building standards.

*Recommended Action 3-3-2:* 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.

*Recommended Action 3-3-3:* Develop a reuse plan for the Plains School site that incorporates sustainability and community and economic development principles.

#### **MSF-4 The delivery of efficient, reliable and environmentally sound public services.**

**Objective 4-1:** Ensure efficient and environmentally sound water supply services.

*Recommended Action 4-1-1:* Continue to evaluate, monitor, and consider the appropriateness of a merger of the two Fire Districts.

*Recommended Action 4-1-2:* Investigate the merits of reinstating the underground storage tank regulation in the Town's General Bylaw.

**Objective 4-2:** Ensure continued provision of efficient and effective public safety services.

*Recommended Action 4-2-1:* Continue upgrading public safety communications systems to provide consistent, reliable two-way communications and emergency notification systems.

*Recommended Action 4-2-2:* Continue upgrading public emergency notification system.

*Recommended Action 4-2-3:* Provide mobile access to webbased GIS system.

**Objective 4-3:** Improve the efficiency and environmental effectiveness of wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste/recycling services.

*Recommended Action 4-3-1:* Expand and support the community's comprehensive outreach and education program encouraging residents and businesses to increase recycling.

*Recommended Action 4-3-2:* Develop strategies to maximize South Hadley's economic and environmental return on the landfill.

*Recommended Action 4-3-3:* Evaluate the feasibility and options for establishing a separate stormwater services enterprise fund or program.

*Recommended Action 4-3-4:* Work with neighboring communities to address regional infrastructure and waste management needs.

**Objective 4-4:** Increase coordination between the Town and SHELD to maximize the benefit of SHELD's fiber optic network and development plans for the community.

*Recommended Action 4-4-1:* 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.

*Recommended Action 4-4-2:* Improve communication between SHELD and Town government regarding the status of the fiber optic system.

*Recommended Action 4-4-3:* Coordinate the fiber optic system development with residential/commercial development projects.

*Recommended Action 4-4-4:* Develop resources to provide a cost effective fiber optic system.

## **MSF-5 Enhance delivery and management of municipal services through expanded and coordinated communications.**

**Objective 5-1:** Improve the effectiveness of all Town communications and use of technology.

*Recommended Action 5-1-1:* Train municipal employees on public communication skills and strategies.

*Recommended Action 5-1-2:* Provide information on technology options to the public as part of budgeting and planning.

*Recommended Action 5-1-3:* Evaluate the potential for new technology to improve service delivery and efficiency.

*Recommended Action 5-1-4:* 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, keeping the site current.

*Recommended Action 5-1-5:* Continually evaluate the website's content, architecture and Internet Service Provider (ISP) with a focus on how the site and the information are providing customer service, public participation, and efficient service delivery.

***Recommended Action 5-1-6:*** Continue to increase the amount and quality of information (including employment, volunteer, contract, and other opportunities) provided through the website, public notices, Channel 15, and other methods.

***Recommended Action 5-1-7:*** Ensure that bylaws, services, and regulations can be easily accessed on the website.

**Objective 5-2:** Coordinate Town and community services to the benefit of South Hadley's residents.

***Recommended Action 5-2-1:*** As appropriate, use Town information resources such as the website to raise local awareness of community recreation, civic, and service resources.

***Recommended Action 5-2-2:*** 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.