

Proposal to
Center for Communities by Design
The American Institute of Architects
2012 Sustainable Development
Assessment Team (SDAT) Program

SOUTH HADLEY MASSACHUSETTS



The RISE of the Falls



November 2011

Prepared by the
South Hadley AIA SDAT Steering Committee
116 Main Street, Room 204
South Hadley, MA 01075-2896
413.538.5011 x206 · 413.538.7565 Fax
www.southhadley.org

HELEN FANTINI, CHAIR

MICHAEL DAVIS

FRANK DETOMA

MICHAEL FISHER

JACK FLEMING

LUCIA FOLEY

WALTER HAMILTON

JESSE LYTLE

STEVE WERENSKI

KEN WILLIAMSON

GILLIAN WOLDORF

Town of South Hadley



RICHARD L. HARRIS, AICP
Town Planner

DORIS LECLAIR
Senior Clerk

AIA SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ASSESSMENT TEAM STEERING COMMITTEE

116 Main Street, Room 204
South Hadley, MA. 01075-2896
Telephone: (413) 538-5011 Ext 206 * Fax: (413) 538-7565
www.southhadley.org

November 15, 2011

Ms. Erin Simmons, Director, Design Assistance
The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292

RE: South Hadley, Massachusetts: The Rise of the Falls
Application to the 2012 AIA SDAT Program

Dear Ms. Simmons:

On behalf of the South Hadley AIA SDAT Steering Committee and the Town of South Hadley, we are pleased to submit our application to the AIA Center for Communities by Design, 2012 Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program. The work of many minds and hands over the last several months contributed to the making of this application. In words and images, it documents the challenges and concerns, along with our hopes for a unique neighborhood within South Hadley, South Hadley Falls.

There are many reasons to hope for positive outcomes in the Falls. South Hadley is well positioned to take full advantage of the AIA SDAT Program as many preceding actions have helped to pave the way. Concluding in 2010 and the result of a 3-year process, the town adopted a Master (Comprehensive) Plan, the first in over 30 years. In the Introduction and Vision chapter of the Plan, Core Initiative No. 1 is to "Revitalize South Hadley Falls." But what does that mean? How do we translate this goal into action? And how can we put the tenets of sustainability to real use as we work to improve this neighborhood?

As a direct result of the Master Plan, the community has initiated several efforts. We are currently working with one of our educational partners, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, on two projects. Through an agreement with the UMass Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Regional Planning programs, graduate students have been surveying, documenting, and assessing our town's physical attributes in order to develop design standards. This week, we will hold a "Community Conversation" about the Falls that will be conducted by UMass faculty and students as part of plans for a "Falls Charrette."

Recently, two public and private sector developments within the Falls have generated new energy and optimism. First, the town purchased a riverfront site on Main Street overlooking the falls for the construction of a new library. The Massachusetts Library Association awarded a \$4.8 M grant (approximately 50% of the construction cost) toward this effort. Secondly, E-Ink, a company that manufactures e-reader screens, has moved its production operation into a vacated industrial building on Gaylord Street in South Hadley Falls. E-Ink has plans to expand.

Our community is eager to begin to realize its vision for this part of town, so full of potential, but in need of the fresh perspectives and multi-disciplinary approach offered by the SDAT Program's team of experts. With the AIA SDAT Program's help, we know we can move more confidently toward what we couldn't resist calling *The Rise of the Falls*.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have with our application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen J. Fantini". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Helen J. Fantini, AIA, Chair
South Hadley AIA SDAT Steering Committee



SOUTH HADLEY MASSACHUSETTS



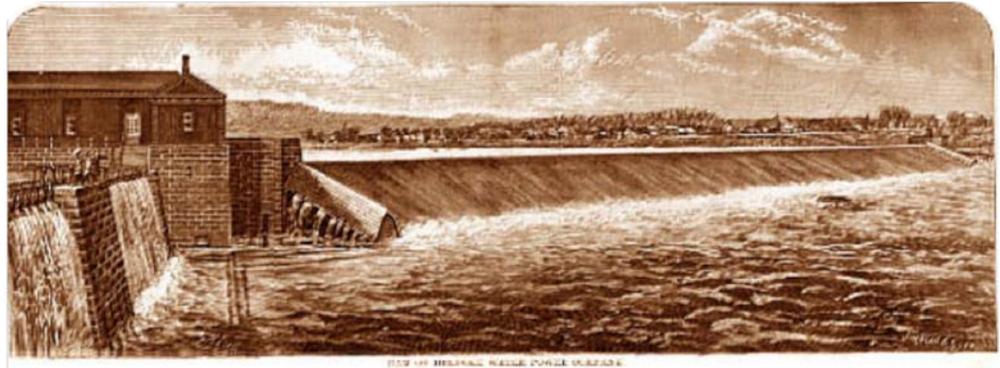
Top to Bottom:
 Connecticut River and the falls
 South view from Mount Holyoke, c. 1900
 (Library of Congress)
 Bridge Street, Route 116 business block
 Residential Street

The RISE of the Falls

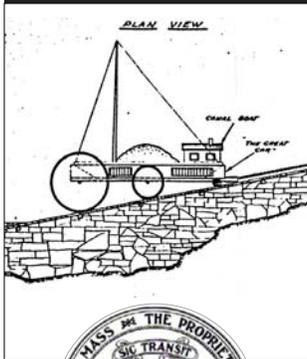
Table of Contents

- Summary..... 5
- Community Description..... 6
 - History..... 6
 - Population and Demographics..... 6
 - Economics 6
 - Local Government 7
 - Geography and Topography..... 7
 - Project and Contextual Information 7
 - Regional Setting and Influences..... 8
 - Past and Ongoing Planning Efforts 8
- Study Area and South Hadley Falls Map..... 9
- Problem Statement and Issues Analysis 10
 - Barriers to Success..... 10
 - Scope of Issues 10
 - ▶ Environmental Challenges..... 10
 - ▶ Social Challenges 11
 - ▶ Economic Challenges..... 13
 - Visual Comparison: Center and Falls..... 15
- Objectives of the SDAT Process 16
- Project Organization: Local Capacity & Resources..... 17
 - Steering Committee 17
 - Budget and Funding..... 18
 - Educational Partners..... 18
 - Communications and Outreach Plan..... 19
- SDAT Project Timeline..... 20
- Community Partnerships and Support..... 20
- Supplemental Documents and Attachments..... 21
 - Previous Planning Studies, Reports and Resources 21
 - Issues Ranking..... 23
 - Additional Maps 25
 - Letters of Support 28
 - Additional Documents..... 47

The RISE of the Falls



SOUTH HADLEY MASSACHUSETTS



Above:
South Hadley Canal
Inclined Plane, c. 1795

Primary Contact:

Helen Fantini, AIA, Chair
South Hadley AIA SDAT
Steering Committee
116 Main Street, Room 204
South Hadley, MA 01075
(413) 538-5011 x206

Summary

South Hadley, Massachusetts: *The Rise of the Falls*

An Application to the AIA Center for Communities by Design
2012 Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program

Located alongside the Connecticut River and its dramatic falls, South Hadley Falls is a distinct neighborhood within the town of South Hadley. The development of businesses related to the falls and the river made the Falls a thriving place in which to live and work for well over 150 years. Over the course of the last six decades, however, the Falls has experienced a gradual decline in its economic and physical vitality. Major employers have downsized or left town altogether, leaving buildings and lots vacant and underutilized. Its riverfront and waterfall are almost invisible to passersby.

The 2010 Master Plan for the Town of South Hadley has defined a broad vision for the revitalization of the Falls. The AIA's SDAT Program offers our community a real opportunity to identify and clarify initiatives that will benefit South Hadley Falls. We are eager for the SDAT to address the challenges that we face, including:

- **Environmental:** Transit and land use, flooding
- **Social:** Sense of place, lack of public spaces
- **Economic:** Revitalization, public policy and planning, jobs

This project unquestionably reflects our aspirations for the future of South Hadley Falls, a community that in many ways mirrors the larger history of the United States from its colonial origins to the post-industrial present. We are optimistic that with the help of the SDAT Program, we can bring together preservation and development, the natural and the built environment to stimulate revitalization of this unique place. Our project title, *The Rise of the Falls*, expresses this aspiration.



Old Firehouse Museum

Community Description

HISTORY

In 1725 some of the younger men and families of Hadley began making homes in the area south of the Mount Holyoke Range. In 1732, this settlement became the “South Precinct of Hadley” with limited self-government. Formal creation of the Town of South Hadley occurred in 1753. South Hadley’s rich history is noted through federal designation of historic districts (such as the Woodbridge Street District), preservation of buildings (such as the Sycamore House), and community celebrations (such as Town’s 250th birthday). A sandstone slab unearthed in South Hadley in 1802 offered the first confirmed evidence of dinosaurs in North America, and this historically important specimen can be seen today at the Amherst College Museum of Natural History.

South Hadley is distinctive in that it has had two historical population centers, the Falls and the Center. Physical and economic factors have contributed to a persistent sense of separation between the two centers.



A community gathering at Town Hall

The Falls area of South Hadley was home to the nation’s first commercially successful navigable canal, which began operation in 1795. Industrial development in the Falls was significant in the 19th and early 20th centuries, as it was across the Connecticut River in the city of Holyoke. In recent decades, the commercial and industrial activities of South Hadley Falls have diminished. Remains and remnants of the canal are still visible and partial restoration efforts are underway.

The northern part of town, also known as “the Center,” is the site of Mount Holyoke College, founded in 1837 by Mary Lyon. The first of the “Seven Sisters,” Mount Holyoke College is the world’s oldest women’s college—and South Hadley’s largest employer.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2010 census, South Hadley’s population was 17,514. Located in Hampshire County, the town is considered part of the Springfield Metro (Hampden County) Statistical Area. South Hadley’s population has increased 1.8% since 2000, in keeping with the relatively stable population trend in the Pioneer Valley as a whole.

There were 6,586 total households reported in the 2000 census, of which 4,208, or 63.9%, were family households. The population density was 971.0 people per square mile (374.9/km²). There were 6,784 housing units at an average density of 383.1 per square mile (147.9/km²). The racial makeup of the town was 94.05% White, 1.20% African American, 0.12% Native American, 2.53% Asian, 0.06% Pacific Islander, 0.77% from other races, and 1.28% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race made up 2.36% of the population. Of the town’s residents, 19.6% were under the age of 18, 14.9% from ages 18 to 24, 25.6% from 25 to 44, 22.4% from 45 to 64, and 17.4% who were 65 years of age or older. A language other than English was spoken at home by 12% of the population in 2000; 89.4% of adults were high school graduates or higher, and 32.9% had a Bachelor’s degree or higher.



Residential architecture in the Falls

ECONOMICS

According to the U.S. Census bureau’s five year estimates, median family income in South



Part of the old canal,
Gateway Park

Hadley fell by 1.2% between 1999 and the five-year period between 2005-2009, from \$77,584 to \$76,630. From 1999 to 2009, however, the number of children in poverty increased from 4.77% to 7.83%, and the number of individuals in poverty rose from 5.88% to 6.67%; for families there was a decline, from 4.12% to 2.67%.

The vast majority of new housing units constructed in South Hadley during the past ten years were single-family or two-family dwellings, and an analysis of building activity indicates that the Town has not made adequate provision for affordable housing. Since 1990, those aged 85 and over have represented the fastest growing segment of the Town's population. Income data reflect an affordability gap, particularly with respect to South Hadley's senior population, but also among young adults with entry-level positions.

South Hadley's property tax base is largely residential, and the low proportion of non-residential property taxes presents a financial challenge. South Hadley has experienced the local effects of the nationwide, multi-decade shift away from manufacturing towards a service-based economy. Many employers have downsized or left South Hadley in the past decades, leaving industrial facilities at key Falls locations either vacant, underutilized, or in transition.



Enjoying the water spray area at
Beachgrounds Park

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Continuing the uniquely New England tradition of participatory government, South Hadley maintains a representative form of government. Its legislative body, Town Meeting, consists of 120 elected members (24 from each of 5 precincts). A five-member Selectboard provides Administrative governance with an appointed Town Administrator. Members of Town Meeting hold an Annual Meeting in May and Special Meetings as needed. The Town Budget and the Town Bylaws (General and Zoning) must be approved and adopted by Town Meeting. Other independent, elected boards and officials provide governance and

administrative oversight for specific Town functions.



Main Street:
St. Patrick's Church
Business Block
Knights of Columbus

GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The Connecticut River defines the town's western border; Hadley and Amherst are to the north, Granby to the east, and Chicopee (in Hampden County) to the south. Directly across the river from South Hadley Falls is the city of Holyoke, whose industrial development trajectory has been similar to that of the Falls. South Hadley's 18.3 square miles of land area ranges from a low-lying elevation of approximately 78 feet at Town Hall in the Falls to 1,002 feet atop Mount Hitchcock at the east end of the Mount Holyoke Range, which was formed some 200 million years ago.

PROJECT AND CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

There are numerous vacant or underutilized small, business-zoned parcels with different owners in South Hadley Falls. Some of these parcels are in the FEMA 100-year flood plain. As a result of the new Master Plan, efforts are underway to rewrite South Hadley's Zoning Bylaws, which were created at a time when communities sought to encourage and accommodate the automobile, segregate business uses, and promote lower density development. Some of the current regulations, such as required front yard setbacks, pose barriers to appropriate development for the Falls, which has a more urban character than other sections of South Hadley.

REGIONAL SETTING AND INFLUENCES

Centrally located in the scenic Pioneer Valley, South Hadley's abundant natural resources and location have helped shape the community and character of the town. Situated in Hampshire County along the eastern bank of the Connecticut River and southern slope of the Mount Holyoke Range, South Hadley is 14 miles north of Springfield and 90 miles west of Boston. The community has relatively easy access to the primary north/south and east/west highways that serve the region, Interstate 91 and Interstate 90 (Mass Pike).



Town Hall, Main Street

Mount Holyoke College is part of the Five College consortium that includes the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Amherst, Hampshire, and Smith Colleges, which contributes to deep connections among the Valley's communities. In the City of Holyoke, just across the Connecticut River, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Harvard, MIT, Northeastern, and

UMass are collaborating with Intel and Cisco Systems to turn a former textile mill into the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center. Regional plans for improving and extending rail service with a focus on Holyoke provides an opportunity for the Falls by proximity.



Architect's rendering of proposed new public library

PAST AND ONGOING PLANNING EFFORTS

In 2007, South Hadley secured Economic Target Area and Economic Opportunity Area designations from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, providing new and potentially powerful options to promote redevelopment. A Master Plan, the Town's first in over 30 years, was adopted by the Planning Board in 2010 and lists the

revitalization of South Hadley Falls as Core Initiative #1. The Master Plan identifies a desire to build on the renovation of Falls area recreational and cultural assets including Beachgrounds Park, Canal Park, and the Firehouse Museum, to form an organizing theme for renewed revitalization efforts. In the planning stages and recently approved by voters, a proposed new Public Library in the Falls will provide an additional asset and open up views of the Connecticut River and dam.



Industrial architecture in the Falls

The Master Plan suggests particular attention be paid to the riverfront, and vacant and underutilized property to drive the revitalization of South Hadley Falls. Recently, a number of infrastructure improvements were completed, including upgrades to water mains, sidewalks, and street lamps. The Town has contracted with the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and graduate students have been examining existing development in the Falls as part of a design standards project for the Town, now in draft form. Additionally, South Hadley Falls is the site of exploration for two graduate-level UMass design studios in Fall 2011.

U.S. Census data from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Wikipedia, ePodunk.com. Additional information from southhadley.org, southhadleyhistorical society.org, Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey, and the South Hadley Comprehensive Plan.



SOUTH HADLEY MASSACHUSETTS

SOUTH HADLEY FALLS

Study Area Map:

- A. New Public Library building site
 - B. Fibermark building (acquired with Library site)
 - C. Old Firehouse Museum
 - D. Existing Public Library building
 - E. Town Hall
 - F. Police Station
 - G. South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD)
1. St. Patrick's Church
 2. Falls Congregational Church
 3. United Methodist Church

Study Area

The proposed Study Area encompasses most of the portion of Town known as South Hadley Falls. It can be described as follows: Connecticut River to the south and west, from Route 202 to the Chicopee border (at the end of South Main Street); Route 202 to the north, and Lamb Street/South Main Street to the East. Principal streets included are: Main, Bridge (Route 116), Lamb (Route 116), and Canal. The Study Area includes both bridge entries to/from Holyoke, via Routes 116 and 202. This Study Area is composed of "hard edges" including the river, Route 202, and a ridge that defines its northern boundary.

While Route 202 does connect South Hadley with other places, it also splits the Falls into two sections.



Street views of the Falls

Problem Statement and Issues Analysis

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

1. **Economic:** With the exception of the E-Ink Corporation, which has recently established its production operation in an existing South Hadley Falls industrial complex, there has been minimal private investment in the Falls over the last thirty years. It appears that robust development is hampered at least in part by the small size of available parcels. Assembling land parcels of a size attractive to potential developers is challenged by a fragmentation of ownership. Meeting the requirements of the 100-year flood plain presents issues of engineering and design that may increase project development costs.

How do we define, attract and facilitate the right type of private development for South Hadley Falls?

2. **Connection:** Historically, topographically, and economically, South Hadley Falls and South Hadley Center have developed as distinct town nodes. Located along the Connecticut River, the Falls grew into an active industrial zone with intensive commercial and associated residential development, while the Center, three miles north, and was shaped by its proximity to Mount Holyoke College. Further, construction of the Route 202 bypass and Muller Bridge created a means around the Falls, but also resulted its relative isolation from the Center. There is no effective public transportation or bikeway between the two parts of town.

How might connections between the Falls and the Center, as well as to adjacent communities, be made in order to enhance and reanimate the Falls while preserving its unique character?

3. **Coordination:** South Hadley Falls is home to such important and stable institutions as Town Hall, the police department, St. Patrick's Church, the South Hadley Public Library, and S.H.E.L.D. (South Hadley Electric Light Department). Renovation of Beachgrounds Park located in the Falls has been completed, three additional riverfront parks have been undertaken, and construction of a new public library in South Hadley Falls is planned. A Master Plan for the Town of South Hadley was adopted in 2010, replacing a plan developed over thirty years ago. We must find ways to coordinate these initiatives effectively in order to realize their maximum positive benefit for the community.

How do we convert the principles of sustainability—ecology, economy, and equity—into a tangible form that is tailored to South Hadley Falls?

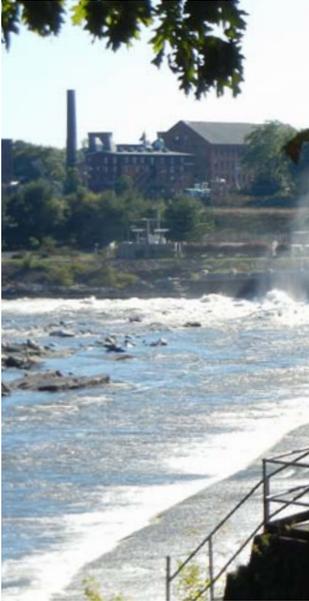
SCOPE OF ISSUES

Using the Master Plan and a series of lists resulting from brainstorming sessions for guidance, the Steering Committee discussed and defined several issues that could be addressed by the SDAT. The Steering Committee noted overlap amongst issues and that issues repeat, but the issues reveal different facets when placed in different categories.

► Environmental Challenges

Transit and Land Use:

Transportation to and within South Hadley is predominantly by automobile. Most people



View of the Dam and Falls from the proposed new library site

rely on their cars to get them to where they need to go. And though the Falls is considered a walkable neighborhood, one's basic needs cannot be met; there is no small grocery or convenience store in the neighborhood. Getting to and from this section of Town without a car is difficult. The Falls is approximately three (3) miles away from the Town Center. No special lanes are provided for biking. If one does not have access to a car, a bus (PVTA Route Red 25) with a limited number of trips per day runs from Mount Holyoke College, in South Hadley Center with one stop in the Falls, and continues on to locations in Holyoke. While there are several bus routes that connect South Hadley Center to Northampton, Hadley and Amherst, none of these routes furnishes a stop in the Falls.

Efficient automobile travel was the goal when, in 1958, the Route 202 by-pass and Muller Bridge were constructed resulting in a quicker route from South Hadley and points north and east to Interstate 91 through Holyoke. However, Route 202 also split the Falls neighborhood into two sections, and created a physical separation between the Falls and the rest of South Hadley.

While access to I-91 and the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) is relatively convenient, South Hadley is as not directly connected to these major highways as are nearby towns of Holyoke, Chicopee, and Northampton. This has made it difficult for South Hadley to attract major retailers. These same large chain retailers located in the nearby Ingleside Mall in Holyoke, Chicopee, and Hadley, attract business away from South Hadley's smaller retailers.



North Main Street, Great Flood of 1936

Flooding:

Not surprisingly, The Falls' location adjacent to the Connecticut River presents challenges as well as opportunities. In the early part of the 20th Century, South Hadley Falls was victim to several floods. Much of the vacant land in the Study Area along Main Street is within the FEMA-defined 100-year flood plain. This land is composed of many small parcels (1/4 – 1/3 acre), with different owners, making difficult the task of

assembling a large parcel for potential development. Moreover, parcel size is a factor with respect to development within the flood plain. Measures required to store flood waters on site make small parcels nearly infeasible for cost-effective development.

► **Social Challenges**

Sense of Place:

South Hadley Falls has a rich history that is tied to the Connecticut River. Like many New England river settlements, the Falls had its heyday during the early industrial days of paper and textile mills in the 19th century, harnessing the natural power of the "Great Falls at South Hadley." Notably, South Hadley was the site of the country's first navigable canal, which operated from 1795 to 1862. Using an invention known as the "inclined plane," the canal enabled boats and goods



1903 parade, Main and Bridge Streets
Photos of the area as it looks today are shown on Page 12.

passage up and around the falls. The canal served Connecticut River commerce until the development of the railroads made it unprofitable. The development of commercial businesses and residential building in support of the industries gave the Falls the moniker, "Canal Village." Except for a small monument on Main Street, the history of this canal is



not currently made visible in any meaningful way. Efforts to partially restore and make the canal more visible are underway.

South Hadley Falls is relatively isolated from the Center. Generally, professionals and those affiliated with Mount Holyoke College have chosen to live in proximity to it, in the north end of Town. In part because the development in the Falls through the 18th and 19th centuries was industrial in nature, South Hadley Falls has a working class base.



When those same industries down-sized or left Town, the Falls experienced an economic and physical decline. This contributes, along with many other factors, to the notion of “two South Hadleys.”

Many can imagine the Falls as a unique, sustainable, historic riverfront neighborhood. However, without reliable public transportation, safe means of biking or basic services within walking distance, this is not currently possible. Once a walkable neighborhood into the 1950’s, where one’s needs could be met without getting into a car, today the Falls has the greatest concentration of vacant lots and underutilized buildings in need of

Above and below:

The ‘Gateway’ to the Falls at the Route 116 bridge from Holyoke. (See Page 11 for a 1903 photo of this area.)

repair in South Hadley, including many historic structures. A number of the remaining viable businesses operating in the Falls are those related to auto repair or sales. These businesses are located in central and highly visible locations. A driver crossing the Route 116 bridge into Town is presented with an underutilized lot with an auto repair shop, a gas station, a liquor store and a fuel services company.



The crime rate in South Hadley Falls is no greater than the town overall, yet there is a perception that it is not as safe as the rest of Town. Worries about nefarious behavior along the river are not entirely unfounded, though, since any such activity would be shielded from street view by dense vegetation. Moreover, there is not enough street activity to lend “eyes on the street” to promote a greater sense of safety.



Public Spaces:

South Hadley Falls is not characterized by open space. This area of Town has a denser, more ‘urban’ development pattern, with some open space adjacent to the Connecticut River. Unfortunately, access to the waterfront is limited, both physically and visually; you can spend a lot of time in the Falls without realizing that you are next to the Connecticut River. The Falls lacks a significant public gathering space. By contrast, the north end of Town has a small, traditional New England common. Bounded by the Village Commons, a successful mixed-use development, Mount Holyoke College and the post office, the Town Common sees frequent use (a seasonal weekly farmer’s market, Columbus Day fair, summer concerts, e.g.). The Falls has no similar public space in spite of being home to most of the Town’s municipal facilities. The Falls is home to the newly renovated Beachgrounds Park, which provides playing fields and a new playground with a spray park. Beachgrounds is directly adjacent to the river, but is at a lower elevation such that the river cannot be seen. The Town Hall front lawn is used for Memorial and Veterans’ Day ceremonies, but it is a small space, not ideal for these events. It, too, lacks visual connection with the river.





Canal and river view at Gatehouse Park

The potential for stunning views of the waterfall and the Connecticut River is currently unrealized due to limited means of access to the river. The ability to connect visually to the river is made difficult due in part to the dense vegetation along the river's edge. Physical access to the river is likewise difficult to find, is unpublicized, and is limited in its scope. Currently, several parks are under development along the river, both in preconstruction and construction phases:

1. **Canal Park** – completed
2. **Gatehouse Park** – in construction
3. **Texon Park** – permitting phase since 2006
4. **Lower Riverside Park** – in construction

Much of the land directly adjacent to the river is owned by Holyoke Gas and Electric (HG&E). As part of the development of Gatehouse Park, there is a plan to restore a small segment of the canal for educational purposes. Today, only one of four of the planned riverfront parks is complete with no “master plan” in place as yet to connect them. Completion of these plans is hampered by a contentious relationship between the Town and HG&E.

► Economic Challenges

Revitalization:

In the Master Plan's “Introduction and Vision” chapter, Core Initiative 1 is “Revitalize South Hadley Falls.” There is no question that in relation to the the rest of South Hadley, improvement in the Falls is most needed and desired. Projects being developed across the river in Holyoke, such as the Canalwalk, Holyoke Innovation District, including the Green High Performance Computing Center, and Holyoke Intermodal Transportation Facility, could be connected to or complemented by projects on South Hadley's side of the river.



Scenic overlook at Canal Park

The plan for a new library to replace the under-sized, out-dated 1906 library on Bardwell Street is a cause for optimism. In July 2011, South Hadley was awarded a grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for \$4.8 million, approximately 50% of the construction cost. On November 8th, 2011, Town voters went to the polls and approved the funding mechanism to allow the library project to continue moving ahead. Planned for a site directly overlooking the “Great Falls of South Hadley,” and the partially restored historic canal, the new library is a harbinger for positive development in the Falls.

Across the street from the proposed library is a two-story, 24,000 SF masonry structure known as the Fibermark Building. This building was acquired by the Town as part of the library site purchase. Determining the best use for this building is both an challenge and an opportunity.

Public Policy/Planning:

Currently, South Hadley's Zoning By-laws do not make the development of mixed-use projects practical in the Falls. Front yard setbacks of 35' for commercial uses does not complement the existing development pattern of South Hadley Falls. The Town has engaged the services of Joel Russell, a land use and zoning attorney, to begin the process of marrying the vision of the Master Plan to the regulatory requirements of the current



South Hadley
Electric Light Department

South Hadley Zoning By-law. This project will unfold over the balance of 2011, and will be completed in the late fall of 2012. Changes to the Zoning By-laws will require approval by a 2/3 majority of Town Meeting members, which can be a high bar to clear.

As highlighted under Environmental Challenges, Flooding, the fragmented ownership of parcels coupled with the concern that parcels are not of adequate size to attract development is certainly an issue that re-appears under this category. The appropriation of Town funds for the purpose of purchasing property would require widespread approval and a unifying, convincing vision for the Falls to gain the public support needed to make it a reality.

Because much of the land directly adjacent to the Connecticut River is owned by Holyoke Gas & Electric, the Town must find constructive ways in which to work with HG&E if South Hadley wants to shape the use and appearance of its waterfront.

Finally, the South Hadley Electric Light Department (S.H.E.L.D.) has signaled in recent years, interest in relocating away from its Falls, Main Street facility. To date, S.H.E.L.D. has not pursued this course, and while relocation would free up a Town-owned piece of property on the riverfront, it would also weaken the image of the Falls as the municipal heart of South Hadley.

Jobs:

Loss of industry has left a gap. Up through the 1950s, the Falls was still a vibrant town center in its own right. In a section of Town where people could and did live and work, the loss of James River and Texon and significant downsizing of another company, Intellicoat, were major blows to the people who worked here. One bright spot in the picture is that E-Ink, a company that manufactures the screens for e-readers, has moved its manufacturing facilities to the Falls. E-Ink has renovated and is reusing a portion of the former James River Graphics plant. E-Ink has plans to expand, and is finding its South Hadley Falls location advantageous for a number of reasons, including proximity to the UMass Center for Nanotechnology.

The Master Plan mentions the concept of developing businesses based on river recreation, such as boating, kayaking, and fishing. Evaluating the viability of such options, along with the establishment of a Business Improvement District, all require study.



Top:
Industrial building, Gaylord Street
Below: E-Ink, a growing employer



Numerous garage and automotive-based structures can be found throughout the Falls.



SOUTH HADLEY'S TWO CENTERS: A VISUAL COMPARISON

South Hadley Center



Above: Mount Holyoke College
Below: Business Center Views (Village Commons, Town Common)



South Hadley Falls



Above: Town Hall
Below: Business Center Views (Main Street, Bridge Street)





Objectives of the SDAT Process

For South Hadley, the desire is strong and the time is right for the AIA's SDAT Program. We have seen investment in our Master Plan paying 'dividends' in the form of increased volunteerism on newly created boards and commissions and a renewed sense of pride in this town. Additional dollars have been invested in the development of Town-wide design review standards, a zoning by-law re-write, and Falls-specific design charrette and infrastructure improvements. However, we lack the multi-disciplinary expertise to pull all of these efforts and energies together into a plan that marries vision, policies and procedures within a framework for sustainability.

Our objectives for the process and resulting products of an SDAT Program are as follows:

PROCESS

1. That the expertise offered by the SDAT will help us understand issues and opportunities that we cannot currently see or articulate ourselves;
2. That this process will highlight and enhance the unique and positive attributes of South Hadley Falls and use its strengths to make it a destination for new businesses and residents;
3. That connections between South Hadley and neighboring towns and stakeholders be made or improved upon through work on this project; and
4. That this process will help to foster connections between people who live and work in the Falls with greater South Hadley, working together as one South Hadley.

PRODUCTS

1. That the SDAT provide recommendations for converting the principles of sustainability into achievable actions that will attract private investment to the Falls;
2. That these recommendations include a visual dossier (plans, renderings, models) to facilitate public conversations and support for the appropriate types of development, particularly for the "gateway" at Main and Bridge Streets;
3. That the present and expanded network of parks be developed effectively as sites for community sports, leisure, education, and entertainment;
4. That the potential for an arts and cultural district in the Falls that capitalizes on the beauty of the river and the industrial history of South Hadley Falls as "Canal Village" be explored and opportunities for tourism be pursued, and;
5. That a visit to Town Hall or the library could be enhanced and extended to take advantage of the rich array of additional attractions available in the Falls.



Street views of the Falls

Project Organization: Local Capacity and Resources

STEERING COMMITTEE

Helen Fantini, AIA, Chair
SDAT Steering Committee
Planning Board
South Hadley, MA

Michael Davis
Mount Holyoke College
South Hadley, MA

Frank DeToma
Selectboard
South Hadley, MA

Michael Fisher, Fundraising Chair
Community and Economic Development Commission
South Hadley, MA

Jack Fleming
Conservation Commission
South Hadley, MA

Lucia Foley
Cultural Council
South Hadley, MA

Walter Hamilton, Communications Chair
Library Board of Trustees
South Hadley, MA 01075

Jesse Lytle
Master Plan Implementation Committee
South Hadley, MA

Steve Werenski
Pietras Werenski & Co. and St. Patrick's Church
South Hadley, MA t

Ken Williamson
Historical Commission
South Hadley, MA

Gillian Woldorf
Resident
South Hadley, MA

Advisory Role:

Richard Harris, Town Planner
South Hadley, MA

Stephen Schreiber, FAIA
Professor and Director
Architecture + Design Program
Department of Art, Architecture & Art History
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA

BUDGET AND FUNDING

Our proposed budget for the SDAT Program is summarized below. In addition to AIA's contribution of \$15,000 to cover team expenses, South Hadley has budgeted a cash contribution of \$5000 to be raised through community fundraising and an in-kind contribution of \$5000 largely reflecting allocated staff time and donated services. The total proposed project budget is \$25,000.

Proposed Project Budget

Sources of Funds:

AIA grant	\$15,000
Community fundraising	5,000
In kind	5,000
<hr/>	
Total sources	\$25,000

Budget summary

Pre-assessment visit	\$2,100
SDAT team visit	8,400
SDAT team visit public meeting	1,100
Follow up report and visit	2,100
Report preparation, graphics, maps	3,500
Contingency & miscellaneous	2,800
<hr/>	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$20,000

In-kind support and donations,
Town Administrator, Town staff,
marketing & communications \$5,000

Special Note Concerning Community Fundraising

The South Hadley SDAT Steering Committee feels strongly that participation of the private sector in the project will be a key to success. Therefore, the Steering Committee has decided as a first step to seek monetary pledges from businesses, industries, and other commercial enterprises operating within the Town. A pledge solicitation letter has been drafted and will be distributed more or less concurrently with submission of our SDAT application. Steering Committee members will then engage in face-to-face follow-up. While we are confident that a minimum of \$5000 can be raised from the private sector to support the AIA SDAT project, public sector support through governmental departments, commissions, and agencies and quasi-governmental organizations can serve as an additional source of funding on an as-needed basis.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

Home to Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley is also regionally part of the Five College consortium. The Town has commitments from two institutions, Mount Holyoke College and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, for providing assistance to the SDAT. Mount Holyoke College, an all-women's liberal arts college, offers a major in architectural studies. The University of Massachusetts Amherst is the only public, NAAB-accredited university in New England that offers a masters' degree in architecture. The Steering Committee has also been fortunate in having both educational partners' representatives at Steering Committee meetings; Professor Michael Davis as a committee member, and Professor Stephen Schreiber, as an advisory member. As such, both have contributed to the development of the application, and are very familiar with the challenges facing South Hadley Falls.

Please also reference the letters of support from these two educational partners (see Supplemental Documents):

Mount Holyoke College

Michael Davis, Professor of Art,
Program Coordinator Architectural Studies
Mount Holyoke College
206 Art Building, South Hadley, MA 01075

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Stephen Schreiber, FAIA
Professor and Director
Architecture + Design Program
Department of Art, Architecture & Art History
University of Massachusetts
Fine Arts Center, Room 457
151 Presidents Drive, Amherst, MA, 01003-9330

COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OUTREACH PLAN

The Steering Committee will communicate both general information and specific details of the SDAT process to stakeholders and the general public through a variety of media, including print, radio, television and online sources.

Print sources include *The Town Reminder*, a weekly publication available without charge throughout town, *The Republican* of Springfield, a regional daily newspaper that circulates in town, and *The Daily Hampshire Gazette* of Northampton, that also circulates in town.

Sources will also include digital media, such as the town's official website: www.southhadley.org. Notice of SDAT Steering Committee meetings, decisions and requests for participation will continue to be regularly posted on the site (www.southhadley.org/Pages/SouthHadleyMA_SDAT/index). Broadcast media will also be notified of SDAT activities, including local community access television that operates from studios at South Hadley High School and is carried by the Town's cable TV service on Channel 15.

Exposure through print media would include editorial copy, weekly calendar entries and, potentially, advertising buys. Exposure through broadcast media would likely include news stories as well as interviews and/or participation in call-in shows.

Communication Partners/Personnel

Media relations will be coordinated by Steering Committee member Walter Hamilton, a retired longtime reporter and copy editor of *The Republican* of Springfield, under the direction of Town Planner Richard Harris and Steering Committee Chair Helen Fantini. Mr. Hamilton will maintain working relationships with pertinent editors of the various print and broadcast outlets and coordinate coverage with cable access TV Studio Manager Bob Smith and Assistant Studio Manager Dan Pease.

Media Relations

The core elements of the media plan will include issuance of outreach information to local print, broadcast, and online outlets that are designed to help the public understand the project. The information will also publicize key meetings of the SDAT and Steering Committee, and other public and private groups with stakes in the planning process. Those materials will be available through the Town public library and local businesses to educate and establish opportunities for public feedback. They will also be made available for download via the town's official website.

Local Media Outlets include:

Town Reminder (Weekly): www.townreminderonline.com

Daily Hampshire Gazette (Mon-Sat): www.gazettenet.com

Springfield Republican (Mon-Sat, Sun): www.masslive.com

The Valley Advocate (Weekly): www.valleyadvocate.com

South Hadley Community Access TV-15: www.shctv15.com

WGBY TV-57 (PBS-Springfield): www.wgby.org

WGGB TV-40 and Fox 6 (ABC/Fox-Springfield): www.wggb.com

WWLP TV-22 (NBC-Springfield): www.wwlp.com

CBS TV-3 (CBS-Springfield): www.cbs3springfield.com

WFCR-FM 88.5 and WNNZ-AM 640 (NPR Radio-Amherst): www.wfcr.org

WAMC-FM 90.3 (NPR Radio-Albany): www.wamc.org

WHMP-AM/FM 1400 and 1240 AM, 96.9 FM Northampton: www.whmp.com

WMHC FM 91.5 (Mount Holyoke College Radio) www.wmhcradio.org

WAMH FM 89.3 (Amherst College Radio): www3.amherst.edu/~wamh

WMUA FM 91.1 (University of Massachusetts Radio): www.wmua.org

WCCH FM 103.5 (Holyoke Community College Radio)

SDAT Project Timeline

SDAT Full Team Visit:

The Steering Committee, in consultation with the Town and its educational partners, has identified two weekends in April, 2012, that would be optimal for the full SDAT visit: April 13-15, or April 20-22, 2012. These April weekends do not conflict with holidays, or Town events, and precede the end of the academic year for Mount Holyoke College and UMass. A spring 2012 SDAT reflects our desire to initiate the SDAT process as soon as possible. While these dates in April 2012 are preferred, the Committee is willing to work with the AIA to identify other options. However, it is our strong preference that the full SDAT visit would occur in the spring, 2012.

Preliminary Visit:

It is understood that the preliminary visit would occur one to two months prior to the full SDAT team visit.

Final Report and Follow-up to the SDAT:

Receiving the final report 2-4 months after the full SDAT visit would work well for South Hadley, and would give boards and commissions time to determine if any actions would require Fall Town Meeting action (typically October or November). A follow-up visit, in the late spring of 2013 during the implementation phase, would optimally occur after the May 2013 Town Meeting (typically the first Saturday in May).

Community Partnerships and Support

Please see Supplemental Documents for copies of letters from:

- Western Massachusetts Chapter of the American Institute of Architects
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Mount Holyoke College
- Gillian Woldorf and Heather Reichgott
- Pietras Werenski & Co.
- St. Patrick's Church
- South Hadley Community and Economic Development Commission
- South Hadley Cultural Council
- South Hadley Conservation Commission
- South Hadley Historical Commission
- South Hadley Master Plan Implementation Committee
- South Hadley Planning Board
- South Hadley Public Library Board of Trustees
- South Hadley Selectboard
- E Ink

Supplemental Documents

TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT PLANNING STUDIES, REPORTS AND RESOURCES

- a. **1946 Zoning Bylaw and subsequent comprehensive amendments.** The Town adopted its first Zoning Bylaw in 1946. Professional planning and zoning consultant services were provided by M. O. Saunders in developing the initial Zoning Bylaw and in its' administration. Relying upon the services of M. O. Saunders, the town subsequently "comprehensively" revised the Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map during the latter 1950's and early 1960's. While amendments have been made to the Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map since this time, the form and structure of the Zoning Bylaw has largely remained intact.
www.southhadley.org/Pages/SouthHadleyMA_Planning/zon/index
- b. **Subdivision Regulations.** The Town adopted Subdivision Regulations in 1954 and were last revised in 1995. The Planning Board is in the process of considering some revisions to the regulations.
www.southhadley.org/Pages/SouthHadleyMA_Planning/sub/index
- c. **1964 Comprehensive Plan.** With assistance from The Planning Services Group, Inc., South Hadley developed its first Comprehensive Plan in 1964. It was partly funded by the Massachusetts Department of Commerce and Development with an urban planning grant under Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954. This plan largely guided the comprehensive revisions to the Zoning Bylaw which took place during the late 1950's and early 1960's. A Capital Improvement Program: 1967-1972 was prepared with assistance from The Planning Services Group, Inc. as a follow-up to this Comprehensive Plan.
- d. **1979 Comprehensive Plan Update.** Fifteen years later, with services provided by Curran Associates, the Town developed a 1979 Master Plan Update. Associated with this update was development of a series of technical reports addressing a variety of planning issues including farmland preservation, fiscal impact, mobile homes, housing conservation, and planned unit development. These reports date from 1975 to 1982.
- e. **Geographic Information System.** During the early 1990's, the Town Planner developed the Town's first GIS program using the Atlas GIS software. This program relied upon a base map manually digitized by the Town Planner. The Town has converted to ArcGIS 10 and has recently had a new digital base map developed. However, the zoning and much of the "customized" data base is still reliant upon the older version of the base map.
- f. **Community Development Plan.** The Town participated in the EO 418 planning effort sponsored by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs in 2004. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission provided the consultant services for this effort.
- g. **Specialized Studies and Reports.** Over the past 20 years, the Town has participated in numerous specialized studies to address planning issues. Among these studies are the following:
 - South Hadley Route 116 Corridor Study (Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts; 1991)
 - Alvord Street Corridor Study (Center for Economic Development, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts; 1992)
 - South Hadley Intersection Analysis (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; 1992)
 - RENAISSANCE: A Revitalization Plan for South Hadley Falls (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; 1988)

- [South Hadley Water Supply Protection Report and Recommendations](#); (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 1992)
 - [South Hadley Water Resources Action Plan](#) (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; 1996)
 - [Range and River: Recreation and Open Space Plan](#) (Town Planner; 1993 and 1999)
 - [South Hadley Falls Feasibility Study](#) (Balmori Associates, Inc.; April 1998)
www.southhadley.org/Pages/SouthHadleyMA_Planning/2007RecPlan.pdf
 - [South Hadley Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan](#) (Tighe & Bond; 2002)
 - [Economic Target Area Application](#) (Town Planner, 2007– Approved 2007)
 - [Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program](#) – South Hadley Reconnaissance Report (June 2009)
www.southhadley.org/Pages/SouthHadleyMA_Planning/documents/SHLIReportFinalReduced.PDF
- h. **2010 Master Plan.** With the services of a 16 member volunteer committee and VHB, Inc., the Town developed the 2010 Master Plan. This document was adopted by the Planning Board in August 2010 and endorsed by Town Meeting in Fall, 2010. A copy of the document is on the Town’s website (www.southhadley.org) under the Planning Board’s web page.
www.southhadley.org/Pages/SouthHadleyMA_CPAC/CompPlanDoc11-17-09
- i. **Design Assessment (2011 Draft).** As a follow-up to the 2010 Master Plan, the South Hadley Planning Board contracted with the University of Massachusetts (Architecture & Design and Landscape & Regional Planning Programs) to undertake a Design Assessment of the Town’s significant areas (the Falls, major roadway corridors, and select other locations) as a prelude to the development of design guidelines. This project has provided a comprehensive report (draft at this time) on the critical design elements that are considered to be important to the character and identity of the community.
- j. **Zoning Bylaw Revision Project (Began September 2011).** The Planning Board has contracted with Joel Russell Associates to make strategic and selective revisions to the Zoning Bylaw to address a number of key issues and recommendations in the Master Plan. This work began in September 2011 and is scheduled to be completed in time for a November 2012 Special Town Meeting. The minutes of meetings and word products to date are posted on the Planning Board’s webpage at:
www.southhadley.org/Pages/SouthHadleyMA_Planning/ZBRProject
- k. **Falls Design Charette (Began October 2011).** As another follow-up to the 2010 Master Plan, the South Hadley Selectboard contracted with the University of Massachusetts (Architecture & Design and Landscape & Regional Planning Programs) to undertake a Design Charette for the South Hadley Falls Area. This project is anticipated to provide four products: 1) A report outlining the findings of a public meeting that will summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis); 2) a report of the findings of a “Ground Truthing Exercise” that will focus on the observations of three planners who have been involved in areas similar to the Falls and; 3) a report on case examples of places similar to the Falls that could serve as models for the Falls efforts; 4) a set of recommended design options that will take advantage of the Falls’ striking place along the river’s edge. The products generated in this studio will also provide potentially useful information for an AIA Sustainable Design Assistance Team workshop.
(See Additional Documents: Community Meeting Notice)

ISSUES RANKING (1 of 2)

SDAT for South Hadley Falls
Steering Committee Meeting 9/1/11
Issues Ranking

		Low - 1	Medium - 2	High - 3	Not an issue
En	ENVIRONMENTAL				
1	Limited means of transportation to/within the Falls	4	3	1	1
2	Flood plain restrictions (actual vs. perceived)	1	2	6	0
3	Limited access to waterfront (physical and visual)	0	1	6	1
4	River community	1	4	1	2
5	Industrial history	4	4	0	0
6	Links to Holyoke/Chicopee's development	2	5	1	1
7	Connectivity to neighboring communities	3	2	4	1
8	Lack of visual connection to the river given seawall, vegetation	2	2	5	0
9	Natural Heritage Endangered Species regulations	6	1	1	1
10	Vacant buildings (& underutilized)	1	2	5	0
11	Neglected open spaces	0	3	5	0
12	Potential for outstanding views of the river	1	0	8	0
13	Legal ambiguities with Holyoke Gas & Electric with development of waterfront	1	7	1	0
14	Greater density than in other parts of town in part due to smaller parcel sizes	3	1	1	4
15	Parcels of adequate size to attract development?	1	1	7	0
Ec	ECONOMIC				
1	Potential to use recreation to foster economic growth: (for example: fishing, boating, kayaking)	2	5	2	0
2	Challenge of encouraging residential and mixed-use development	0	1	8	0
3	Access to high-speed fiber-optic network	3	1	4	0
4	"Good bones" (infrastructure, buildings)	1	3	2	2
5	Proximity to Holyoke Innovation District	1	3	3	2
6	Proximity to Mount Holyoke College	4	2	3	0
7	Convenient access to highways	5	3	1	0
8	Close to Holyoke Amtrak station	2	4	1	2
9	Fragmented ownership of parcels	2	0	7	0
10	Greatest concentration of vacant lots and buildings in poor condition	0	4	5	0

ISSUES RANKING (2 of 2)

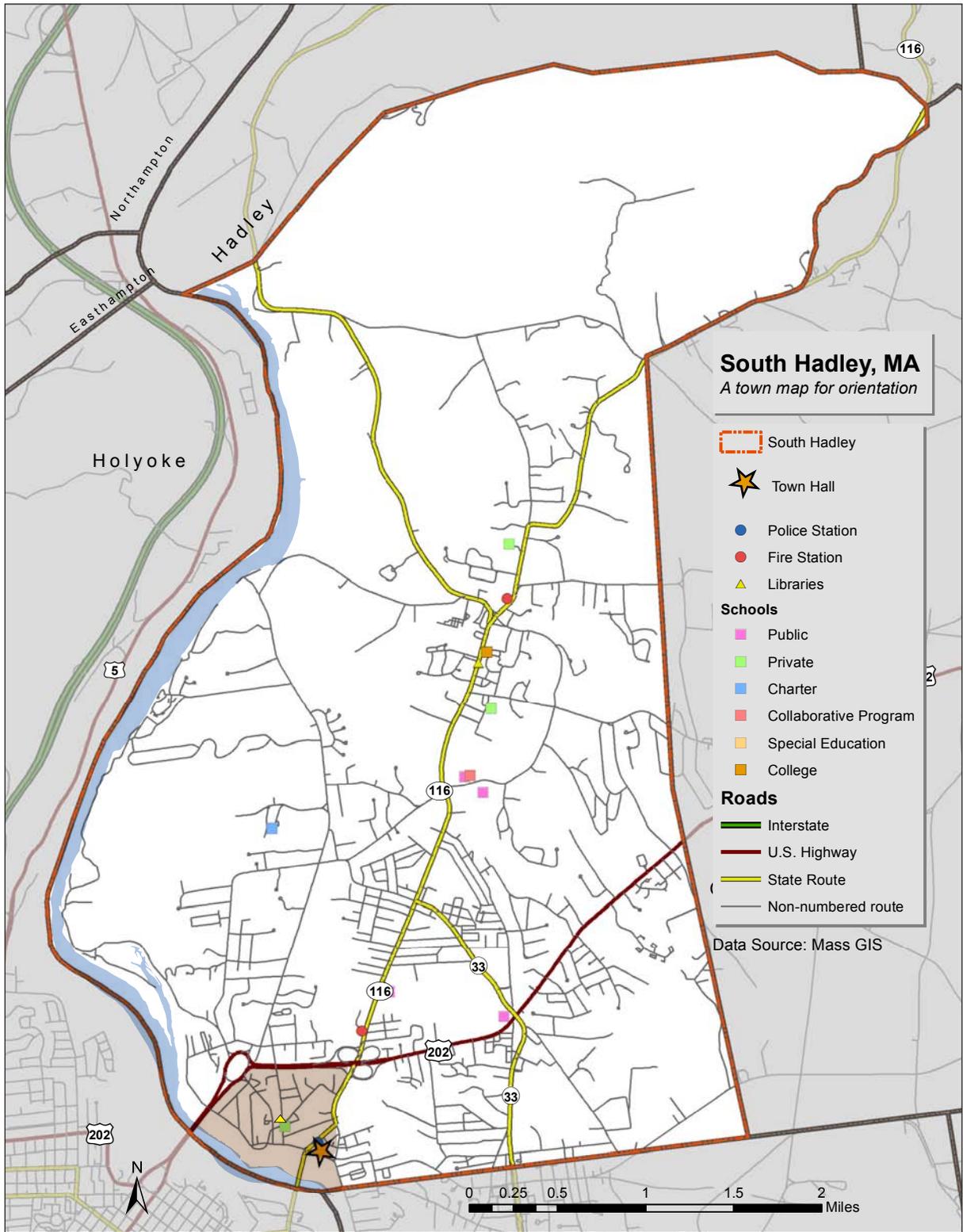
SDAT for South Hadley Falls
Steering Committee Meeting 9/1/11
Issues Ranking

		Low - 1	Medium - 2	High - 3	Not an issue
11	Largest public and private investment (new Library, E-Ink) in town	0	3	6	0
12	Potential for hydro-power	3	1	1	4
13	Relative inaccessibility to the Falls from other parts of town	5	1	0	3
14	Route 202 is a barrier to the Falls	3	0	1	4
15	Holyoke Canalwalk expansion (partnerships with Holyoke?)	0	5	2	2
16	Falls does not meet the "blighted" criteria for purposes of grants	3	1	1	3
17	Preponderance of auto-related services	1	5	1	1
18	Liquor store, gas station and garages mark gateway to SH from Holyoke Route 116 entry				
19	Perceived as not as safe as other parts of town	0	5	4	0
20	Falls businesses tend to be related to fabrication with few professional services	3	4	1	1
21	Discourage relocation of SHELDT out of the Falls	1	4	3	1
22	Business improvement district possibility	1	4	4	0
S	SOCIAL				
1	Potential to use recreation to foster economic growth	2	5	2	0
2	Potential for an arts/cultural district	1	4	4	0
3	Loss of industry (James River, Texon) has left a gap	3	2	2	2
4	Use of river as a unique draw for sustainable business/living	1	2	6	0
5	Local businesses that support local residents (similar to Falls in its prime)	2	6	1	0
6	Exploiting the history of the nation's first canal by making it more visible	1	2	6	0
7	Connectivity amongst historic sites and parks lacking	2	1	6	0
8	Many historic structures in poor condition	1	3	4	1
9	Notion of two South Hadleys	2	1	4	2
10	Gateways from Holyoke, Chicopee	0	5	2	2
11	New library	0	1	8	0
12	Gentrification concerns	2	3	1	2

MAPS

(Note: Detailed Study Area Map of South Hadley Falls is located on Page 9)

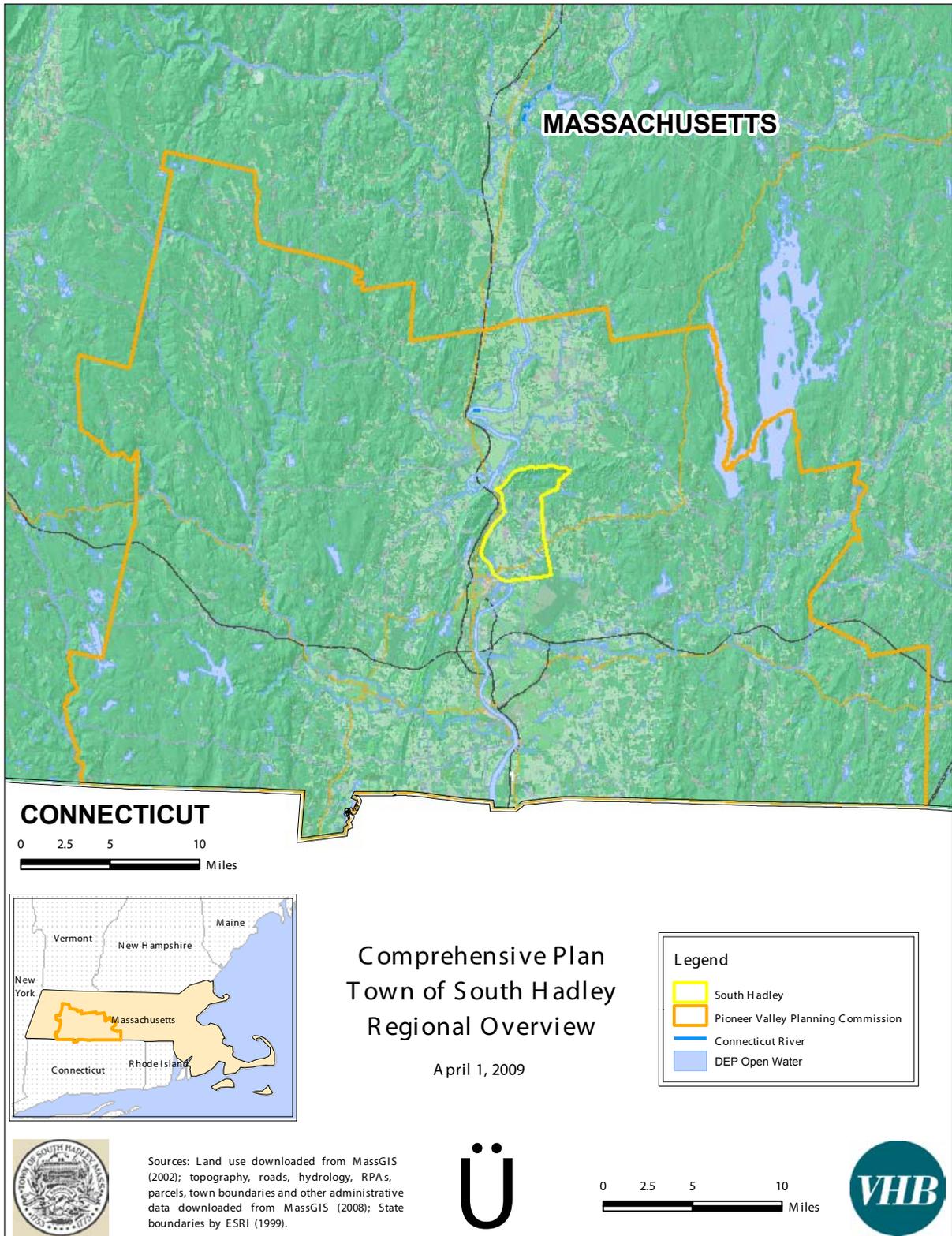
1. SDAT Study Location and Town Orientation



South Hadley Falls Study Location

Maps

2. Regional Overview



MAPS

3. South Hadley Falls Open Space 2011 University of Massachusetts Amherst Design Standards Project



● Rt 116 view
of Rt 202 overpass



● Ridge view

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

The letters that follow include:

Educational Partners

- a. Michael Davis, Professor of Art, Program Coordinator Architectural Studies
Mount Holyoke College
- b. Stephen Schreiber, FAIA
Professor and Director, Architecture + Design Program; Department of Art, Architecture & Art History
University of Massachusetts

Community Partners

- c. Lorin Starr, Executive Director
Western Massachusetts Chapter of the American Institute of Architects
- d. James M. Mazik, Deputy Director for Operations
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- e. Lynn Pasquerella, President
Mount Holyoke College
- f. Gillian Woldorf and Heather Reichgott
Falls Homeowners
- g. Stephen Werenski, Falls Business Owner
Pietras Werenski & Co.
- h. Fr. Thomas Shea
St. Patrick's Church
- i. Jeff LaBrecque, Chair
South Hadley Community and Economic Development Commission
- j. John Fleming, Chair
South Hadley Conservation Commission
- k. Lucia Foley, Chair
South Hadley Cultural Council
- l. Kenneth Williamson
South Hadley Historical Commission
- m. Jesse Lytle, Chair
South Hadley Master Plan Implementation Committee
- n. Joan Rosner, Chair
South Hadley Planning Board
- o. Mitchell B. Resnick, Chair
South Hadley Public Library Board of Trustees
- p. Frank DeToma, Select Board Member
South Hadley Selectboard
- q. Simon Nip, Chief Financial Officer
E Ink

Letters of Support: a.

MOUNT HOLYOKE

Mount Holyoke College
Department of Art and Art History
50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075-1499
tel 413-538-2200 fax 413-538-2167
art@mtholyoke.edu

Richard Harris
Planning Office
116 Main Street, Room 204
South Hadley, MA 01075

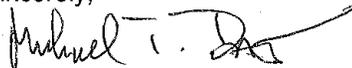
Dear Mr. Harris,

I write as the representative of Mount Holyoke College on the Sustainable Design Assistance Team committee to express the full support of the College for the planning and design goals articulated in the grant application to the American Institute of Architects. From the very beginning, Mount Holyoke's President Lynn Pasquerella has encouraged College participation in this initiative and at her invitation I volunteered to join the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team Steering Committee.

Founded in 1837, Mount Holyoke College has grown with the town and is intimately woven into its fabric: members of the faculty and staff send their children to school in South Hadley, we live, shop, and worship in South Hadley, we participate in town government. At the same time, South Hadley is an unparalleled resource for Mount Holyoke. Composed in equal measure of industrial, agricultural, educational, and residential strata, of historical and modern buildings that span its entire 250-year history, it offers a living classroom to our students of unique depth and richness. The Art Museum has drawn on that history in its exhibitions, "Locks, Stocks, and Barrels: The South Hadley Canal at 200 Years" (1996) and "Changing Prospect: The View from Mount Holyoke" (2002-03). The natural landscape and the built environment fuel courses ranging from biology to environmental studies to geology to architectural studies and history, offering faculty and students invaluable sites and opportunities for research and analysis.

The Sustainable Design Assistance Program can only enhance the special character of South Hadley. Its focus on South Hadley Falls takes a significant step forward to showcase its spectacular riverfront setting and the dramatic falls that triggered, first, the construction of the canal, then a half century later led to intense industrial development. It tells a story of the ways in which nature, infrastructure, commercial and economic activity are intertwined, lessons that remain critically important today. Two of the cornerstones of Mount Holyoke's educational mission are to prepare young women to engage in the world in a socially meaningful way and to think broadly as well as creatively across the boundaries between specialized fields. The AIA assessment offers a model of the power of collaborative effort and interdisciplinary planning that our students can take with them to other communities in the United States and abroad. Mount Holyoke not only supports but also looks forward to working actively with the town to achieve the goals of this exciting project as it highlights the history and animates the activity of our community.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Davis
Professor of Art and Architectural History

mtdavis@mtholyoke.edu

October 25, 2011

Letters of Support: b.



**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST**

Architecture+Design Program
457 Fine Arts Center
151 Presidents Drive
Amherst, MA 01003-9313

413-577-1575
architecture@art.umass.edu
www.umass.edu/architecture

10 October 2011

Erin Simmons, Director
Center for Communities by Design
The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006-5292

Dear Ms. Simmons:

The UMass Amherst Architecture+Design Program fully supports South Hadley's application for sustainable design assessment of South Hadley Falls. Our program is New England's first and only public, accredited architecture degree. It has a particular mission to bring progressive architectural design ideas and services to cities and towns that are usually underserved by the architecture community.

Our students and faculty have worked with South Hadley on various projects, including town-wide design assessments, interdisciplinary studios focusing on planning issues in South Hadley Falls, and architecture studios addressing specific sites in South Hadley Falls.

Our students and faculty have actively participated in South Hadley's SDAT Task Force. We will remain involved throughout the process.

While we are located in nearby Amherst, and have close connections to Mt. Holyoke College, in South Hadley. We also have a design center in Springfield (close to South Hadley Falls), that can be part of the process.

We look forward to working with the Town of South Hadley and the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment team.

Sincerely

Stephen Schreiber, FAIA
Professor and Director



Executive Committee

President
Thomas RC Hartman AIA

President Elect
Jeremy Toal AIA

Treasurer
Christopher Farley AIA

Secretary
Ludmilla Pavlova AIA

Past President
William Austin AIA

Martha Montgomery AIA
Sigrid Miller Pollin FAIA
Stephen Schreiber FAIA
Julie Waggoner Associate AIA
Kathryn Wetherbee Affiliate WMAIA
Erika Zekos Associate AIA

Executive Director
Lorin Starr

Administration & Programs
71 South Main Street
Sunderland, MA 01375
PIF 413.665.2424
director@wmaia.org

Membership
52 Broad Street
Boston, MA 02109

Newsletter
studiozed@comcast.net

Website
jwaggoner@micablue.com

*WMAIA promotes excellence in
architecture through professional
development, community outreach
and the celebration of architecture
in our region.*

www.wmaia.org

November 6, 2011

SDAT Program Director
Center for Communities by Design
American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Members of the SDAT Application Review Panel:

We are writing in support of the Town of South Hadley's application for an SDAT grant to address development issues in the area of South Hadley Falls. South Hadley Falls presents challenges and opportunities that would greatly benefit from the SDAT process. .

South Hadley, with the assistance of Helen Fantini AIA and Stephen Schreiber FAIA, has developed a very considered scope for this SDAT. The planning committee has done an excellent job in defining its objectives and recognizing the benefit of outside assistance. This represents an extended effort (more than a year) of preparation and consensus building that suggests a strong community interest in sustainable development and a commitment to the SDAT process. In addition to the town's financial contribution to the SDAT, the commitment of \$4.8 million in state funds for a new library project in this area is encouraging; an indication that a considerable investment in this area could help propel the implementation of the recommendations of the SDAT team.

WMAIA has had the good fortune participate in SDATs in four of our communities: Northampton, Pittsfield, Orange and Holyoke. The Holyoke program was funded under an AIA 150 grant. Each time the benefit to the community has been tremendous. We are prepared to support the South Hadley Falls SDAT effort in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Lorin Starr
Executive Director

Letters of Support: d.



November 1, 2011

Mr. Richard Harris
Town Planner
Planning Board Office
116 Main Street
South Hadley, MA 01075

Re: AIA SDAT for South Hadley Falls

Dear Mr. Harris,

On behalf of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), I am pleased to offer support for South Hadley's application to the American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design Assessment Team grant program.

The PVPC has been actively supporting sustainable development and downtown improvement efforts for many years. In this regard, through a number of initiatives including work on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, we have a long-standing relationship with the Town in stimulating positive growth in South Hadley Falls.

The PVPC has been working with the Town of South Hadley since 1988 through its Technical Assistance, Community and Economic Development, and regional planning efforts. We are committed to continuing this relationship with the focus on facilitating improvements to the Falls to make it a more vibrant place for residents and businesses alike.

We look forward to assisting the Town in implementing the SDAT program in the Falls and fully participating in the activities of the SDAT process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James M. Mazik".

James M. Mazik, AICP
Deputy Director for Operations
Community Development Section Manager

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission 60 Congress Street - Floor 1, Springfield, MA 01104-3419
phone 413.781.6045 fax 413.732.2593 TTY 413.781.7168 www.pvpc.org



REC'D OCT 25 2011

Mount Holyoke College
50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075-1496
tel 413-538-2500 fax 413-538-2391

Lynn Pasquerella
President

October 21, 2011

Richard Harris, AICP
Town Planner
Town of South Hadley
116 Main Street, Room 204
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Mr. Harris,

I am writing in support of Mount Holyoke's partnership with the Town of South Hadley in pursuing a grant from the American Institute of Architects. Mount Holyoke College is committed to working with the town and other interested parties in developing a comprehensive plan for economic development in the Falls. This grant and its intended project would continue a powerful campus-community partnership wherein the assets of the College and the assets of the community are used for mutual benefit and learning. The economic well-being and potential of the Falls neighborhood and other communities within and surrounding South Hadley have and will continue to have a direct bearing on the College's continued success.

Interestingly, focus on the Falls comes at the same time that planning efforts are underway across the Connecticut River in Holyoke to bring about economic development, jobs growth, and revitalization there. These efforts, spurred by the decision to locate a new Green High Performance Computing Center there and the return of commuter rail service, are supported by substantial local, state, and, to some extent, corporate entities. Collectively we are working to develop and realize an economic development plan for the area, and I am proud of Mount Holyoke's involvement in these efforts.

I believe it is essential that plans for the redevelopment of the Falls move ahead at this time, in order that the Falls and the residents of that and other South Hadley neighborhoods are able to be part of the economic opportunities that are being developed for Holyoke and surrounding communities.

The College has representation on the Sustainable Design Assistance Team through Professor of Art Michael Davis, who has taken great interest in this project. He shared the following with me in a recent note:

The grant-writing process and our discussions have, for me, been enormously enlightening in underscoring the rich heritage, historical, industrial, and architectural, of the Falls. With the ongoing construction of a series of riverfront parks and the hoped-for plans to build a new public library, we have a moment of opportunity to showcase the town's unique character as well as its dramatic setting that can spark a revitalization of commercial and cultural activity.

Working with town planner Richard Harris has been rewarding and I am hopeful that ways will be found to involve Mount Holyoke students (in architectural studies, environmental studies, community-based learning to name a few) in these initiatives as interns or researchers.

Mount Holyoke both supports this grant application and is committed to continuing to work--with Professor Davis's leadership--to bring about the transformation of this historic neighborhood.

Sincerely,


Lynn Pasquerella

October 6, 2011

Richard Harris, AICP
Town Planner, Town of South Hadley
116 Main Street
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Mr. Harris:

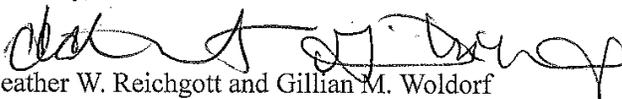
As homeowners in South Hadley Falls, we are writing in support of South Hadley's application for the American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design Assessment Team program.

We see the walkability of the Falls as one of its most important characteristics. We appreciate being able to walk as a family to the newly redesigned Beachgrounds playground, the town library, and Town Hall, among other places. Yet on our way, we find considerable variability in the conditions of the buildings, open spaces, and infrastructure of the Falls. Some houses and commercial buildings are well-maintained; others are in severe disrepair. There are storefronts that have been vacant for more than four years. While it may be easy to walk within the Falls, we are relatively cut off from the rest of town. Public transit is limited to a few bus trips a day, weekdays only, and the US 202-State Route 116 interchange is difficult to navigate with a stroller or a wheelchair.

Improved upkeep of town infrastructure and better access to the Falls will attract more people, businesses, and professional services. At this time, residents from all parts of town come to the Falls to visit the South Hadley Public Library, which is far too small for a community this size. We are pleased that its replacement will also be located here, overlooking the Connecticut River. With the revitalization of the Falls, those who come to check books out of the new library will be enticed to stay a while longer and check out what else the Falls has to offer.

Our block reflects the genuineness and friendliness that we have encountered since we first moved to South Hadley four years ago, and we are proud to call the Falls our home. We wholeheartedly support this endeavor to transform the Falls into a more welcoming place for business, recreation, and sustainable community-building.

Sincerely,


Heather W. Reichgott and Gillian M. Woldorf

Pietras, Werenski & Company, PC
40 Bridge Street
South Hadley, MA 01075

October 31, 2011

Richard Harris
Planning Office
Town of South Hadley
116 Main Street, Room 204
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Mr Harris,

Pietras, Werenski & Company, PC fully supports the Town of South Hadley's application for the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team Program.

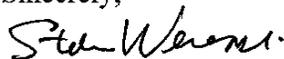
Our Company, a small CPA firm, has been located in South Hadley Falls for almost 25 years. The firm services both business and individual clients.

The South Hadley Falls area has continuously declined during the last fifteen years. Businesses have chosen to relocate out of the Falls rather than invest capital into it. Difficult development obstacles and the rundown appearance of available sites, causes the area to be unattractive to investors.

The selection of South Hadley Falls as an SDAT recipient would be a catalyst for the areas revitalization. The recommendations of an AIA team would be an important part of initiating new development and growth in the Falls.

Our firm believes that South Hadley Falls would be a logical choice form the SDAT program.

Sincerely,



Stephen Werenski
CPA

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH

30 Main Street
South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075

Telephone ~ 413-532-2850
Fax ~ 413-552-0241
Email ~ stpatrickssh@comcast.net
Web site ~ www.StPatrickSH.org

October 31, 2011

Richard Harris
Planning Office
Town of South Hadley
116 Main St. Room 204
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Mr. Harris,

St. Patrick's Parish fully supports the town of South Hadley's application for the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team Program.

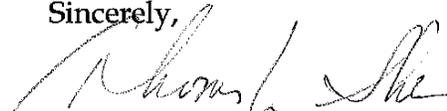
The parish has been located in South Hadley Falls since its inception in 1867. Approximately 1500 families are members of the parish. Many of the members live near the parish within walking distance.

The South Hadley Falls area is an older, former industrial part of South Hadley. Business and residential development has been minimal for decades. The remaining existing businesses are not the type that attract people to the falls.

The selection of South Hadley Falls as an SDAT program beneficiary would be a catalyst for this area's revitalization and allow the parish to more proactively plan for its future.

The parish hopes that South Hadley Falls will be selected for this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Fr. Thomas Shea

Letters of Support: i.

JEFFREY LABRECQUE
Chairman

FRANK DETOMA
Vice-Chairman

CAROL BRIGHT
Member

RAYMOND BROUSSEAU
Member

JACQUELINE CHARRON
Member

WAYNE CORDES
Member

MICHAEL FISHER
Member

BOB PUESCHEL
Member

TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY



PAUL BEECHER
Town Administrator

RICHARD L. HARRIS, AICP
Town Planner

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

116 Main Street, Room 109
South Hadley, MA. 01075-2896
Telephone: (413) 538-5017 * Fax: (413) 538-7565
www.southhadley.org
Email: pbeecher@southhadleyma.gov

November 14, 2011

Ms. Erin Simmons, Director
Center for Communities by Design
The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292

Dear Ms. Simmons:

The Community and Economic Development Commission (CEDC) of South Hadley, Massachusetts is pleased to submit this letter of support for South Hadley's 2012 AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Application. The SDAT project, focused on the Falls area of town as outlined in South Hadley's application, is fully aligned with the strategic goals and objectives of the Commission.

The Community and Economic Development Commission, created in 2010 under a Town Bylaw, addresses critical community and economic development needs within South Hadley. Creation of the Commission was a specific recommendation contained in the Town's new Master Plan. Members of the Commission come from local businesses, including manufacturing, banking and real estate; government; and the general public. Should South Hadley be fortunate to be selected for the 2012 SDAT program, the Commission stands ready to assist the AIA SDAT Team in any way we can throughout the program.

The CEDC has been open to any and all suggestions to help define a future for the Falls area of South Hadley that embraces the three elements of sustainable development—ecological balance, social progress, economic growth. We believe that the AIA SDAT program can be extremely beneficial in helping South Hadley achieve this high priority objective.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Jeff Labrecque
Chair, Community and Economic Development Commission



Town of South Hadley

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN HALL, 116 Main Street Ste. 1
South Hadley, MA 01075-2833
Telephone (413) 538-5052
Fax (413) 538-7565

October 12, 2011

Richard Harris, Town Planner
Planning Department
Town Hall, Room 204
116 Main Street
South Hadley, MA 01075

Re: Support for AIA Sustainable Design Assessment for South Hadley Falls

Dear Mr. Harris,

South Hadley Falls was once an important economic center in South Hadley and the region, with the first successful navigational canal in the country in 1795, and many mills and factories that produced products and provided jobs. Although it has fallen on hard times, residents want to see the Falls restored as a vibrant part of the community again, and to preserve its history.

In the past few years, there have been two large community planning projects that included revitalization of the Falls as one of their recommendations. The Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program sought input from residents in 2008-2009 for their six Priority Natural Heritage Landscape sites, and the Canal Village-South Hadley Falls area was one of the six. The three-year Comprehensive/Master Plan process involved many public sessions seeking input from residents on what the Town should include in its new Master Plan. The completed Master Plan identified revitalization of the Falls as an important goal. In addition, volunteer and town efforts have created gardens and attractive landscaping in the Falls, and organized annual cleanup days to help beautify the area. There are two new parks created by Holyoke Gas & Electric along the Connecticut River that will be opening soon and provide new reasons to visit the Falls in addition to the Bicentennial Canal.

The AIA's Sustainable Design Assessment Team program would provide a wonderful additional level of energy and expertise to the Town's efforts to revitalize the Falls, and would build on the present public dialogue and involvement in planning the Town's future. We, therefore, strongly support South Hadley's application for assistance under the AIA's SDAT grant program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Fleming'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

John Fleming,
Conservation Commission Chair

Letters of Support: k.



South Hadley Cultural Council, 27 Bardwell Street, South Hadley MA 01075

October 20, 2011

Mr. Richard Harris, Town Planner
Town Hall
116 Main Street, Room 204
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Richard:

On behalf of the South Hadley Cultural Council, I am pleased to write in support of the Town's proposal to the American Institute of Architects Sustainable Design Assessment Team Program.

South Hadley's arts community includes practitioners in a wide range of disciplines, as well as those who enjoy and support the arts. Participants in our recent series of open public sessions have expressed a desire to work with the community to implement strategies to connect the arts with revitalization in the Falls, along with a need for Arts Spaces and gathering places. There is genuine excitement about the possibilities.

South Hadley's Master Plan envisions using recreation as an organizing focus for the Falls. Collectively, the Beachgrounds recreation area, the new Gatehouse Park riverfront walkway, Bicentennial Canal Park, and the South Hadley Historical Society's Firehouse Museum—along with a proposed new library, offer a recreational and cultural core on which to build. The new Massachusetts Cultural District program designating local districts to attract artists and cultural enterprises would offer a powerful tool for fostering development around this theme, and we would work to support any effort in that direction.

AIA assistance to move things forward at this critical time would be of enormous benefit and will enable our community to plan creatively and thoughtfully for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lucia Foley", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lucia Foley, Chair
South Hadley Cultural Council

culturalcouncil@shadleyma.org

Richard Harris, Town Planner
Town Hall
116 Main St.
South Hadley, MA 01075

October 10, 2011

Dear Richard,

In 1795 the first commercially successful canal in the United States was built in South Hadley. The unique 250 ft long inclined plane raised canal boats 55 ft to circumvent falls in the Connecticut River, the first major obstacle between the Atlantic Ocean and northern New England. The inclined plane was located where Canal St., High St. and West Main St. intersect.

The South Hadley Canal was a thriving business until the advent of the railroad in 1840. There was a hotel for the boatmen, now marked by an empty lot on Main Street. In 1810 the inclined plane was replaced with a series of locks whose chambers can still be seen, although with great difficulty, behind an auto repair business, who have in the past found the deep pit a convenient place to dispose of old tires.

For about 20 years I served on the South Hadley Canal Park Committee. It was and is a parochial committee with no power to look beyond its narrow mandate of establishing a real canal park with a restored canal and lock chambers. Look through the locked chain link fence and try to discern the progress that has been made in the last two decades.

We on the South Hadley Historical Commission strongly support the application of the town of South Hadley to the AIA's Sustainable Design Assessment Team Program. We can foresee a comprehensive plan that would take full advantage of the incomparable waterfront location of the former canal as a focal point for the town of South Hadley.

Sincerely yours,



Kenneth Williamson

For the South Hadey Historical Commission
43 Woodbridge St.
South Hadley, MA 01075
Williamson98@comcast.net

Letters of Support: m.



October 3, 2011

Helen Fantini
c/o Planning Office
Town Hall
116 Main St.
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Ms. Fantini,

The Master Plan Implementation Committee is pleased to support South Hadley's application to AIA's Sustainable Design Assessment Team program. It is a great opportunity for the Town to make progress in an area critical to its future.

For the past four years, South Hadley has been engaged in finding new ways to shape its future. A citizen-led Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee worked for two years to assess the Town's challenges and opportunities in order to formulate a new master plan. That plan was embraced across the town and has inspired renewed engagement and enthusiasm among businesses, departments, and citizens to move South Hadley more purposefully toward the future that we all would like to see.

The most critical element of South Hadley's Master Plan is the revitalization of South Hadley Falls. It is the part of our community with the greatest untapped potential: close to the scenic Connecticut River, with a variety of housing stock and commercial spaces. It is a challenge, though, that has been difficult for us to wrap our arms around given the complex web of challenges and variables. Professional expertise from the SDAT program would help us develop a coherent, practical strategy, and I am confident that we could leverage this opportunity to build momentum toward a brighter future for the falls.

We on the Master Plan Implementation Committee are very excited about this opportunity and look forward to contributing to the process however we can.

Sincerely,



Jesse H. Lytle, Chair

Letters of Support: n.

TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY

JOAN ROSNER
Chairman

HELEN FANTINI
Vice-Chairman

MARK CAVANAUGH
Clerk

JEFF SQUIRE
Member

MELISSA O'BRIEN
Member

JEREMY KING
Associate Member



RICHARD L. HARRIS, AICP
Town Planner

DORIS LECLAIR
Senior Clerk

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING BOARD

116 Main Street, Room 204
South Hadley, MA. 01075-2896
Telephone: (413) 538-5011 * Fax: (413) 538-7565
www.southhadley.org
Email: planning@southhadley.org

October 17, 2011

Ms. Helen Fantini, Chair
SDAT Steering Committee
c/o Planning Board Office
116 Main Street
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Ms. Fantini,

It is with pleasure that I submit this letter of support on behalf of the South Hadley Planning Board for the pursuit of the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team grant.

There has been a long-standing interest in stimulating positive growth in South Hadley Falls. Following a three year effort, the town completed and adopted a new Master Plan in 2010, its first in over 30 years. Already, many town boards and commissions have started to work on addressing the recommended actions in the Master Plan. In the Master Plan's Introduction and Vision chapter, Core Initiative 1, is "Revitalize South Hadley Falls." The Planning Board recognizes that should the town be successful in securing this grant, efforts to revitalize the Falls could be given a tremendous push in the right direction.

The Planning Board fully endorses the SDAT Steering Committee's efforts, and looks forward to actively participating in the activities of the SDAT process.

Sincerely,

Joan Rosner, Chair
South Hadley Planning Board



**South Hadley Public Library
Board of Trustees**

27 Bardwell Street
South Hadley, MA 01075
Phone (413) 538-5045 • Fax (413) 539-9250
shadleylib.org
Joseph Rodio, Library Director

October 3, 2011

*South Hadley Public
Library Board of
Trustees*

*Mitchell Resnick,
Chair*

*Maxine Cechvala
Connie Clancy*

*Helen Gage
Hollis Haley*

*Ann-Marie Mahnken
Susan Obremski-
Crowther*

*Joyce M. O'Neil
Anna Symington*

Richard Harris
Planning Office
116 Main St., Room 204
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Mr. Harris,

On behalf of the South Hadley Public Library Board of Trustees, I am pleased to offer my support for South Hadley's application to participate in the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team program.

The South Hadley Public Library is a municipal community library located since 1906 in South Hadley Falls. The library collection focuses on contemporary topics and titles, popular authors, and current materials and formats. Public access computers, online access to databases, popular adult and youth programs, and community meeting space are provided at the library. The library's website www.shadleylib.org provides access to databases and materials directly to users in their homes. Given its extended hours and services, the library is heavily used for reference, interlibrary loan, and the circulation of library materials.

Our current aged building is unable to support the community's call for services. The town has identified and purchased five parcels straddling upper Main Street in the Falls neighborhood for future construction of a new public library and is exploring the possibilities of re-purposing the "Fibermark" building on one of these parcels. The historic site chosen for the new library is located on the Connecticut River, where in 1795 the first commercially navigable canal in the United States began operation, making Falls Village a busy shipping and trade center. Our new library will overlook the Holyoke Dam and the canal and will bear witness to the historically significant role of the canal and power generation. We are excited to know that South Hadley will once again have public access to the river and the Falls that gave our neighborhood its name and heritage. After two centuries of industrial riverside sprawl, we look forward to the day when our public library will be the community conduit that returns the gaze of South Hadley toward the Connecticut River.

The recently adopted Master Plan has identified a revitalized South Hadley Falls to be crucial to the continuance of economic health and quality of life in South Hadley. The Public Library Board of Trustees supports and encourages the application to AIA/SDAT for a grant that would enable a community charrette for the purpose of facilitating a shared community vision and plan for Falls neighborhood renewal.

Sincerely,

Mitchell B. Resnick
Chairperson, South Hadley Public Library Board of Trustees

TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY

ROBERT G. JUDGE
Chair
FRANCIS J. DETOMA
Vice-Chair
BRUCE S. MACCULLAGH
Clerk
JOHN R. HINE
Member
MARILYN G. ISHLER
Member



PAUL G. BEECHER
Town Administrator
Telephone (413) 538-5017
Fax (413) 534-1041

SELECTBOARD OFFICE
116 Main Street, Suite 109, South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075-2896
selectboard@southhadley.org

November 10, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

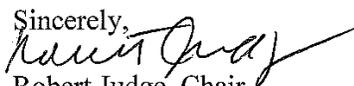
This is a letter of support for the American Institute of Architects Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program grant application from the town of South Hadley Massachusetts, written on behalf of the town's Selectboard. We appointed the application process steering committee and have endorsed its efforts to obtain a SDAT grant from the A.I.A.

Selectboard members have been concerned for many years about the need to redevelop the Falls area. About two and a half years ago, the Board established a Community and Economic Development Commission. Much of that group's work has centered around the Falls. A recent Community Development Block Grant to the town has permitted us to spend more than \$800,000 on infrastructure improvements in the Falls.

The commission members are all volunteers. While they are from diverse backgrounds, none is a professional in the redevelopment field. They have benefited from the expertise of Town Planner Richard Harris and Town Administrator Paul Beecher, both of whom have experience with redevelopment efforts and attend commission meetings.

In order to more fully educate themselves about the redevelopment process, the Commissioners have met with local developers and business people, real estate agents, the South Hadley Electric Light Department Board of Directors, and various town boards (Planning, Conservation, Health). They have gained a general sense of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges in the Falls, but readily admit that they lack the professional expertise necessary to develop a realistic vision and a comprehensive "plan of attack" for that area. Furthermore, they cannot produce appropriate renderings of what a re-invigorated Falls might look like. The latter issue is an extremely important aspect of any successful redevelopment activity in the Falls, because any effort there will likely require some investment of the town's resources, and voters will have to be convinced of the value of any redevelopment effort there. A realistic vision for the Falls, aided by plan and elevation views and other visual aids, would be extremely helpful in this regard. In short, we need more professional help in this effort.

The SDAT grant application steering committee has been hard at work for many weeks on this proposal. We hope that you will give it careful consideration. South Hadley Falls deserves better than its present state.

Sincerely,

Robert Judge, Chair
Selectboard



E Ink Corporation
733 Concord Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
www.eink.com

November 16, 2011

Mr. Richard Harris
Town Planner
Planning Board Office
116 Main Street
South Hadley, MA 01075
RE: AIA SDAT for South Hadley Falls

Dear Mr. Harris,

I am pleased to announce that E Ink Corporation is in favor of South Hadley's application to the American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design Assessment Team grant program.

E Ink expanded to South Hadley Falls in 2009. At that time, we began with 3 employees and have since grown to over 85 permanent employees with plans for future expansion. As the manufacturer of the film materials used in popular electronic reader devices like the Amazon Kindle and Barnes and Noble Nook, E Ink is committed to quality products which are used worldwide. We believe our presence in South Hadley Falls is beneficial to the community and the community has demonstrated that they are essential to our continued prosperity. We are committed to remaining in South Hadley Falls and would welcome improvements to the Falls to make it an even more vibrant place to do business. E Ink fully stands by the SDAT Steering Committee's efforts, and looks forward to participating in the activities of the SDAT process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Nip".

Simon Nip
Chief Financial Officer

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

1. SDAT project news story (below)
South Hadley *Town Reminder*, September 9, 2011

4

TOWN *Reminder*

September 9, 2011

Sustainable Development Assessment Team works to secure grant for Falls area

SOUTH HADLEY – Members of a team representing a spectrum of interests have begun to focus on ideas and projects proposed in recent years for the Falls section of town in an effort to secure a grant for professional assistance in revitalizing the area.

The panel of town residents, with the support of a group of experts from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, began meeting in August in the Planning Board office at Town Hall. The local panel has been charged with completing an application for a grant offered by the American Institute of Architects, or AIA, that will pay for a team of national experts to visit the town and suggest ways to build on the strengths and unique characteristics of the Falls section.

The local group, called the Sustainable Development Assessment Team (SDAT) Steering Committee, is composed of representatives of the South Hadley Planning Board, Community and Economic Development Commission, Conservation Commission, Master Plan Implementation Committee, Historical Commission and Public Library Trustees. Members also include those representing Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley Electric Light Department and residents of the Falls. The team will probably grow further once representatives of the Selectmen, St. Patrick's Church, School Committee, Chamber of Commerce and others are named. Interested citizens are welcome to participate.

At its initial meeting on Aug. 2, the team defined the limits of the study to an area roughly bounded by the Connecticut River, Route 202, Lamb and South Main streets to the Chicopee line.

The group listed aspects of the Falls that enumerated its strengths, most notably the potential of its location alongside the Connecticut River. The local team also noted the area's downsides, including such factors as its location in a floodplain, neglected open spaces, dilapidated buildings and vacant lots.

According to the town's Master Plan, completed in 2010, riverfront recreation associated with planned parks along the river near the Holyoke Dam holds potential appeal for developers and businesses. A Riverfront Park is now under construction, and an extension above the dam to include the locks and gatehouse of the historic canal, is being planned. That Gatehouse Park overlooking the dam could become a cultural tourism destination, according to the Master Plan. Creation of a Business Improvement District was also recommended to support development.

The Master Plan, the product of 24 months of meetings and collaboration between the local 16-member Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and local and regional officials, businesses and residents, also stresses the importance of the Falls in meeting the town's goals for "housing, visual quality and economic development."

"Strong partnerships and new relationships among public agencies, landowners, developers, and particularly the business community will be essential to achieving this goal," according to the Master Plan.

Also planned for the riverfront is a new Public Library on a bluff overlooking the dam and canal that would help bring visitors to the area, long walled off and made inaccessible by industrial buildings. The library location has been endorsed in the Master Plan.

If the application succeeds, the AIA would pay the expenses, with a 25 percent local match, for a team of

experts to visit the town for three days. Their report would outline a program based on the association's goal of "helping communities create a sustainable relationship between humans, the natural environment and place" according to the association's application guidelines. Northampton, Pittsfield, and Orange are three nearby communities that have already participated in the program.

If the application is successful, an AIA staff person and a team leader would tour the project area for a day or two to introduce the leader to the community and spark broader community interest and establish a focus for the project.

A full team of five to seven professionals would follow. They would listen to the ideas and concerns of residents, interested groups and community leaders, and then prepare a summary presentation of its findings. That would be provided to the community and discussed at a public meeting.

The final phase would be implementation. It would start by identifying priorities, preparing an action plan and undertaking immediate objectives. The AIA team would answer questions or offer advice throughout this implementation phase, and critique local implementation efforts after a year or more.

"If we are successful, the SDAT would provide the town with a fresh perspective on our challenges; a potentially invaluable opportunity." Helen Fantini, SDAT steering committee chair.

