South Hadley Falls: Report on the Public Process

Elizabeth Brabec, University of Massachusetts - Amherst
Mark Hamin, University of Massachusetts - Amherst

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Report on the Public Process

Prepared for the Town of South Hadley, Massachusetts
By the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning,
Final Report - June 21, 2012
South Hadley Falls
Public Process

prepared by
Elizabeth Brabec and Mark Hamin

and the
students enrolled in RP 630 Public Participation
under the direction of:
Elizabeth Brabec and
Flavia Montenegro-Menezes

for the Town of South Hadley, Massachusetts
by the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning,
University of Massachusetts Amherst
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The public process effort of the South Hadley Falls Design Charrette and future vision analysis had three primary goals:

- to identify the major elements of a common vision for the future of South Hadley Falls;
- to identify opportunities for future growth, change and development that are appropriate to the vision; and
- to consider creative design solutions to the goals and visions of the community.

To achieve these goals, the project engaged four phases of public process:

1. an initial information gathering phase of documentary research into the history, background and demographics of the community;
2. a visit to and discussions with residents;
3. a community design charrette to discuss potential design options; and
4. a final community forum to discuss revised design options and engage with a panel of economic development consultants.

For the economic development panel, the UMass Project Team secured the consultation of three planning and redevelopment professionals with significant experience and expertise relative to current strategies for community economic development, adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, historical and
cultural preservation, mixed-use downtown revitalization. Panelists Robert Hubbard (Gardner, MA); John Dyjach (Holyoke, MA); and Mackenzie Greer (Berkshire RPC, Pittsfield, MA) each brought their particular areas of focus and specialization into the discussion of the South Hadley Falls neighborhood. These expert consultants reviewed South Hadley’s Master Plan and other recent planning documents, the UMass Project Team’s draft reports on design assessment and South Hadley Falls design visions, as well as other forms of documentation regarding town residents’ and leaders’ public comments on implementation of redevelopment goals.

Based on the community vision survey, comments voiced at the November 16th and February 2012 meetings, and the recommendations of the expert panel, a series of recommendations for the future planning and development of South Hadley Falls emerged. The overview below highlights major areas of strong consensus or high priority, and thus represents a distillation of convergent results from all of the various information sources.

**Major Common Themes:**

- Stronger **connection** of South Hadley Falls with the rest of the Town, greater **partnership** with complementary redevelopment initiatives in Holyoke and throughout the Pioneer Valley region
- Greater **attraction** of new businesses, residents, and visitors to South Hadley Falls but with measures to **mitigate impact** (e.g., traffic, noise, infrastructure capacity, etc.)
Improved relationship with and access to waterfront; enhancement and clustered linkage of recreational and cultural amenities

Emphasis on centers, gateways, and corridors, characterized by mixed use and multiple modes of circulation (e.g., walking, biking, public transit)

Bringing more natural features into the neighborhood, by developing an open space system of parks, greenways, and reactivated water corridors

**Major Common Strategies and Techniques:**
- Greater focusing and streamlining of ambitious Master Plan framework toward a smaller number of highest-priority goals
- Stronger orientation to community development 'quality of life' strategies vs. 'business recruitment' strategies as the prime driver of neighborhood-based economic revitalization (e.g., local housing and business diversity)
- Targeted inventory to identify major clusters of suitable parcels and buildings in terms of title and tenure, condition of site and structure, etc. in order to delineate potential redevelopment 'zones'
- Consider special district designation (oriented to historical, cultural, design or mixed-use characteristics) to supplement standard zoning/development regulations
- Consider Community Preservation Act dedication to Falls redevelopment; also explore potential use of tools such as MGL 21E, 40Q, EOAs, etc.

*Figure 2: Focus areas of interest identified in the planning process: the yellow and green dotted circles around the edge of the Falls indicate major nodes of access; the red area is the Bridge and Main focus area; the blue area is Buttery Brook; the purple area is Riverside; and the yellow area is the primary access corridor and the center, which includes the Town Hall.*
Also, some recommendations regarding what not to do, or to do only with significant reservations or limitations: e.g., Redevelopment Authority with eminent domain power, Community Development Block Grant resources, Tax Increment Financing or Business Improvement District; these may not be appropriate for South Hadley unless done very carefully and specifically.

Specific Ideas that received strong support in discussions:
- attracting commercial anchors such as a hotel
- Capitalizing on historic buildings and sites,
and placing an emphasis on refurbishing and reanimating:

- prioritize the funding of an Economic Development Director to focus on the attraction of new business interests, particularly a grocery store.
- Prioritize the development of appealing places to walk and bike – whether to work or just to go
- Creating business areas with the right combination of residential and commercial – don’t want business pushing residential out
- A variety of public uses to enhance local activity - Performance venues, farm markets
- Prioritize the development of affordable housing – condos, family homes - so that the diversity of South Hadley Falls continues.
Figure 5: A design concept for including public uses into the Falls: a performance venue at Riverside. (Lawson Wulsin and Jennifer Masters)
Figure 6: A design concept for celebrating the history and historical features of the Falls: a historical canal museum and concepts for bridging connections between Riverside and the downtown and residential areas. (Feiqiang Tong and Carol Rumph)
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Goals and Process

Public participation is integral to any planning process and essential to the success of a well-planned and well-designed business district or neighborhood fabric.

The goals of this design and visioning process were:

- to identify a common vision for the future of South Hadley Falls;
- to identify opportunities for future growth, change and development that are appropriate to the vision; and
- to consider creative visions to identify alternative outcomes.

Spread over a period of months from September 2011 through February 2012, the process was composed of four activities:

1. an initial information gathering phase of documentary research into the history, background and demographics of the community;
2. a visit to and discussions with residents;
3. a community design charrette to discuss potential design options; and
4. a final community forum to discuss revised design options and engage with a panel of economic development experts.

The initial information gathering phase of the process occurred in September and October of 2011. During the latter part of October and early November, the team also visited the
community and interviewed residents about their community. To begin the public discussion process, a team of landscape architecture, architecture and regional planning graduate students from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in partnership with the Town of South Hadley, held a public charrette in the town hall auditorium. The goal of this planning charrette was to identify the characteristics of South Hadley Falls, and the conditions that would create a stronger sense of place, and desire among the residents of the Falls and the rest of the Town to live, work and visit the area. Town stakeholders including residents, business owners, town officials in South Hadley and South Hadley Falls participated in this phase of an ongoing dialogue and visioning process.

The public charrette meeting attracted 39 residents, an indicator of strong public support and interest in a topic that was not going to immediately lead to an agenda item of Town Meeting vote. Advertising for the meeting was cast across a wide array of media including online announcements, radio, an article in The Republican and flyers posted in local businesses. Through surveys, meeting attendees indicated that they heard about the meeting most often through “Know Your Town” followed by word of mouth through family and friends.

Members of the public participated in a four part charrette:

- a guided visualization of a future for the area;
- a presentation of preliminary design ideas for potential South Hadley Falls revitalization from five design teams;
- small group dialogue and design feedback;
- closing presentation of small group visualization recommendations for town consideration.

Participants indicated that a good plan is a “balancing act” among interconnected systems including: open space, economic and civic development, interconnected multi-modal transportation and housing.

A second public meeting was held on February 8, 2012. The goals of this meeting were

- to engage the community in a panel discussion with three economic development consultants from communities with similar issues and demographics, and
- continue discussion about the design options for the Falls.

Although the outreach prior to the meeting was not as robust as the first public meeting, the meeting attracted 29 participants. The results of that indepth discussion are presented in the appendix.
South Hadley Falls has a rich and varied history. Focused around the waterway that identifies its boundary, the South Hadley Canal was the first navigational canal in the United States. Construction was started in the late 1700’s and employed the services of many local residents. The canal was designed as a stone incline used to drag boats up or down the 50-foot drop by way of horse or oxen. After completion in and around 1795 the canal operated for ten years on the incline system before switching to a series of locks and inlets. Within fifteen years, population in the Pioneer Valley nearly doubled, partially attributed to employment and services related to South Hadley Canal. South Hadley had been seen as a Longshoreman’s town in which many of the residents worked to transport goods via South Hadley Canal. Beech Grounds served as the cargo landing where dock workers unloaded/loaded cargo for local transport onto flat boats. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the bustling South Hadley Falls economy was supported by an interconnected system of transport, production of goods such as flour and textiles and an entertainment destination for visitors by way of steamboat.

Across the river, Holyoke’s population increased by way of immigration and some of its most skilled workers made their home in South Hadley Falls. Although much of the immigrant population dealt with the poor conditions due to many employment opportunities and lack of mobility otherwise.
Across the river, Holyoke's population increased by way of immigration and some of its most skilled workers made their home in South Hadley Falls. Although much of the immigrant population dealt with the poor conditions due to many employment opportunities and lack of mobility otherwise. Unfortunately Holyoke began a boom and bust period well in the 1920’s. Mills closed or moved south, the country was adjusting after two World Wars, and South Hadley Falls felt the popular shift to suburbanization with a growing reputation of South Hadley as a bedroom community.

**Age and Ethnicity**

The 2010 U.S. Census shows that the total population of South Hadley Falls (census tract 8211) is 6,939 people with a median age of 42.8 years of age. Compared with national demographics, South Hadley Falls has an older population than Massachusetts and national means, in the over 45 age groups (see the purple line in figure 1 above). It is also significantly below national and state levels in young adults (20 to 24) and small children (0 to 9 years of age).

Further analysis of census demographics shows that reported ancestry varies widely in the census tract that includes South Hadley Falls (tract 8211). The highest reported ancestries are Irish, French, Polish, French Canadian and German, with smaller numbers of Italian, Scots and Portuguese ancestry. These are all indicative of a population that settled in the area predominantly in the first half of the 20th century and earlier.

**Housing Age**

A look at the housing stock of the area reveals that the majority of housing units are owner occupied (figure 3), and built either before 1939, or in the post-war building boom between
1950 to 59. Of the rental units, the vast majority were built before 1939, and the vast majority are two to four unit properties (figure 4).
Figure 4: The number of rental properties, units per property and relative age in South Hadley Falls
Advertising and Outreach

Prior to the South Hadley Falls Public Charrette, a major advertising campaign was developed and implemented. Public participation students drafted advertisements and contacted media outlets, including the Republican, Daily Hampshire Gazette and radio stations WFCR and WRSI. Students also distributed posters and fliers to community members and business owners/employees in person. Additionally, the school superintendent was contacted about advertising on the electronic reader board, however the group was told that the board is reserved for school functions only. In the future, an additional school-based method would be helpful for future public meetings to attract a younger constituency including young professionals and families. With the aide of school participation, activities for youth involvement in planning could also be included. Appendix A contains a complete listing of all media contacts and outlets.
Based on a survey of attendees, the two most common venues for hearing about the meeting was through the Town Office, and word of mouth through friends and family. A number of individuals cited multiple venues for being reached by the meeting advertising, the most common of which were “Know Your Town,” through friends and family, followed by the flyer and the town website.

### Comparison with previous town public meetings

Existing records of town hall meetings indicate a between five and ten residents on average who regularly attend. The town did specify that depending on the agenda these figures could rise well above the average to between sixty and one hundred people. Attendees are drawn from an overall town population of close to 18,000 residents. On November 16th, 2011, the South Hadley Falls Design Charrette attracted 39 residents, an indicator of strong support. Meeting facilitators were told by town administration that this had been the best attendance they can remember for a meeting that did not have an agenda for a town vote.

The Charrette attendance was close to 25% seating capacity and organizers were well prepared to accommodate a larger sample of South Hadley’s population. Similar design oriented meetings have been held in the past with the November 16th Charrette having a substantially higher attendance then past meetings. Residents usually find out about meetings through word of mouth, vested interest, or the regionally based newspaper, “The Republican.”
Figure 6: Frequency of success of advertising venue for attendees who cited multiple event notices.
The Visioning and Design Concept meeting on November 16th, 2011, had three modes of participatory action for residents:

1. a visioning exercise that asked meeting participants to envision what South Hadley Falls of the future looked like and what attributes it had;
2. a written survey focused on asking attendees a number of questions about their vision for the future; and
3. the presentation and discussion of design concepts developed by design teams from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The summary results of process are presented in the following discussion.
The most common theme cited by meeting attendees for the future vision of South Hadley Falls was for an increased number of shops, including retail, commercial and small business uses. The second, third and fourth most important themes were parks and open space, having an accessible and walkable community, and the importance of the river and water to the community. Also cited in the visioning exercise were the importance of the library to the future of the community, housing, restaurants and history or the preservation of the history of the community.
Focus Group Summaries

The meeting participants broke up into five focus groups, each led by a group of students. The goal for these break-out groups was to discuss a variety of design concepts, which had been developed by the students to spur discussion about the future of South Hadley Falls.

Design Team Group 1: “Energy-Build, Grow, Expand”

Design Team Members: Katherine Ostermeir, Marcus Lafrond, Jennifer Masters, Lawson Wulsin, Fang Fang, Feiquiang Tong

Regional Planners: Jonathan Cooper (scribe), Jef Fries (notes)  Sally Miller (facilitator)

Design Summary

The stated focus of the design team was energy. It was further elaborated to mean human energy, economic energy, and sustainable energy production. Specifically, the design team wanted to find ways to harness the energy of the community and find ways for it to build, grow, and expand. The first pair of presenters began with a presentation that was referred to as “Mount Innovation.” The idea was to use the hillside south of Route 202 as a site for a research and development facility to create innovative technology as a basis for economic development in the area. Particularly through the construction and development of an interactive science museum and learning center inspired by the Boston Museum of Science. The second portion of the design team’s presentation focused on connecting the innovation area, industrial area, and the residential area using green space and public plazas to “re-knit” the community. The idea is to make South Hadley Falls a comfortable place to live and work. All while presenting places for the employees and residents to be together and build community.

Participant Discussion and Common Themes

It was stated that there are not enough places for them to spend time and no means for them to get to or from the South Hadley Falls. There was also a concern expressed over the lack of “hangout” space, both for youth as well as the young adult crowd (20-30 year olds). One possible solution to the youth issue was using the proposed public plazas to provide performing arts space. Second, the lack of public transportation in and to South Hadley Falls and the severe limitations placed on local business through the lack of adequate parking was also a common theme.
Community Consensus on Issues and Ideas

At the end of the breakout session time, the group came to a consensus on some issues and ideas that would provide an overview of the discussion. Focusing on the waterfront and finding a way to bring in performing arts or other youth space was one such idea. Further, there was a desire to see more industry return to town to accompany the new library project. In regards to the proposed design ideas, the members of the community felt that using the hillside or mountain property was a very positive idea, as it is a part of town no one ever thinks about. The other idea that seemed to resonate was opening up streams of connectivity that would allow for economic activity and community space.

Design Team Group 2: “Anchoring South Hadley Falls”

Design Team Members: Nate Frazee, Hang Zhou
Regional Planners: Rory Fitzgerald (Scribe), Pamela Landi (Notes), Jen Stromsten (facilitator), Tim Ignacio (Greeter & Facilitator)

Design Summary

The Group 2 designers saw South Hadley Falls as a center, an ‘anchor’ for the community and the region. The designs built on ‘the bones’ including

- historic uses and structures, from canal to churches;
- expanding waterfront uses to echo past connections such as a ferry;
- encourage new uses such as ‘blueways’ for recreation;
- use history to drive the future of the community;
- celebrate the ingenuity that created this community; and
- redevelop as a community connected to the ecosystem.

Participant Discussion and Common Themes

- Improving parks and park access ... connections between recreation;
- commercial anchors like a hotel would build upon existing assets... spill over from economic activity from Holyoke, Golf Course, draw down activity and nightlife from the region;
- capitalizing on historical paths – refurbishing;
- willingness to rethink the Falls so that for instance flooding can be accommodated... Let floodplain be floodplain or become a park, nature core around which a commercial and residential activity can be focused;
- establishing connectivity within South Hadley along the blue way on the river, capitalize on natural features of South Hadley such as view shed of River and Holyoke Range;
- relationship with the river as a resource, aesthetic attribute, and as a site of economic and recreational activity. i.e. commercial activity and community agriculture;
- pedestrian friendly activities, shopping, dining, riverfront access and water based recreation;
- full service, self-contained, walk able community; and
- image of the community, portals into South Hadley Falls.

The design goals that the community expressed interest and desire for in their community included: establishing pedestrian...
friendly spaces throughout the community that serve to promote growth, self-containment to create a full service walkable community, and improving connections to the river and the surrounding region throughout the Falls.

The community members were very receptive to the designs presented to them by designers Nate and Hong. They agreed that change needed to happen in the Falls without compromising the current residents of the area. They also expressed a great desire for really establishing commercial anchors in the area to draw visitors and revenue from the neighboring region. Capitalizing on economic activity due to the local colleges, golf course, and neighboring towns is something that the residents suggested during the discussion. The hotel idea presented was also widely embraced as a necessity to the area because there is currently no location for visitors of the community to stopover. The image of the community as a place to visit and enjoy was also discussed as the wish to establish portals into South Hadley Falls arise. Creating a hotel and vibrant downtown was viewed by the community members as a way to bring economic activity, families, and future residents into the town.

Lacking a real sense of a vibrant, thriving, and sustainable downtown core, South Hadley Falls does have a lot of possibilities and the community members really seemed to understand this potential. This desire for a vibrant and lively downtown was a topic that every member of our group discussed at least once during the discussion. The community members acknowledged that actions needed to be taken to connect the Falls to the river regardless of the means and measures required. They also agreed that if creating these connections caused changes in the circulation and structure of the downtown core, that it may be necessary to allow the town to connect to the riverfront and the view sheds into the Mount Holyoke Range. Pedestrian friendly roadways and paths throughout town were some of the suggestions discussed. Local businesses, coffee shops, dining, and retail stores were all elements that the community members felt were necessary to enliven and promote the downtown of South Hadley Falls. The desire for community gardens and farmers markets also was expressed and embraced by the community members. They really connected to sustainable measures and sought to strengthen the Falls connections to local business and farms throughout the region.

Parks were discussed at length during the meeting. The community members really felt it was necessary to connect the parks in the downtown, while striving to establish more park space in and around the downtown. These parks were seen as assets to the town that could capitalize on the environmentally diverse and aesthetically pleasing elements in the town such as the views up the Connecticut River and the spectacular views of the Mount Holyoke Range. Additionally the designer's thoughts of creating blue ways along the riverfront and promoting waterfront access through the downtown were ideas the community members were very receptive and encouraging towards.

Finally, the community members really shed light on the striking element of flooding in the downtown area. The designers failed to mention the floodplain in their presentation and the residents were sure to point out this shortfall to the designers. They saw a need to really let the floodplain be a floodplain, rather than fight it, try and embrace it and plan for it in the most successful and sustainable way possible. Many ideas were discussed which included bringing in trailers to house shops and retail that could easily be removed in a high water situation, raising all the buildings up an additional story, and creating first floor level parking to alleviate the flood levels impact. These ideas really emphasized the importance of local knowledge of a place; the members of the community knew the river and what it was capable of. They understood the need for planning for unseen environmental changes and disasters.

In conclusion, the breakout session was extremely effective to establish goals of the community members of South Hadley Falls.
Our group, as said before was very diverse and covered many topics. They really thought about a lot of different elements and their enthusiasm and energy really helped to establish attainable and practical goals to use when moving forward with development in the Falls. Their hopes and suggestions were very well thought out, and should definitely be incorporated into a toolkit for the future growth of the town. It was a very successful and educational session.

**Design Team Group 3: “Industrial Spine”**

**Design Team Members:** Katrina Spade, Gaetan Jacques, Jaime Rznic, Patrick McGeough, Emily Gaperetti, Tai-Hsiang Cheng

**Regional Planners:** Brian Reid (scribe), Meagen Mulherin (facilitator), Russell Pandres (notes)

**South Hadley Attendees**

There were thirteen members in attendance. One of which explicitly stated that they lived in the South Hadley Falls area. While there were introductions, members did not mention their jobs or their roles in the town.

**Design Summary**

Their design revolved around the idea of an “Industrial Spine” for South Hadley. This included the movement of automotive garages out of the floodplain area, the creation of an industrial incubator, and connecting the incubator in the north with the Falls area by way of a greenway for biking and walking.

**Participant Discussion and Common Themes**

- Support for high-tech industry with possible support from a town Economic Director;
- environmental restoration along Buttery Brook for public recreational space (biking/walking);
- establish interconnected bike paths through South Hadley and the Falls area for transportation;
- cluster synergetic businesses together (ex. Hotel and restaurants, grocery store and bank, bike shop close to bike lane) for efficient land use and consumer convenience; and
- smart redevelopment of the floodplain that is flexible for flooding- nature core around which a commercial and residential activity can be focused.

**Participant Discussion and Common Themes**

The Industrial Spine, the group of residents proposed five key ideas. First, South Hadley would pursue the hiring of an Economic Director to lead redevelopment in South Hadley Falls (e.g., the transfer of automotive garages out of the Falls area and initiate a high-tech incubator potentially led by E-Ink). The residents hope this will lead to a stronger high-tech industry base breathing new life into South Hadley. Second, the environmental restoration of Buttery Brook could make way for the development of a bicycle and walking trail. One resident suggested new trails to be developed as an “Industrial Greenway”, while another thought bike paths should connect retail stores and eateries in the South Hadley Falls to the rest of the town. Third, the town should work with businesses to cluster similar enterprises together such as the automotive garages in one area and restaurants & retail stores in another. Residents hope this will foster competition and use land more efficiently. The residents understand that relocating businesses is difficult, but also an important component of the process. Through compromise and negotiation, residents believe this can be accomplished. Fourth, redevelopment of the floodplains is key to redevelopment in the South Hadley Falls and residents would like to consider residential development due to the need for new housing. In order to mitigate the effect of floods, the lower
levels would be planned as garages with the upper levels as condos. Finally, the group came up with four key principles to keep in mind for South Hadley Falls redevelopment, “retention, relocation, reuse, and reclamation”.

Design Team Group 4: “Regenerating a Village”

Design Team Members: Peter Webster, Kimia Samimi

Regional Planners: Belen Alfaro (facilitator), Toni Marie Pignatelli (facilitator), Margaret Engesser (scribe), Josh Chase (notes)

South Hadley Attendees

There were 6 people in the group who were very open and willing to discuss. There were 2 women, a recent resident, a small business owner, a professor, a member from the Historical Commission and a member from the Housing Authority.

Design Summary

The design team proposed a greenway plan to connect all parts of SHF. A main focus was on mixed-use redevelopment, emphasizing commercial and residential development and entertainment venues. There was also much focus on preserving the historical and cultural character of the town.

Participant Discussion and Common Themes

- Mixed-use buildings for the South Hadley Falls downtown;
- riverfront access to highlight one of many existing town assets;
- infill development of vacant lots with affordable and market rate housing in downtown to create starter homes for young families, but not condominiums; and
- highlight historical character of South Hadley Falls within new development.

The townspeople were very interested in the idea of the revitalization of a downtown center and creating more mixed-use buildings to attract more age groups, especially the younger population. This would also hopefully be complemented by more access to the riverfront as a way to draw people to South Hadley Falls. There currently is not much connection to the river and it was noted that people who live on the riverfront are not aware of their “waterfront” property. There was talk of redeveloping several currently vacant lots into mixed-use buildings, including the Town Hall and old library buildings. While there was enthusiasm for such redevelopment, it was also made very clear that the town wanted to preserve the culture and character of South Hadley Falls and maintain it for those who have lived there for their entire lives. There was also discussion of introducing affordable housing in downtown by replacing vacant lots with infill and creating starter homes for young families, as a method for attracting younger residents. Condominiums were mentioned as being undesirable as they would not be successful in South Hadley Falls.

There was also talk of the historical aspect of the town and integrating the history into new development. It was mentioned that the town “needs help in bringing forward the history” and really making it present throughout the town. Preserving the town’s history is essential to the residents, and there was discussion regarding the need for a museum in town to showcase their history. The town has an abundance of historical materials however they would need a plan and funding to implement a museum. The museum would also be a part of mixed-use development, as it could be built downtown alongside restaurants and shops.
Design Team Group 5: “Re-Animating South Hadley Falls”

Design Team Members: Ryan Ball, Kyle, You Jin, Mohamad Farzinmoghadam, Blaise Tricon
Regional Planners: Pedro Soto (facilitator), Stephanie Molden (scribe), Seth Morrow (note taker)

Design Summary

Amply titled, “Re-Animating South Hadley Falls,” the Team 5 design concept aims to capitalize on South Hadley Fall’s close proximity to the Connecticut River. The central goal of the design is to re-establish a connection between the citizens of the Falls and the Connecticut River, “Re-Animating South Hadley Falls”. The following is an analysis of the participants’ critiques of the proposed design and recommendations they have made to improve the initial design’s practicality in addressing the most urgent needs of the community.

The design team proposed several river-based recreation activities such as water skiing, canoeing, paddle boating and swimming to address a lack of recreation in the community. The idea is that recreation will serve as a catalyst in creating a substantive sense of community. While the community members welcomed the recommendations, collectively they felt that recreation on the water was not very feasible. For example, one resident informed the design team that 6 inches below the water exists eight, 12” diameter pipes which were used for water input to the factories on the river, making water recreation dangerous to implement. Additionally, the cost to remove unused infrastructure, such as these pipes would prove to be very costly and difficult to remove.

One of the main concerns amongst the group members was that the true, most urgent needs of the community were not being addressed. While the community members appreciated and ascribed to the potential value that recreation could add to South Hadley Falls, they felt that more energy should be focused on four specific areas, namely improving the following: community walkability, addressing “real” community needs, affordable housing and access to public transportation. In addition, the group highlighted the following list as their true needs and wants.

In general, the initial design proposed by team 5 does not accurately reflect the needs/wants of the community. Some of the suggestions made below should be incorporated into the final design in order to reach the goal of “Re-Animating South Hadley Falls” and overall improving the sense of community.

Participant Discussion and Common Themes

Community Walkability
- Dog park
- A skate park
- Ice skating on beach grounds

Real Community needs
- Taking your kids for a walk at intersection of Main St. and Bridge St.
- Would like to see recreation/youth center
- Roller blading, biking, hilly, on beach paths
- Outdoor Amphitheater
- Pick up games at beach, asked to leave
- Farmer’s market in designated area, OR maybe community garden
- April @ Firehouse Museum, Canal Village Potpourri, tag sale, fiddlers, great musical space
- Fall Festival & Flea Market in designated space
- Need a bakery (natural foods?), small grocery stores
**Brick and Mortar**

- What will be developed, concern for an increase in retail shopping
- Mixed use of old buildings
- Experience of firehouse turned into a center for the arts, recycled
- Music, food, fun, recreation, arts of all kinds
- Outdoor amphitheater and indoor theater at Mt. Holyoke-used to have summer theater-good event
- Thursday Farmer’s Market in Common in the summer
- Student housing does not really exist
- Accessibility- bus does not go around falls, students want to live on bus line
- South Hadley needs affordable housing

**Access to Public Transportation**

- Peter Pan bus @ Mt. Holyoke
- Amtrak coming to Holyoke, also has existing bus station
Case Study Examples for Comparative Assessment

The UMass Project Team chose consulting panelists with experience and expertise in economic and community redevelopment (especially with a focus on adaptive reuse and preservation goals to accompany redevelopment) for cities and towns of similar size and circumstances to those of the South Hadley Falls area, e.g., Massachusetts area communities with a history of 19th century industrial development related to water power, which have faced stable or declining population and economic transition away from manufacturing over the course of the 20th century, and which also may have new opportunities for cultural and recreational resource-based economic revitalization. Robert Hubbard presented key examples from his experiences as Director of Community Development and Planning and as Executive Director of the redevelopment Authority for the City of Gardner, MA, in addition to state-wide work for the Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors and Massachusetts Economic Development Council. John Dyjach shared his economic redevelopment experiences from the neighboring City of Holyoke, MA, which include current roles as Assistant Director for the Office of Planning and Economic Development, member of the Holyoke Redevelopment Authority, and of the Holyoke Economic and Industrial Development Corporation. His standing as a long-time resident of South Hadley was an additional bonus. Mackenzie Greer's background as both a designer and a planner informs her perspectives on adaptive reuse and historical/cultural preservation as integral to redevelopment. Her work as a graduate
-time resident of South Hadley was an additional bonus. Mackenzie Greer’s background as both a designer and a planner informs her perspectives on adaptive reuse and historical/cultural preservation as integral to redevelopment. Her work as a graduate student at UMass involved detailed study of redevelopment strategies for Holyoke, Northampton, and Pittsfield, MA. In her current position with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Mackenzie has been able to bring a variety of regional case study examples (e.g., Adams, North Adams, Lee) to the discussion.
Comments by
John Dyjach

edited by Mark Hamin

[John Dyjach is the Assistant Director, Office of Planning and Development, City of Holyoke, MA. John has also served as a member of the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, the Redevelopment Authority, the Public Library Corporation and the Emergency Planning Committee for the City of Holyoke]

The Public Forum for the Redesign and Redevelopment of South Hadley Falls provided an overview of demographics, the significant historical assets of the area and recommendations from the UMass Studio Findings. The information provided perspectives that may help shape future development in South Hadley Falls.

Common themes of the graduate student’s presentation, the panel perspective and public Q&A included:

- Creating projects and policies that would integrate the entire community of South Hadley.
- Quality of life issues for residents including the concern of increasing blight and the future of the distressed properties.
- Capitalizing on the proximity of the Connecticut River.

The UMass presentation provided unique concepts that individually or in combination could be a catalyst for redevelopment. These unique concepts are important to spur creative thinking. Comments made at the meeting indicated more information was needed for these proposals as well as time for analysis.

The South Hadley Falls discussion initially centered on current conditions such as how to deal with traffic, noise and properties falling into disrepair. The discussion shifted to focus on the Town’s Comprehensive Plan Core Initiative #1 (energize continued redevelopment and investment in South Hadley Falls, in part by using recreation as an organizing focus for economic development, tourism, and investment activity). A concentrated effort on this initiative could result in the added benefit of unifying the Town. Town support of the public library project is an excellent step toward this.

Other suggestions for areas of focus and opportunities included:

- Promote historic significance of the South Hadley Canal with the opening of the Gatehouse Park.
- Establish more direct public transit connections to access the Five College area and to access the Transportation Center and potential passenger rail station in Holyoke.
- Strategically place visible and attractive signage at key gateways and wayfinding signs at parks, town hall, etc.
- Develop an inventory of existing businesses to promote business to business relationships.
- Modify the existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Program and aggressively offer the Local TIF option for smaller developments especially in Gateway Areas.
- Amend zoning by-laws to reflect a “village center” concept.
- Consider vacant lots for off-street parking.
- Resolve the disposition of the Texon and Fibermark buildings.
- Continue upgrades to the Beachgrounds Park and connect commercial interests with family friendly and sporting activities at the park.
- Promote the establishment of a weekend
Farmer’s Market in the Falls to

- provide local fresh food options for residents and to draw visitors.
- Partner with the Village Commons and McCray’s Farm or others to do seasonal weekend trolley rides to promote activities and attractions throughout the town.

The Urban Renewal concept may be well-suited for successful and sustainable economic and community redevelopment for the area. Although it is unlikely that the South Hadley Falls has the level of distress to qualify as an Urban Renewal area, it does have projects that are consistent with the Urban Renewal principle of facilitating public actions to spur private development. The public library project along with Canal, Gatehouse and Beachgrounds Parks could be an excellent catalyst to drive revitalization. The town has also invested in infrastructure improvements to upgrade utilities and streetscapes. Concentration of improvements to public property and providing incentives for private development in gateway areas is strongly suggested.

Additional research found the LDS Consulting Group study on the Rental Housing Supply and Demand for the Fibermark building particularly applicable for the future redevelopment of South Hadley Falls. A section of the report states:

“While shifts in employment, housing and mobility, the principal center of commerce today in South Hadley has focused around the Route 116/Route 47 node with the Village Commons, Mount Holyoke College, and the Woodbridge Historic District. However, the Subject Property has traditionally been the local area of commerce. This is due to the recreational area, industrial and governmental employment centers and local retail and restaurants. The area is undergoing renovation and renewal. The closing off of a portion of the street along with a new planned library across the street will create a pedestrian friendly environment. There is a dependable bus service available in walking distance to the site which will connect potential residents to shopping areas and surrounding communities.”

Focus is on South Hadley Falls and the framework exists for the area to once again evolve into a flourishing area for recreation, culture and commerce. The efforts of the UMass Team and the upcoming analysis by the American Institute of Architects Sustainable Design Assessment Team will bring focus to the visions expressed by residents and help guide town officials on the priority of actions necessary to make the renewal of the Falls a reality.

**Additional resources for consideration:**

Massachusetts Economic Development Incentive Program


MassWorks Infrastructure program


Urban Renewal


Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Comments by Mackenzie Greer

edited by Mark Hamin

[Mackenzie Greer is a Community Planner with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. She has worked as an Outsource Planner (a planner-on-loan program of BRPC) for the Town of Adams and City of North Adams. Mackenzie’s recent projects include village center zoning, walkability analyses (part of an “active living” focus of our community health and wellness work), and modernization of parking standards. Mackenzie is also support staff for North Adams’ current comprehensive planning effort and a regional sustainability plan.]

The Village of South Hadley Falls is in an exciting time in its development. The recent completion of the Master Plan has illuminated a number of opportunities and challenges on the horizon for this community. As I reviewed information prior to attending the resident discussion, I was struck by the powerful history of the canal, the settlement of South Hadley Falls, and its place in the industrial development of the Connecticut Valley. What a huge impact a small community can make to the region. The design concepts prepared by the UMass studio which incorporated this history into their approach resonated most with me.

There are many opportunities available to this community:

- South Hadley Falls can embrace its capacity for affordable workforce housing. By protecting and enhancing its housing resources, it can attract young families looking to be part of a community with traditional neighborhood design.

- Embracing the arts and culture is a means to engage community members, activate young people, and bring together generations of residents. Find creative means, utilizing arts and culture, to help locals see their town in a new light and attract visitors to experience what South Hadley Falls has to offer.

- Supporting and enhancing the pedestrian network – its sidewalks, crosswalks, safety and general connectivity – are means to enhancing property values, attracting a diverse community, reducing dependence on vehicles, and creating opportunities for socialization between all generations. The traditional neighborhood design present in the Falls makes this a much easier goal to achieve.

- Reconnecting the village to the town appears to be one of the greatest needs in South Hadley. I heard from residents that not only is there a physical disconnect, but also a social one. While bridging the physical gap may take many years, taking a programmatic approach may bear more fruit, and sooner. In particular finding ways to extending the potential impact of Mount Holyoke College through classes, other programming, and housing should be a focus.

- Take advantage of this momentum built through the comprehensive planning process, and subsequent design activities. These are opportunities not to be missed – as one resident said during the feedback session, “please invite me back again soon.”

- Sometimes a singular catalyst can inspire a community. The recent park and future library are exciting developments which seem to have inspired many residents, have and will serve as much needed community gathering spaces. Capitalize on this energy and means to bring people together.

I look forward to learning more about what is ahead for South Hadley Falls!
I. Main Common Themes / Take-home Points from various town and UMass documents, especially in light of public input during meeting.

I would label the most prevalent themes as more closely related to Community Development than Economic Development, including:

- Reconnect, in both a physical and a social context, South Hadley Falls with the rest of South Hadley
- Reconnect South Hadley Falls to the riverfront
- Address parking and traffic issues, particularly lack of parking and traffic noise.

Another repeated theme expressed support for visioning and thinking ‘outside the box’ but also wanted project alternatives that are rooted in the reality of South Hadley Falls’ demographics, physical and natural environment, history, etc. and the town’s ability to mobilize resources for implementation.

2. Selection and justification for consensus priority areas of specific focus in South Hadley Falls based on documents, discussions and my professional assessments.

The Comprehensive Plan is overly ambitious with an implementation structure that recommends many committees. More focus is needed. I think concentrating on the strategies contained in the Plan’s Core Initiative #1 makes a lot of sense. Particularly the following:

- Capitalize on Gatehouse Park overlooking the dam as a cultural tourism destination.
- Encourage additional recreation-related uses throughout the Falls, and find new opportunities to create
recreation connections - both literal and informational.

- Develop a new Library and SHELD facility along a main thoroughfare in the Falls area.
- Work with area churches and societies to integrate existing recreational facilities into the new recreational district.
- Improve signage, transportation and streetscape to direct travelers to the Falls.
- Link for mutual benefit with recreation, tourism, transportation, economic development and cultural initiatives in Holyoke.
- Connect the South Hadley bike/pedestrian network with any pedestrian/bike development in the Holyoke area.
- Encourage expansion of the PVTA link with the Holyoke transportation hub.

I removed establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) because my experience with trying to establish a BID gives me serious reservations about spending the time and effort needed to mount such an effort unless significant support from property owners already exists within the proposed district.

I would supplement the strategies related to transportation, streetscape and bike/pedestrian networks with specific references to ‘Complete Streets’ (refer to www.completestreets.org) and to the need for additional off-street parking.

Finally, the recurrent mention of re-establishing an active, lively outdoor gathering space might be framed around establishing an open-air market place in the Falls area.

3. Recommendations of tools and techniques most well-suited for successful and sustainable economic and community development in South Hadley Falls.

Rename and reorganize the Planning Department into the Department of Planning and Community Development. Rename and redefine the Town Planner position into the Director of Planning and Community Development.

Hire an assistant to the Director with a focus on community development and grant writing. Consider naming and defining the position as the Community Development Coordinator. I recommend this staffing approach as opposed to creating an Economic Development Coordinator position to be more in keeping with the prevalent themes and priority areas identified above.

Preparation and adoption of a professionally and thoroughly updated zoning bylaw is a recognized priority that will require some outside consulting services. The Comprehensive Plan contains a large number of good suggestions for consideration.

I understand the study and development of design guidelines is underway.

Additional tools and techniques that should be considered:

- Prepare and publish a troubled properties list based on appropriate criteria such as nonpayment of taxes, health and safety code violations, abandoned, etc.
- Establish a defined target area eligible for funding based on a slum and blight inventory or an income survey establishing more than 50% of the households met Federal low-moderate income guidelines to facilitate access to funding for CDBG-eligible activities, e.g., Housing Rehabilitation, streetscape improvements, parks and playgrounds, signage and façade program, etc.
- Adopt the Community Preservation Act.
- Focus the CD Coordinator on additional grant programs for implementing strategies listed above available from the MA Department of Housing and Community Development, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, the MA Historical Commission and the MA Board of Library Commissioners.
- Disseminate information about State and
Federal tax credit programs including contact information for consultants that will help property owners utilize the various tax credit programs.

- Reassess the criteria for Tax Increment Financing and designating Economic Opportunity Areas to make the programs more attractive for prospective investors.

Respectfully,

Robert L. Hubbard

March 2, 2012
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Outreach and Advertising

Meeting Flyer and Poster
The Republican press release
The Republican post meeting article
Advertising venue and type
Flyers distributed by students in South Hadley Falls prior to the public charrette meeting.
Community Conversation

Let's talk
South Hadley Falls

What does South Hadley Falls mean to you?
What could it look like in 2020?
How would you like it to look?

Come join the conversation about design and development ideas for the South Hadley Falls neighborhood in a public forum! We want to invite you to share your preferences and priorities about various visions for South Hadley Falls.

When: Wednesday, NOVEMBER 16th, 7:00-9:30 PM
Where: Town Hall Auditorium, 116 Main Street, South Hadley Falls

*refreshments/snacks, childcare provided*
For more information or if you have access issues,
please contact southhadleyfalls@gmail.com

::Organized by the UMass Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning
and the Architecture and Design Program in consultation with the Town of South Hadley::
## Advertising Location and Outreach Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Outreach Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican/Masslive.com</td>
<td>Media - Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily hampshire Gazette</td>
<td>Media - Print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFCR</td>
<td>Media - Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRSI</td>
<td>Media - Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getty Mart - 17 bridge st.</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop and Go - 4 bardwell st.</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home on Canal</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebenezer Choo’s</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Y near SHF</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careys Flowers</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halfway House and Lounge</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hadley High School (During voting)</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allereys Package Store</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Brunelle Law Offices</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Pizza and Grinders</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Defense Specialists</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
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<td>Ideal Accessories Auto Detailing</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
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<td>Ann Ra Boutique</td>
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<td>South Hadley Electric Light</td>
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<td>River’s Edge Hairstyling</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laundromat</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Y near SHF</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland Farms</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Village Commons (several locations)</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Village Eye Care, PC</td>
<td>Posters &amp; Fliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Odyssey Bookshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Thirsty Mind Coffee Shop</td>
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<td>Ace Hardware</td>
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<td>Congregational Church of South Hadley Falls</td>
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<td>GRO South Hadley</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
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<td>Know Your Town</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Hadley Arts Council</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
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<td>South Hadley Public Library</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Hadley Women’s Club</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick's Church</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
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<td>School Committee</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Assessors</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
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<td>Conservation Commission</td>
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<td>Historical Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainability and Energy Commission</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Analysis of Advertising Success**

Frequency of responses to survey question, “How did you find out about the meeting?”, including multiple responses.
The Republican Press Release

South Hadley residents invited to program on future of the Falls
Published: Monday, November 14, 2011, 8:15 PM
Patricia Cahill, The Republican By Patricia Cahill, The Republican

SOUTH HADLEY – “What does South Hadley Falls mean to you?”
That will be one of the questions at a “Community Conversation” about the future of the Falls area in South Hadley, on Nov. 16 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Town Hall, 116 Main St.

Everyone in South Hadley is invited. Refreshments will be served. Admission is free, and child care will be provided.

The event is organized by a contingent of University of Massachusetts professors and graduate students in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning and the Program in Architecture and Design, who have been engaged by South Hadley to help bring a neglected part of town back to life.

“At one time the Falls area was an economic center of the community,” said Paul Beecher, Town Administrator. “It was bustling with activity.”

Then the factories began to close up and go south – literally, in some cases. Businesses moved out and fires destroyed some property. So, while Mount Holyoke College and the Village Commons thrived to the north, Main Street and the rest of the Falls neighborhood declined.

People are clearly troubled that the Falls has become in a sense disconnected from the rest of the town, and one of the goals mentioned in South Hadley’s Master Plan is to revitalize this once-vibrant area.

Falls has such a great constituency who would like more services,” said Sally Miller, a UMass graduate student working on the project.

“It has empty buildings and limited access to the waterfront. But there is so much potential, and there is so much pride in the history of the falls.”

UMass Professor Mark Hamin, who is coordinating the project, said public participation is crucial. “It’s a very interactive, intensive process,” said Hamin.

The program on Nov. 16 will start with presentations by five graduate-student design teams, who will offer “preliminary visions” of what the Falls could look like, based on research they’ve been doing since summer.

Then the assembly will break into small groups, where residents will have more of a chance to speak. “We want to elicit ideas, to find out what their vision is,” said Miller.

Residents can bring up whatever they want to – traffic, businesses, trees, street lighting, water, building size, convenience, safety.

The idea is for the UMass group to take it all in and, later in the process, come out with
recommendations that reflect the values of the community.

Hamin is clear that the UMass people will not be telling people in the Falls or the rest of the town what to do. “Our role is to consult, advise and give guidance,” said Hamin. “We serve as a resource so the town can make the decisions.”

Three professors and about 50 graduate students have participated in the project, which is funded by a $20,000 grant.

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The Republican Post Meeting Article

Graduate students, residents discuss visions for South Hadley Falls
Published: Friday, November 18, 2011, 1:15 PM
Patricia Cahill, The Republican By Patricia Cahill, The Republican

SOUTH HADLEY -- “We would love some kind of grocery store in the Falls,” said Diane LaRoche. “And a farmers’ market we could walk to!”

LaRoche was one of about 50 residents of South Hadley who showed up for a program called “Community Conversation: South Hadley Falls,” at Town Hall on Wednesday.

Residents were almost outnumbered by the team of graduate students from the University of Massachusetts who, under the guidance of faculty, had been working all semester on new visions for South Hadley Falls.

The neighborhood used to be a bustling commercial center, but declined as factories and stores closed up and left. “Revitalizing the Falls” has been a goal of the town.

UMass professor Mark Hamin coordinated the university-town collaboration.

The grad students came armed with a slide show, easel pads, maps and a new color brochure about the Falls. They envisioned everything from high-tech industrial parks to a trolley to “remediation ponds” to a riverfront water park with a four-story climbing wall.

They also came armed with enthusiasm about an area they said had “great potential.”

“When it comes to engineering, you’re not afraid to tackle anything,” said graduate student Nathan Frazer, referring to the 18th-century ancestors who built the first commercially navigable canal in the Northeast in South Hadley.

The graduate students had worked in five groups, each with its own vision for South Hadley Falls. They presented their ideas briefly in slides, then split up to take their posts at five different display tables. There, members of the audience browsed and asked questions as they
munched on a splendid array of snacks.

The grad students then shepherded the assembly into small groups, and that’s where residents had their say.

“If we have a nice shiny new library,” said resident Richard Orlick, “we need a factory next to it to support it.”

Resident Larry Dubois said the Falls started declining when the rotary on Route 202 was built, because north-bound traffic began crossing the 202 bridge instead of the bridge in the Falls.

For buildings in the floodplain of the Falls, Dubois said the solution was to add second stories to existing buildings and save ground floors for parking. He also liked mobile vendor carts for a “street market” effect.

Other suggestions that came out of the groups: A hotel for businesspeople and golfers, a nightlife (new Falls resident Adam Roberts said he likes hanging out at the Egg and I, but he’s always the youngest person there), bikeways, performance spaces, sidewalks, safe intersections.

Jeffrey LaBrecque, manager of the Village Commons, liked the idea of clustering similar businesses together, like the restaurants in Northampton and the auto shops on West Springfield’s Riverdale Street.

One of the student displays showed how a cluster of auto shops in Denmark solved ecological and visual problems by creating a fabulous living roof of grass, like giant arms hovering over the shops.

Hamin said the team will use all the information residents had provided, work it into their proposals, and come back in January for another presentation.

“I think it went great,” said Joshua Chase, a graduate student in Landscape architecture and Regional Planning. “Everybody was quite involved and quite honest.”

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South Hadley Falls Community Meeting Survey
(Thank you for your participation. We will use this survey information to develop a vision for South Hadley Falls, and to improve our communication strategies in the future.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where do you live?</th>
<th>South Hadley Falls</th>
<th>Other South Hadley Neighborhood</th>
<th>Town other than South Hadley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long have you lived there?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex/Gender:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Occupation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How did you find out about this meeting? (please check at least one)

- [ ] Poster
- [ ] WFCR
- [ ] WRSI
- [ ] South Hadley Town Website
- [ ] Church Bulletin
- [ ] Flyer
- [ ] Know Your Town Facebook
- [ ] Hampshire Gazette
- [ ] Friends/Family
- [ ] MassLive.com
- [ ] Other, please specify:

What do you value most about South Hadley Falls? (For example, types of buildings, green or open spaces, activities, people, etc.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Responses</th>
<th>Where do you live?</th>
<th>How long have you lived there?</th>
<th>Sex/Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>How did you find out about the meeting?</th>
<th>South Hadley Falls Personal Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Hadley</td>
<td>40 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>College professor now at selectboard meeting</td>
<td>Other - I've been active in getting your group down here to help</td>
<td>Would like to see a mix of residential and small businesses, shops, restaurants. The river and the falls should be more visible to residents and visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hadley Falls</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Family/Friends</td>
<td>Northamptonshire</td>
<td>No answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hadley Falls</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Friends/Family</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hadley Falls</td>
<td>29 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Technical assistant</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Friends/Family</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>Other - Richard Harris</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Hadley Falls</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>No answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Hadley Falls</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Postdoctoral fellow (psychologist)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Friends/Family</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>No answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Hadley Falls</td>
<td>44 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Town Planner</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>Other - UMass</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Hadley Falls / Old Luman Road</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>RN Quality</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Manager - Hospital</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>A vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with employment centers, regional recreational facilities which are connected to regional bike and walking systems. As area which provides housing for area colleges and draws residents throughout the town and region. Vibrant river front.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| South Hadley Falls | 40 years         | Male                          | Retired    | 55  | VK \\
| South Hadley Falls | 35 years         | Male                          | Retired    | 52  | CEDC \\
| South Hadley Falls | 3 years          | Male                          | Retired    | 50  | M \\
| South Hadley Falls | 4 years          | Female                        | Retired    | 39  | ARP Professor | No answer                      |
| South Hadley Falls | 6 years          | Female                        | Retired    | 35  | Friends/Family | No answer                      |
| South Hadley Falls | 4 years          | Male                          | Retired    | 32  | Friends/Family | No answer                      |
| South Hadley Falls | 4 years          | Female                        | Retired    | 31  | Friends/Family | No answer                      |
| South Hadley Falls | 4 years          | Female                        | Retired    | 28  | Friends/Family | No answer                      |
| South Hadley Falls / Old Luman Road | 30 years | Female                        | RN Quality | 60 | Manager - Hospital | No answer                      |
| South Hadley Falls | 40 years         | Male                          | Retired    | 45  | CEDC \\
| South Hadley Falls | 35 years         | Male                          | Retired    | 52  | VK \\
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| South Hadley Falls | 3 years          | Male                          | Retired    | 50  | M \\
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46 South Hadley Falls Public Process Report Appendix
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Hadley</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Professor at Mont Holyoke</td>
<td>Friends/Family - South Hadley Town website - Know your Town Facebook - Tried living with more shrubs etc. A welcome to South Hadley arch way sign. Nice views of the park benches. Historical markers / signs explaining South Hadley / Holyoke history. War shutle / Ferry service to/from Springfield. Restaurant &quot;on the water&quot;. Commuter parking - 4th Holyoke. New Transportation hub. B &amp; B on the River. Small craft access (canoe, kayak).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hadley</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Retired - Busy on South Hadley Town Commmitee</td>
<td>Friends/Family - South Hadley Town website - Know your Town Facebook - Tried living with more shrubs etc. A welcome to South Hadley arch way sign. Nice views of the park benches. Historical markers / signs explaining South Hadley / Holyoke history. War shutle / Ferry service to/from Springfield. Restaurant &quot;on the water&quot;. Commuter parking - 4th Holyoke. New Transportation hub. B &amp; B on the River. Small craft access (canoe, kayak).</td>
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**Frequency of Vision Statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords or phrases</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River, water</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shops, retail, commercial, small businesses</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks/Open Space/Vegetation/Green</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access/Walkable</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>History, historic preservation</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential, housing</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreational facilities</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active, lively, vibrant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed-use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural activities - music, art, theatre</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bikeable</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
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<td>Community</td>
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<td>Views</td>
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<td>Grocery store, farmers market</td>
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<td>Storefronts</td>
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<td>Attractive, tasteful, beautiful</td>
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<td>Beachgrounds</td>
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<td>Renewable energy</td>
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<td>Bus route</td>
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<td>Modern</td>
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<td>Natural</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>No empty lots, buildings</td>
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<td>No large, non-local chains</td>
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<td>Trash and recycling cans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainable/green</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entry, gateway into Falls</td>
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<td>Profitable and tax producing</td>
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<td>Experimentation</td>
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<td>Daytime workforce</td>
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<td>Welcome sign</td>
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<td>Nightlife</td>
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<td>Churches</td>
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<td>Northampton</td>
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<td>Buildings in good repair</td>
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<td>24 story skyscraper</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
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<td>Memorable</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferry service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverse</td>
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Community Response to the Design Options
Public Charrette Meeting Small Group Dialogue Transcripts

November, 16, 2011

Each design team has two sets of transcripts including: notes taken by note taker on a computer and notes taken by a scribe that were written for the general audience during the visioning process on large flip-charts.
Design Team Group 1: “Energy-Build, Grow, Expand”

Design Team Members: Katherine Ostermeir, Marcus Lafrond, Jennifer Masters, Lawson Wulsin, Fang Fang, Feiqiang Tong

Regional Planners: Jonathan Cooper (scribe), Jef Fries (notes), Sally Miller (facilitator)

Brackets identify the design teams questions or input. Citizen comments are set off by one indent, and responses to those comments are set off by another indent. We begin, as with most epic poems, in medias res: a gentleman would like some specifics.

How many solar panels or wind turbines will be needed? Up to 130% of town land would need to be covered in solar panels.

[Team: Research and Development Center built into the hill. A museum and learning center. Job/skill training facilities.]
   Wonderful to see these ideas.
   Where will the funding come from? How to achieve these goals?
   It’s like we’re stuck in this box and trying to get out.
   I never think about that piece of property.

[Team: Intellicoat and E-Ink. Companies re-knitting the community. Bringing work and residential life together. Bringing talented people together.]
   • These companies are sort of a God-send.

[Team: On the Connecticut - Wind, Water, Solar]
   • The river is so invisible.
   • After Irene, the beach was gone. Kind of interesting, the ebb and flow.
   [But what about getting out there?]

[Team: What does Energy mean? How can it connect industry and community? What about main SHF nodes: Library site, Beach, and Main St?]
   • You have to be in the marketplace. That’s what made this area the greatest in the world.
   • Is Main & Bardwell parking lot an inefficient use of space?
   • We don’t have enough parking.
   • Only six parking spaces at the current library!
   • Fishermen haven’t forgot about the beach.

[Team: Where could activities thrive? Markets or performance spaces.]
   • We need more warehouse space.
   • An industrial swap meet at High & Canal.
• The Warehouse? banquet hall in Holyoke provides services to SHF youth groups, organizations, etc.
• I came to see Group One because I liked the org [Group One Scribe: I don’t know what I meant by “org.” JC]. To transform spaces physically/socially.
  • How do we get that surplus labor? Are there shareholders?
• Kids hang out at Friendly’s now? [Why?] It’s walkable from local schools.
  • At 15, 16, I didn’t have my license.

[Team: What about interactive spaces for kids?]
• If it’s a museum, probably not. Need choices for exhibits, etc.
• Currently using the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. A lot of home-schoolers go there for science learning.
• The Lions Club runs the Leo’s Club, with access to Lions Club network.
• We need spaces for Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School.
• I see a lot of other towns where they have a community garage
• What about old jeep trails and old roads?
  • Those are state-owned now.
• Every part of South Hadley had productivity.

[Team: Where do people gather?]
• My garage, making things.
• The Falls is municipal. We need a way to extend that communal attitude/use.
• The Laundromat. The Roost.
  • El Guanaco. But what about access? R25 Bus?
• Mount Holyoke College. Can we connect SHF and MHC?

[Team: What are your priorities?]
• You put up a library, I want to see a factory next door, supporting the library.
• The tax base is 92% residential, 8% commercial.
• I chose to live in the Falls, but most people in the younger bracket gravitate to the Village Commons. I want a place to spend time.

SCRIBE NOTES

*Denotes public quote, idea, or questions

Area south of 202- Industrial area on the hill:
Want to create significant base economy and money for the people of SHF
Including a new R and D facility up on the Hill
  • Integrated and inserted into the hillside
  • “Mount Innovation” Development of innovative technology to eventually be manufactured by the people of SHF
  • Also function as an interactive science museum and learning center for the people of
SHF
• SHF would be an energy independent society that is run and built by the people of SHF
  *Question-“How paid for?”
• Expressing vision of what we think will work best
• Concern over the way to create the vision through the “path of least resistance”
• Concern from a resident over the expense of a project like this and the draw to construct in Southern US

Student explanation of the studio process: 6 week studio that does not have a funding component and the plan for tonight is to talk about the ideas and less focused on the line items and the budgeting
  *-“To have ideas thrown out as potential visions of what might be can get people excited and we can work our talents towards that”
  *-“As member of the EDC, what you are doing is what we are looking for, something outside of the box, totally fresh ideas, doesn’t mean we need dollars and cents right now”

**Student presentation:**

Industrial E-Ink area
• Who wants to work there? How to make it a pleasant place to work and make it a part of the community
• Focusing on connecting industry with the innovation area and the residential areas by including green places and plazas
• Re-knitting community
• Goal to bring talented people together to exude and breed success

Master Plan and Vision:
• Thinking in new ways of what energy means, not just water and solar, but the human energy and how you can harness that to build and grow and expand to harness the community
• River focus and renewable energy focus
• Economy, energy, and Human activity are the focus
• Center for the community located on the river front between the damn and 116
  • Taking idea of a traditional community center and turning it inside out to expose and engage the river front.
  • Primary Nodes: Library connected to main street commercial district connected to the beach area
  • Connections with continuous paths and outdoor terraces
  • Could be a phased plan
  • Views of the river is huge and having them be flexible spaces in terms of size and what could happen in them
  • What kinds of things would people like to have space to do?
  *-What are you offering for the industrial sector? You are talking about
economic energy
*—“Just basic services, warehouse space”
-Answer: focus on highlighting the industrial space and have not proposed to get rid of any of it
-“We have buildings here that could provide the same services as the “warehouse””

*—“Generation of power for economics is great, and opening up the riverfront for people to enjoy”
*—Adam who works with the Youth Commission: “Like the energy focus of the plans, and opening up channels of ways energy can move”
  - Question from Students: What does human energy mean to you?
    *—Reasons for people to come into a space and invest in it, create, and perform labor that may not be economically based, but it all helps the overall economics and makes people want to come here more
    *—Youth hang out at friendly’s how do we get them to hang out in the community place
  - Why Friendly’s?
    *—Ice cream, walkable, lack of other options
    *—Wayne says “I was hanging out there 45-50 years ago at age of 15-16 and could get there on the bike and it was a central place to hitch a ride”
    *—Adam from youth commission thinks it would be great to have a shuttle to the area of SHF

How to get youth involved:
*—“Do the youth have a stake in it and are they leading the process? Are they shareholders in the space down there, helping run them, put on events?
-Students asked residents their opinion of an interactive science place or place to explore science like the Boston Museum of science
  *—If museum...probably not. If it’s a youth space and they get to build and get to use and have a stake in deciding what is there, then yeah they would use it.
  *—Wayne discussed the Leo (Lions) club that does volunteer work and it would be a good group to get involved. They have a community service project to do and that is already happening for different things in town but some may be able to provide human power
  *—Side note: Lions meet at the Polish-American club on 202 because there is not much place for meetings

*—Helen: I like that the concept (overall) is clear and it can radiate out and connect with the town
*—As far as youth there is the PVPA (performing arts charter school) they don’t hang out here, but if they had a space that they had ownership of it would be great
*—Relating to the river would be great, performance or science
*—The River is Invisible
*—Post Irene no beach or fishing
Assured that the beach has recovered from the storm

Discussion of the edge of the waterfront and how it could be utilized when the water is lower

*Richard: “you were talking about science and getting kids interested, I seem to come from a different generation. At the age of 15 I bought a motor from a car at the junkyard and a car from a junkyard and for $50 I had a 66 GTO
  *“places down south have a community garage”
  -Answer: The plan includes possibly removing the auto shop and creating a community workshop space to bring your car or bike and learn to fix it yourself and there would be some pros there to help

*Richard: “we also used to have some great Jeep Trails on Olympia that are now all gated off, they have been there over 200 years and the people that respect it go up there and manage the trails. But people are concerned for the environment. My brother is there all the time on a quad.”
  *-Even a small parking lot with a mud hole

-What’s most important to you?
  *-“Creation of wealth the way it used to be, wealth should be dug from the ground processed and taken to market, taking out a loan or paying your taxes is not creating wealth”
  *-That is what made this area the greatest in the world, Holyoke was “queen of the industrial nations” I would like to see SHF get there
  *-Adam: Town seal is great, Industry, agriculture, and education
  *-Wayne says: “its harder these days to manufacture, I have lost customers to China and you are not going to get manufacture down along the river, but E-Ink is like a godsend
  *-Rich: What do you think about warehouse space for an industrial swap meet?
    -Jen (student): Flexible space for lots of different people for lots of different space
  *-Group ID’d building on the corner of High street that the town already owns as a great space for that

What activities already go on at these spaces and what should there be more space for here in the community?
  -And how is community built in SHF?
    *-Around work
    *-People would live here and work in the mills
    *-Helen: it was...
    *-Every part of SH had productivity
    *-Pearl city pond mentioned

In terms of today, where do people get together and where do they hang out and what do they do?
  *-Garage making stuff, very interested in a community garage
    *-Also “need work, sick and tired of being under employed”
*-Falls is the municipal park of town, Town hall, police etc. all offer up meeting spaces is there a way to extend the marketable meeting space without feeling like you are in town hall
*-Space that is town sanctioned but not town hall
*-Discussion of community garden
  *-Group joked that it would be a good use for the golf course
*-Idea of performing arts spaces is wonderful and vital part
Are there linkages with the college that might help foster connection?
  -*It's also important that people spend money, eat, coffee, and ice cream cones

*-There is no bus to the Falls area and there is no easy way to get here
  -*Great project would be getting back to tramways
  -Studio looked at 2 trolley system along a designated path
  -*Believe the tracks are still there

*-Frank how do people build community?
  -*The Roost and the Laundromat, also lots of meetings
*-Richard: one loss was the library now that they reconfigured the common
*-Frank: not enough off street parking
  -*Parking is a major issue*
*-Municipal space is laid out poorly and is ugly
*-Merchants say there is not enough parking and people have to walk long distances
*-Natural gas powered trolley would help

Ending:
*Most important thing is balance: Library is new and we need a bustling factory next to it to support it
*-92% residential tax base, we need to change that a little
*-There is not much room for expansion in the industrial park
*-Adam: “As a 20-30 something I moved to the falls for the chance of revitalization. But everything is in the common (thirsty mind etc.) and most in this age bracket want to be there, but there is some magnetism to the area and there has to be a café or something and a space that people will spend time in. Place to go and just hang out
  -*Wayne: hard to get one without the other, need people to move in to the area
Design Team Group 2: “Anchoring South Hadley Falls”

Design Team Members: Nate Frazee, Hang Zhou

Regional Planners: Rory Fitzgerald (Scribe), Pamela Landi (Notes), Jen Stromsten (facilitator), Tim Ignacio (Greeter & Facilitator)

SCRIBE NOTES

- Who are we trying to attract? Likelihood of lots of students small
- Questions as to what the designers know about the Falls and why it deteriorated.
- The demise of the Falls is due to the floodplain - Cannot build on floodplain
- Rotary cut off traffic to the falls, only way to revitalize is to go up 1 story with the buildings.
- Access to Holyoke no longer necessary with rotary
- Everything has to pass flood plain rules, could do parking underneath
- Park revitalized, but it has created tension because Holyoke visitors come in, vandalism is an issue
- Incorporate floodplain into design “commercial around with park in center”
- View of Mt. Tom and River, Holyoke Range
- Go North up the River - connections to Ferry street and Rt 147
- Buttery Brook doesn’t get you far
- Boating idea on Ferry Street to be connected to the Riverfront Parkway
- Blue- Way is recreational waters.. members of community unclear about this term
- Should have pedestrian walkway from light here to library, everyone forced to use other way, also incorporate outdoor dining.
- Stabilize commercial and residential area
- Beach Park - “great improvement, but need to merge access to river with these projects”
- Other area not inviting
- General Note: History can be capitalized on: Mixed use , business with apartments, vibrant small shops
- More economic small shops and green space
- Like the hotel idea, but where?.. does town really need 2 funeral homes
- “Self-Containment” walking distance to enhance community
- Walkability throughout, how industrial area can be green
- New businesses as economic anchors
• Again, anchor commercial and green space
• Questions of the overall process and how it works…each group focusing on a different area of town
• Things to do at night needs to be looked at
• Using river as a renewable energy source
• Water park…using resources
• Green space: Community Gardens, fabulous, Agricultural, grow tomatoes and beans…addresses many issues
• Need for hotel in town
• People who would come to hotel would eat and shop locally
• Not capitalizing on what’s happening
• Traffic issue, with signage, trees an issue, obscured view in cloverleaf area
• Gateways into town:
  • Bridge from Holyoke, no welcome or streetscape
  • Buildings as town anchors, more welcoming
  • Police doubles as town hall parking
  • Walkways laterally, attachments to bike paths
• Attached Parks
  • Hard to think of 2 parks being so close
  • Opportunity occurs to get them connected
• Grandiose plan…forget money
• Be careful what put down, could come true
• Area lost,
  • Parking, street vendors, storefront sidewalks, and sidewalks behind buildings looking to riverfront
  • Idea for trailers for vendors, moveable,
  • commercial and residential
  • Art studio, cafeteria: see the river
• Connect spaces
  • Visibility…vandalism goes away
  • Layered opportunity here
• How accessible is park from Bridge Street
  • Ground level can’t see river, only real view is from the Bridge

**Computer Notes**

* CM denotes “community member”

[Team: We are trying to see SHF as center. ] What we looked at in terms of anchoring is
actually building something that will serve as an anchor for the Falls. Look at currently what SHF has vs. what you historically had. You had four stories buildings that created the corridor. The bones are still here. We are looking to see how to build on that, play on history and to build on that (to make) an economic vibrant area. Assets include: the canal, Carew, Catholic Church, some of the buildings – structures that exist and the corridor

- Looked at ferry, 1 of 5 ferries up to White River Junction VT. (121 miles) Important connection that historically was there (saying it was a big factor, there was no other ferries nearby)
- Looked at canal (what made the river useable, made a connection) and how it is connected. SHF always had engineering. SHF has engineering ingenuity. Not afraid to exercise ingenuity.
- Look at library as anchor as northern end. (Spoke about fun ideas for reusing areas. At the northern end of the Falls he describes different ways to use that area in relationship with the library. Talking about Carew as outdoor action center and can use stretch as a demonstration area for white water rafting and kayaking). Draw in destination points; draw in young people to establish future generation (of residents and users). (Establish) longevity in terms of activity.
- Canal system connected with waterfront park along stretch near library. Allow for waterfront property at controlled pace so you are not worried about flooding, preserve ecosystem and allow social activity that will spur development.
- Look at 3-4 stories that will provide amenities shopping that people in SHF will use and not have to go elsewhere. Provide additional building and more homes, people like to live where there are future amenities, propose a hotel complex to draw people to the Falls and also serve the industry. Create an opportunity to spur development, anchors development and creates connection in SHF and region.
- Put a bridge (? Did not understand), reference to ferry. Incorporate buildings like the Carew, not take things down. Re-incorporate trolley that connects people to waterfront from hotel to create constant flow and connect with Mt Holyoke College. Was where trolley line ran.
- Use historic to drive future of the community.
- Connect with eco system, bring more green more and make whole area a park and make connection for you outside your home.
- Separate buildings can incorporate views and can address water and soils, topography and vegetation.
- Can drive home ecological aspects as well as economic. Create system that is whole.]

**Transition to Seated Conversation**

**Facilitator:** Can offer feedback, suggestion, share ideas and designers will draw on trace. Process is to have community to talk with each other.

**Community Member (CM) Question (woman between 55-75):** Who are we trying to attract?

**Nate:** First meeting (with Economic Development Committee?) looking to bring in young engineers into this area, create amenities for current residents and will draw bring in new people, may bring in new students

**CM (man 45-55):** Likelihood (is slim) that lots of students will not come down. (Holyoke has its own residences so students won't live here and Holyoke has their own hotel.)
What did (Nate & designers) know about the demise of the Falls?

*Nate:* the railroad...canal system obsolete and factories left...and there was no long term goal

**CM (man 45-55):**
Flood plain problem demise of Falls is the flood plain. The rotary, the Falls was vibrant because all the traffic went through falls over bridge. Rotary changed things. Problem is the first story is flooding and you cannot rebuild. Beachground Park was revitalized for people of South Hadley –k and Holyoke people coming and some vandalism happening. In order to revitalize here you must deal with here.

**Jen:** Stop and put some of these thoughts on trace. (was CM pointing to map)

**CM (man 45-55):**
Problem is you cannot do something here first until you do something to stabilize the Falls. Falls did not deteriorate from time I was a kid and once rotary built cut off the Falls.

**Jen:** Good time to put trace. Go back to who is this for, go back to that.

**CM (65-75 man, retired wildlife conservation and teaching):**
(First to introduce the radical idea of shifting the town center)
Pick up on what ...could pull flood plain so it can flood and push back the amenities. I see that with commercial around it with a park in the center. (*interpretation - One of the things he wanted to see more of was activating all along the CT river, see more a focus of activity – need to be a part of public experience, seeing the nature into the center of town, moving town to accommodate the nature, looking at natural features that are amazing at the center) - ... the park goes up the river itself and there are roads and places up there (not accurate) and view up there with CT river on one side and Mt. Tom on another - it's a knockout (view). Canal Park... (Not talking about a transportation destination, more about the natural connection) Chicopee not a destination. Go up river, beautiful area of town that you can lift up and do something great for the town. Put two ends of the town together (The South Hadley center and the Falls). Buttery Brook does not get you too far (does not extend up to Mt. Holyoke College area).

**Nate:** This group did not focus on Buttery Brook as other groups did. Consider blueway park for canoeing

**CM:** Problem with canal is that power company owns it and they are hard to work with. They were supposed to take something down and it is 10 years later (still there).

**CM:** Connect Canal Park to connect with 47 (Returns back to previous comment)

**CM (man 45-55):** Need to get 200 feet above dam for safety. Need to get beyond dam because there is a dam behind the dam - the old Indian dam.

**CM:** What is a blueway?

**CM:** (ans.) Connect waterway....(did not use word corridor, but implied water corridors for recreation)
**CM (man 55-65 from on the board of the Orchards golf course):**
Traffic free zone up to library, force people (to walk) with a pedestrian mall all the way up to library. To allow pedestrian network to build buildings with residential along that corridor, which addresses some of the elevations (issues).
Handle traffic here (in main corridor – Bridge Street waving), force people to drive and park on that side can utilize that area for outdoor dining.
(*interpretation - Direct all vehicular traffic to commercial corridor, not just to free up area for walkability and safety, but to restore activity that was lost by the 202 diversion*)

**CM (40-45 woman, parent, was on comprehensive plan steering committee):**
Have to stabilize commercial and residential first. Have beautiful new Beachgrounds. She notices despite nice park it faces cement wall where river is. I use it all the time with my kids it is better than before but merging it with other park (i.e making walkable connection to other parts of riverfront)
Love notion of pedestrian access, walkable and getting to the river. I with my kids don't go into parking lot (waves at area – center of town) because it is not inviting.

**Jen:** On top of beauty, what are other things that make a place inviting?

**CM Asw:** (Mentions visioning exercise and what came to mind)
Like idea of mixed use, artist studios, lofts, apartments, offices on top.
Would love all different age groups elderly young family artist with more vibrant small shops coffee shops.
No coffee shops says college student (CM recalling a conversation with a college student). That is what comes to mind. More pedestrian and small shops with green space attached.

**Nate:** if autos are removed are safer for small children. Burlington case study (Church Street, a pedestrian mall) comes to mind.

**CM (man 55-65 from on the board of the Orchards golf course):** Think (of town as) a whole self containment. Everything you want is within walking distance. Don't need to get up in the morning and get in car. New progressive mayor across river may take advantage of the falls before we do

**CM (woman between 55-75 first to speak):** Get new mayor to collude with us.

**CM (40-45 woman, parent, was on comprehensive plan steering committee):**
How does industrial area can be grouped (pointed to top of design, industrial park zone)(not sure person said grouped, could not hear well)
I drive through to go to library, scary to drive hairpin turn. Once you get to the library ok. Never thought of greening area and if it were it would be fabulous. New business there could be economic anchor.
Like hotel idea. Could be used by college families. But I kind ...(of think?)
Blair brought up there is a funeral home there, does the town need two instead of a hotel. Likes idea if there is a way to take advantage of that corner (may have pointed to map).
Something else than parked cars, not sure what it would be.
Like idea of approach to anchor commercial business with green space and bringing them
together.
(she is referring to auto oriented commercial and many parking lots along commercial corridor)

**Jen:**
When we get to closing remarks we are going to ask someone from each group to share ideas
Not looking for minutes. This group is focused on the downtown revitalization and key aspects and have someone from the public to talk about that.
And to give a few minutes …
This is the next step on a long process; some are detailed and regulatory and some more visioning like this, (but) layers that connect at some point. This is meant to be to be coupled with constraints, but (here and now) to step back from what is there and talk about centering downtown in different place.
Looked at SHF 4 2 months and never occurred to shift from center. Think about this more.

**CM question regarding process:** Each group given different theme and best ideas coming together at end?

**Nate:**
Each of us (will) concentrate on smaller site; but we are now talking about the larger picture.
May look at one block. That is what next process is and …. (what is presented tonight) some is ‘fill’ (maybe bad to say – N.) Some has not been looked at in more detail. We did not want to give you a broken vision (tonight).
Each group will hone (in on) one each piece.
Teachers have guided each group to look at different area so that there is a diversity of represented areas.
He (naturally) will look planning and development of site as LA; and architects will look at buildings

**CM (woman between 55-75 first to speak):**
Things to do at night, which is something that needs to be looked at.
Bring students, restaurants, coffee shops and library.

**CM(40-45 woman, parent, was on comprehensive plan steering committee):**
Like idea of using a place like it traditionally was. It would be nice, a water park at Beachgrounds. Wouldn’t it be nice if (use) recycled water or whatever. Not just looking at river but tapping into resource of the river. (May have missed a few specifics here)

**CM (woman between 55-75 first to speak):**
Green space, community gardens
One (community garden?) in northern part of town, fabulous to have one down here (clarifies what kind of agriculture) Thinking something directly (like) agriculture where you can plant your tomatoes and your beets. (urban agriculture)

**CM (man 55-65 from on the board of the Orchards golf course):**
Definitely a need for a hotel in the town.
I am a member of Orchards come to town (for our golf events) and have to stay in Holyoke
and Chicopee. These (referring to the organization he is a part of or another group?) are the types of people that will stay local, eat local. Want to attract (them)
We lost out big time when…LPGA came to town ...college proximity to orchards, not facility was enough. (Hard to hear)

_**Jen:** Not in capitalizing what is in town already (rephrase)_

_**CM (65-75 man, retired wildlife conservation and teaching):**_  
Way 202 took commerce out of town, happened in Amherst too  
To keep traffic did it deliberately. Now route 9. No one goes there. (Missed some, hard to hear)

_**CM (35 man):**_ No one mentioned Northampton. One of other presentations, a nice big sign - not issue we have - so many trees and could be a traffic issue (it was a sign up high where people on 202 can see SH) (He was saying way roads come in the cars…….)  

_**Jen:** Unsafe?

_**CM (35 man):**_  
Some of trees put there, I don't think how tall or broad they would become and don't know if there is zoning that would follow. ...obscured.  
(Think there was a question as to where the CM was referring – and another CM clarifies- The clover leaf.)

_**Original CM:**_ Past the scope (of this group) but relevant.

_**Jen:**_ May inspire master plan. (Trying to say this is a reason you want to do this process, and to have a Master Plan so you don’t have ‘improvements’ that create quality problems over time)

_**CM (40-45 woman, parent, was on comprehensive plan steering committee):**_  
On topic of gateways coming over the bridge, came up (a lot) in comprehensive plan.  
You don’t know where you are no streetscaping,  
Parcels (gas liquor and auto on left)…
Pie in sky, if they were town buildings or anchors or renovated structure that picked up on history of Falls and is more welcoming (getting at character of place)

_**CM (woman 60 – 70 first to speak):**_  
Along that line there is police station. (That) is a focal point because parking sometimes doubles for parking for town hall (this is all you see when you come over bridge)

_10 min warning_

_**CM (40-45 woman, parent, was on comprehensive plan steering committee):**_  
Someone else touched on this, walkways laterally important as well. (neighborhood interconnectedness)  
Along river a green space built up and kept up attach to bike path.  
We have 2 parks but they are detached and you have to walk through parking lots and
buildings.

**CM (educator or 35 man):** Hard to think two close to each other….. (missed)(Don't realize you have these things are so close together because of obstacles)

**CM (65-75 man, retired wildlife conservation and teaching):**
Be surprised how quickly gaps fill themselves in.
Have a trail come down like this and another trail…..whatever happened… and get them connected. (did not capture full thought)(may be referring to regional trails)
I ran a wildlife sanctuary manager who charged (me with the task). Forget about $ and how it's used. Make grandiose plan that constitutes what you want to be. 19 acres person not to sell. Someday those 19 acres will….they had 100 acres, make a grandiose plan, so we can use 1000 acres and today we have 1000 acres, there was one obstacle but it does not matter anymore. )
The lines we put on paper have a way of coming true; be careful what you put down. (but) In SH, too often things get stuck on shelf

**CM (man 45-55) (shared vision for the Falls – jumps up to the map):**
Parking one row back from street, street level area.
Put trailers out in case of flooding, put street vendors
Next level is store levels back side of buildings have stores too
Not sure what to do with flooding …sometimes…
Open river to viewing,
Flower put in (Jen - activate all of it) green strip here.
Each trailer is a vendor
Do a commercial area next story and next story is apartment building. Trailers are moveable and flood plain is open for flood waters.
Do arts studio, have river as enticing.
See river with no wall so it is enticing
Consider historical buildings and church buildings. They won’t go anywhere for a long time.
Give protection down there (where? The parks) and ..property and vandalism will go away (missed a little)

**Jen:** Vandalism about not enough people.

**CM (man 45-55):** Idea of trailers put something there so it is visually appealing. Give you a layered opportunity.

**CM:** From ground level, can’t see river; if you build up in layers can see river.

**Tim:** Mentions photographing falls, difficult.

**CM:** Best view is over river, but to get a good view must need to climb wall.
Group 3: The Industrial Spine

Design Team Members: Katrina Spade, Gaetan Jacques, Jaime Rzníc, Patrick McGeough, Emily Gaperetti, Tai-Hsiang Cheng

Regional Planners: Brian Reid (scribe), Meagen Mulherin (facilitator), Russell Pandres (notes)

Flipchart Notes of Public Input

- I live north of rotary: The water used to be clean. The mill complex at the dam is why this is no longer the case.
- Would like to see the division lines that enclose South Hadley Falls gone.
- What about artist space?
  - Artists are important in re-use projects.
  - Once artists come, the whole process starts.
- This proposal did not mention the river. Why?
- Where does Buttery Brook run from?
- Have you run the numbers (costs) on this proposal?
- Is the Conservation Commission on board?
- Your proposal includes a parking garage and a culinary establishment. Can you really plan things like this?
  - Competition with other businesses may not allow for them to work.
- None of the plans use the new library that is in the process of being approved.
- This proposal shows businesses clustered together. It is hard to get competing businesses to all move in.
- Actually, you tend to see businesses conglomerate together.
- I don't think there is a future in the Falls unless the auto-businesses are relocated somewhere else in town.
- Retaining businesses is important.
- We need to move the businesses that should be moved.
- I am participating in this group because some of what you said, and show in your proposal is how I want to see South Hadley Falls.
- Some room in South Hadley Falls needs to be made for some of these new businesses.
- Where is the parking? This would be a destination and would need adequate parking.
- The bikeway along the canal is used constantly. I don't see a bikeway in this plan.
- Creating a nice greenway would attract people.
- You made a lot of assumptions in this plan. Assumptions need to be made to move forward.
- You need a good timeline. Not too long though because it will not excite people if it is planned for too far into the future.
- E-Inc. is important. It is a world class facility.
• There should be someone to champion a project like this.
• PVTA had been working on a bike trail.
  • You could look to PVTA for information and analysis for a bike trail.
  • Everything was kept around the river.
  • You could go through conservation land with a bike trail.
• I want to hear more about housing and restaurants.
  • I want a little bistro.
  • How do housing and restaurants fit in? What are the things to do?
• This meeting is not what I expected. I like it.
• You need room for all these new buildings.
  • Do people need to sell their homes to make room?
  • I am worried about existing residences in the area.
• I would not spend a lot of energy on Buttery Brook Park. I would focus more on the river instead.
• What is being proposed in this plan does not seem that hard to do.
• How about a walking area for people that live and work in this area.
• How do you redevelop the flood plains? This is an important question to consider.
• It is important to create new residential opportunities.

**Five Most Important Points**

• An Economic Director to lead
• Appealing open space as a place to walk and ride bikes (Restoration of Buttery Brook environment)
• Reclamation, Re-Use, Retention, and Relocation are key. You can’t do plans like this without them.
• Consider clustering businesses
• Redevelop flood plains (Especially as Residential)

**Computer Notes**

12 people in the group, majority of which do not live in the Falls area

• High-tech industry
  • Incubator for the northern Falls area
    • Need a project champion
    • ‘E Inc’ may be that champion – internationally known
  • Solar research & development center, small scale production
• Education, arts, and trade schools
  • Culinary arts school
    • Experimental restaurants for students to staff
    • Close to downtown
  • Art studio space is wanted
  • Where would these buildings fit in?
Greenways
  • Walkways through the East and West sides of the Falls
  • Waterfront & recreational promenade along the waterfront
  • Visual anchors along the Buttery Brook area
    • Bring people to the Falls area from the north and people in the Falls to the northern area
  • Pathways, along the brook
  • Bioremediation for the rainwater before it hits the brook
    • Buttery Brook is barely a “brook” most of the year
      • Can still be a green system even without large amounts of water
    • Conservation commission would need to be contacted
  • Concerns of spending too much time in the Buttery Brook area
    • Thinks that the river would be a better place to spend time and energies
  • Differing opinions
    • Some think it shouldn't be a major walkway and some do
      • Concerns about it being in between business
  • Movement of (4) automotive repair shops from the floodplain area to outside of the floodplain
    • Is this actually possible? Would the automotive shops be able to move?
      • Concerns about competing businesses moving all to the same area
        • Restaurants and car dealerships typically all go the same area, however, this could be possible but would take some serious cooperation among government and businesses
    • No future for the Falls unless the automotive shops move out of the Falls
    • Must retain the business however, need to find a suitable spot for the businesses and work with them
      • Increase productivity
        • Replace with mixed-use expansion
    • Town members are interested in the river and plans for it, group 3’s plan did not talk much about it
      • Time constraints an issue but it’s considered
  • None of the groups’ plans involve the library
  • Parking? Where will it be?
    • Garages would be above the automotive shop areas with the shops on the ground floor
    • How much parking should be included and in what areas?
  • Bikeways
    • Would go through Bridge St. through HWY 116
    • How would they be able to get people to the pathway?
    • Contact the PVPC, they already have plans for the pathway that were never implemented
      • Could save time and money
    • While considering these plans one needs to capture all the assumptions
      • This way it is easier to wrap one’s head around the ideas without being too critical at
the moment

- Including a timeline would be helpful
  - Need to sell the concept that this may be 10, 20, or 30 year plan
  - Which steps would be taken first?
- What is going to happen to the existing buildings in town?
  - Will people have to sell their homes?
    - Only one building is being affected in the plan
    - Maybe in the future for buildings in disrepair would be removed but stay sensitive to the area and heritage
- Development of residential areas is needed
  - Floodplains is a potential area

**Five Summary Points**

- Economic director to lead and supplement businesses and industry (automotive garages and high-tech incubator)
- Making Buttery Brook an appealing place for biking and walking, keeping the open space
  - “Industrial Greenway”
  - Restoring the environment
  - Need to go near the eateries and retail stores
- Retention, relocation, reuse, and reclamation
- Considering clustering of related businesses
  - Skeptical of ability for businesses to be relocated to one area but for it
- Redevelop the floodplains
  - Mainly residential
    - Lower levels are garages and upper level are condos
Design Team Group 4: “Regenerating a Village”

Design Team Members: Peter Webster, Kimia Samimi
Regional Planners: Belen Alfaro (facilitator), Toni Marie Pignatelli (facilitator), Margaret Engesser (scribe), Josh Chase (notes)

SCRIBE

- Want to learn more about historical aspect of plans
- How to create action in SHF
- Liked Green St. idea
- Good bones component
- Preserve original character

Historical:
- PVPC study- inventory of historical properties in shf
- Need help in bringing forward the history
- Need a museum to showcase the history of shf
  - Have lots of materials to use
  - Need plan/funding
  - Mixed use area for museum to attract more people
  - (Historical committee member)

Industrial:
- Add to existing buildings
- Entertainment area
- Not historically a “night town”, most activity during the day
- Nobody can walk to the river
  - Need to make it more accessible, is unsafe to walk to
  - Beachground is phenomenal/gorgeous and a reason to move to SHF
  - Blend old/new (Bridge St.)
    - Tear down old house and rebuild with new houses that will blend in
    - make new structures fit into character of town
    - “chessboard with chess pieces”

- More businesses to different properties
- cannot keep buildings vacant
- Smaller businesses downtown, by fields
- Wonderful urban character rather than the suburb
- South Hadley falls would more Mount Holyoke students
- look at beach woods during 1960s
- How to attract young people who work in the town to stay there at night?
- Scary to build infrastructure to attract young people because it is too new, not sustainable yet
- What types of clubs or markets? Like Amherst coffee
- want more nightlife like that in Northampton not Springfield
- several bars in town already, use our property for its original use?
- Would you feel safe at night and at the industrial area? - Yes
  - give “eyes” to the area to make it seem safer
- do falls people use community garden? Yes, for people with smaller yards
- need for farmers market
- Drive into South Hadley falls past 202 is not a pleasant view
  - Ugly
  - keep historical character
  - Bridge Street is residential now, in future?
- Create mixed-use on Bridge Street
- Open space from vacant lots
- Mixed-use corridor
- To get more people to businesses, do not use cars, be able to walk
- Past plan for elderly housing by the school
- Human parts: energy, infrastructure, need people to be successful
- preserve neighborhood for those who already lived there, character
  - Sustainable design project at Mount Holyoke
- Housing? - Industrial area
  *need for more affordable family housing
- ferry Street condos in South Hadley falls? 40B
- Library and town hall building: future housing or businesses?
- Businesses and housing problem: people want yards, parking
- some neighborhoods do not have enough parking
- What is affordable housing? (Member of housing committee in group)
  - $500-$800 rent
  - 27% of income and utilities on rent
- Subsidized housing
- bring in the younger population
- Waitlist for affordable housing now is 15 to 18 years- not enough!
- Where do these people live?
- Stigma associated with affordable housing- should be integrated throughout town
- Who will implement affordable housing? Landlord, state. Funding?
- Closing remarks
  - Like variety of plans, including green space, buildings, etc. - Importance to maintain urban character
  - Thought-provoking work
- Like example of Brunswick
- Historical preservation discussed well, along with associated topics
- Mixed-use, how will buildings be used?
- Good ideas never seem to happen because of money and community resistance- need these questions answered
- South Hadley has a strong sense history: land new with old
- Many possibilities for currently empty buildings

**Computer Notes**

*Note:* > denotes member of the public
Why you picked the group:
Had more of a wider range, would like to hear more about the historical
Was interested in how you create action and community in the area
Worked on canal village (chair of selectman)
Liked the visual, like the green street
Engaged both the LA and arch and the good bones component of the falls.
Integration of all the things, revitalization

Historical part: working with the PVPC, had a good property inventory, a lot of mat’l has not gone forward, a lot of other town have done more, have industry museum
Enthusiastic town support for the canal expo at MHC in 1998.
Lots of mat’l the town has, but town didn’t go forward. Town didn’t get/ask for money.
Museum area, not just one museum, café, rest, etc. engage history of the canal, make use of the space
Broadens use of the space, not just the center, all areas mixed, keeps alive, used throughout the day and night, not just during the day, performance based area, can get to the canal thru the space, don’t have to go in the buildings to access the canal area
What can you do with the industrial site: plug in solution, can use the buildings that are there, close to the highway, big site. Make it into an entertainment area, people could see it as they go by. Can direct young people to the town. Young people might not want to live here as is. >has it ever been active at night?
>not really, people went to Hoyles
>priest: Lives on main st, has waterfront prop, but you would never know it. No one can walk along the water in SH, example of St. Louis river, can walk and all. In SH the army corp of engineers says you can’t cut down the trees. People are not temped to walk along the river. Would like to see something done.
>beachground not pleasant, year by year. Sometimes bad, sometimes good. Taking the old and the new. Bridge st. has houses that are falling down. Lets get rid of them. 
>has no back yard
More park, more grassy area.
No big modern arch in the middle, wouldn’t fit.
Plug ins, only adding different pieces of the buildings
>new library, old library will become vacant, possible new town hall? We can move buildings
around however we want.
Micro shops in old industrial building, people go there after soccer games.
>reminds about pike's market in seattle
>at the college one hears from students, we are in the middle in the nowhere, but we have the bones, we are not in suburbia. SHF is off the radar. The ideas could be very appealing, urban riverfront.
Is an urban riverfront, not a lot along the conn river. Was hopping the 30’s (beachwoods). Was a beach.
Have new industry, how are we going to get them to stay after work, or live. How do you get them to do that. If you don't work I the industrial area, you aren't going to the club. Can be dark.
>if we get people from the new industries, and from tech park in Holyoke, will that be a bad thing?
Different types of clubs? Could be replaced with market, restaurant, can be like Amherst coffee. Is a gathering place that changes during the day. Is about keeping the area moving.
>springfield had an entertainment are that drove the priest nuts. Northampton is an ok example. What a club means to one doesn't mean the same to someone else.
>SH has quite a few bars already. Why does it have to have entertainment as well? Would you feel safe going to the industrial area at midnight today? (yea)
Giving eyes to the area at all times makes it a safer place, safer feeling. (swing shifts)
Filling up the whole industrial park will be hard.
People from SH to the garden (where?)
Farmers market in place of club?
>Place to go as comm. Gardens.
>From 116 into SH, blighted as of now, what will be done to improve the place?
Another studio is working on the square, keep the historic feel, big store windows…
>Is all res now. What do you do with the people?
Mixed use, b&b, professional offices move into homes.
Open buildings on the corner, get stores in there, more activity (cupcakes), the people make it interesting, what is happening?
Town people have meet with the town, building and business moved to Holyoke.
What will make it attractive?
Using vacant lots as green space and highlight the “T” zone and use as a gathering area and connect the green spaces with cross streets, mixed use corridor with a loop to bring people to the corridor
>just one thing, likes people on bridge street, is a good thing. People don't have to get in there cars to access bridge street.
Question on what mixed use means.
School and crew corner, cluster some places, was a plan years ago.
Church is a center that is a human part that is apart of the infrastructure. If no church (etc) not town.
Must have local support for restaurants, businesses.
Brunswick, me, was a lot like SHF 30 years ago. Very similar. Started revitalizing the area, first artists, then brewpubs, now bustling are, largest outdoor arts fest in ME
>do the res pop get replaced by the new folks in brunswick? Did the neighborhood get preserved instead of replace with upper middle class?
First floor is all commercial, res up above. 2&3 stories max, started with infill.
Housing: is there more about bringing in more housing?
Central area for “pods”, mixed housing, all groups from studios to 3-4 br. Places. Had open spaces, can add additions when family grows.
Need affordable family housing.
Ferry st. condos, did the developers look at other sites? Will 40b kick in?
Condos aren’t affordable housing.
People talking about housing in the fiber building, old library, old town hall?
Does it have to be one or the other?
This isn’t Europe, no/shared back yards don’t work. Row houses have no parking.
Family housing should be 27% of income, needs more affordable housing. Rents are too damn high.
What if we took away the yard? Community garden, mixed use for young people not as concerned with big yards and are attracted to shops, mixed use areas.
>people who live in shelters have a 15-18 year wait for housing.
Stigma with section 8, spread people around instead to cluster them all together.
>who is going to do it? Landowners, state? Where’s the money come from?
Good affordable housing in Amherst, SE st.
Something you like or something you want to see?
>what I like is the variety simulants levels of green space and infill and its important to increase the urban density and not weave the green spaces in as an integral element. Is very thought provoking.
>seconded^, like Brunswick example
>historic preservation, moved naturally forward, reuse of properties, want new open to changing. Use history.
>like the idea, but will it happen (money community resist), moving forward, how is it going to be financed, where are the areas in which there will be community resistance?
>focus on history, SH has a strong sense of history, blend the new with the old, and housing
different thing that could possibly be done with infill (res and ind)
>what would be the first thing to start with?
Greenways, be involved with the river, is the web that holds things together.
Design Team Group 5: “Re-Animating South Hadley Falls”

Design Team Members: Ryan Ball, Kyle, You Jin, Mohamad Farzinmoghadam, Blaise Tricon

Regional Planners: Pedro Soto (facilitator), Stephanie Molden (scribe), Seth Morrow (note taker)

• What is the bigger picture of the potential pier?
• Taking your kids for a walk at intersection of Main St. and Bridge St.
• The river engages people
• Areas of private property
• People’s back yards
• Empty lot on School St
• To be developed?
• Room in the Falls for green and animals, turning corners and seeing them
• More shops, is there room for it?
• Office supply store that closed
• Do something similar to Holyoke and Easthampton- mixed use of old buildings
• Experience of firehouse turned into a center for the arts, recycled
• Would like to see recreation/youth center
• Swimming, walking
• Three people walk in SHF (in the group), walk around at night to shops
• Dog park on School St
• Rollerblading, biking, hilly, on beach paths
• Staired area with outdoor concert without disturbing neighborhood
• Skateboarders tend to get thrown out
• Organized sporting events-kids leave after game
• Pick up games at beach, asked to leave
• Used to have ice skating at beach grounds
• Town won’t do it anymore
• Farmer’s market in designated area, OR maybe community garden
• April @ Firehouse Museum, Canal Village Potpourri, tag sale, fiddlers, great musical space
• Fall Festival & Flea Market in designated space
• Music, food, fun, recreation, arts of all kinds
• Theater/performing arts
• Outdoor amphitheater and indoor theater at Mt Holyoke-used to have summer theater-good event
Second Public Meeting

February 8, 2012

*Note transcription by Jennifer Stromsten, MRP candidate and public forum organizer, LARP Department, UMass; edited by Mark Hamin*

*Two handouts – SDAT flyer, Agenda*

*42+ audience members*

**Richard Harris: Introduction**

**Mark Hamin:**

Thanks to South Hadley Planning Board, Select Board, Community and Economic Development Committee, Sustainable Design Assessment Committee, and other Master Plan Implementation Committees

Our project scope of work is based on that Master plan agenda, we are here to carry it forward through public review and comment

Introduction to overall agenda

- Background on how this meeting fits into the big picture
- Introduction of colleagues who will talk about what findings came out of the November Public Forum
- In addition, three other special guests – consultants with professional backgrounds in economic redevelopment for places similar to South Hadley and South Hadley Falls to offer insights, suggestions, things to think about in terms of strategies and techniques

Summary of findings of Public Participation process: Prof. Elizabeth Brabec (with Prof. Flavia Montenegro Menezes) and the Public Participation class at UMass organized the November Public Forum and she will present an overview.

**Elizabeth Brabec:**

(PPT slideshow with stats/histograms)

18 graduate students working on public participation came in November. They had previously looked at SHF to understand the village, the area. Advertised the meeting, conducted outreach, organized the process, then facilitated working with community members at the meeting to talk about design concepts.

Background information about the Falls gathered by these students:

- Looking at the demographics of SHF – the Falls area is a little bit older than US and MA average (in the 50+ range), lowest in the under 5 and the young adult (20-24) categories
- Reported ancestry – very consistent with pre-war agricultural, industrial (Irish, French, Polish, German, etc.)
- Age of housing units – most built 1939 or earlier, a burst 1950-59 (GI bill)
• Type of housing units – generally small scale - most rentals are 2-4 unit multifamily, small number from the 1980s with many more units
  Advertising for the meeting – different methods used and survey results from meeting attenders.

• First most common way people heard about the meeting was through Town Meeting
• Second was from friends and family
• Multiple info sources – KYT, town web site, flyers, friends and family

  Two things on the agenda at the last meeting

• Vision for the future
• Reviewing a variety of design concepts
  Vision Themes (see ppt slide for pie chart)

• Shops/retail/commercial 21%
• Parks/open space 17%
• Access (walkability) 16%
• Water – access to the river 14%
• etc. including restaurants, history, housing, library

  Design Concepts – five design themes explored in five groups

• Discussion
• Designs
• Listening
• Notes
• …and then the designers went back to the second half of the studio process and worked on redesign

Tonight we are going to talk about what design focus areas and priorities came out of that November meeting

Peter Webster:

Slides with images of

• Phases of design process:
  Site visit/image taking, analysis, design, feedback from community, redesign

  Five original groups, each with different themes or concepts – some maintained original ideas, some dropped/changed after the public meeting, some developed and elaborated further

  Some context information gathered – floodplain/climate, existing buildings and infrastructure, geographic isolation, etc.

These are the physical aspects of the environment but how does it affect people who live here, human interactions? e.g., Connecticut River: habitat, commerce, history, floodplain, restoring relationship with the river, used to be lifeblood of the community, bridge to Holyoke – what are the most suitable ways to make those connections important again through design?
Recurrent themes:

- Beachgrounds Park – has exceeded expectations, inspired visions
- Buttery Brook corridor for future park or industry, commerce
- Open Space system along the CT River waterfront
- Cultural Center or District i.e. along canal waterway from top and down to below Beachgrounds Park

Mark Hamin:

The Master Plan is the thread that runs through this entire process. The town was responsible for carrying out the Master Plan process, formed committee to carry out implementation of strategic priorities. The UMass Project Team and the three consulting panelists this evening are part of helping this process to continue. Next steps… Goal for tonight is to listen to you, hear your questions, identify priorities, find common ground, provide a reality check through your recommendations.

Planning and Redevelopment Experts – adaptive reuse, strategic planning, mostly in communities with similar conditions to South Hadley and the Falls area

- Robert Hubbard – Director of Community Development and Planning for Gardner, MA and Executive Director of Gardner Redevelopment Authority.
- Mackenzie Greer – Community Planner at Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, currently working on Village Center zoning and walkability, Comprehensive Plan for North Adams, and Sustainability plan for Berkshire County region.
- John Dyjach – South Hadley resident, Assistant Director in the Office of Planning and Econ Development in Holyoke, Holyoke Redevelopment Authority, etc.

Robert Hubbard:

25 years ago went to college in Springfield, came back last week to drive around and to reacquaint with the area.

Lots of similarities with Gardner.

Dichotomy of Village/Falls is distinctive.

Master Plan impressions – 300+ recommendations makes it hard to implement. Despite priorities, best advice would still be to focus.

Many recommendations require committees. Danger of burnout for volunteers.

You need a certain backbone in place i.e. zoning ordinance. Comprehensive review and revision of zoning will be time/effort-intensive and expensive.

Often redevelopment agents look at their list and figure out where they can find grant money, and then ‘follow the money’. Double-edged approach.

Asks – does South Hadley get CDBG? Richard Harris says funding is limited, some comes for Senior Center. Hubbard suggests considering that funding for housing rehabilitation and improving housing stock. DHCD funding is directed to that, but people working on it can also help support other
committees/efforts.

In Gardner they developed the ‘troubled properties list’. Published on a web site with a scorecard, health dept. complaints. Coupled with a housing rehab program to help fund upgrades and fixing code violations. Investors might also peruse list for distressed but suitable properties.

Asks – is there a EOA (Economic Opportunity Area) or TIF program? May be a good tool in the “toolbox”.

Another program called MA General Law 40Q – try to get an eligible area of town designated by the state. Investments and increase in property values after date of establishment of the district can be directed back to improving the district (as opposed to into general fund).

From the perspective of the Executive Director of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority. Does SH need an RDA? Probably not, at least initially. It’s a big step, probably only to be taken if you have a project that needs such a structure to implement. Two tools with an RDA (and urban renewal plan): (1) RDA can avoid the state’s cumbersome procurement process, (2) eminent domain.

(RDA can acquire a property through tax title, negotiate with a developer as a private entity, going with developer with best idea but not necessarily highest bid i.e. job creation)

**John Dyjach:**

(Praises collaboration with Robert Hubbard, salutes his wealth of experience)

As a resident of South Hadley, spent a lot of time in the audience for proposed Ferry St. condo development project – gave him appreciation of the work of the Planning Board and Town Planner Richard Harris.

Referring back to different tools and programs he has encountered in his work.

John has spent 16 years in the City of Holyoke Economic Development and Planning Department.

Impression is that South Hadley Falls is not that far off [from potential upswing in development opportunities]

Solid developments – Beachgrounds Park, St. Patrick’s church, new Library

It’s important to build on and preserve existing strengths of what is already here, but also to think ‘outside the box’ of what kind of development has taken place here historically. What are the new opportunities?

One thing to look at is improving the appearance and appeal of the “Gateways” – take better care of vacant lots, tree plantings, building facades, street features.

Keep zoning as flexible as possible to attract different kinds of uses and users.

Movement back to a more walkable and self-reliant neighborhood, as a local alternative to regional malls and other services outside area.

Bus access and regularity could be improved – transit would be used by more people more frequently if it were more readily available, affordable, efficient.
Establish priorities – strategies for encouraging more families to come down to the Falls? Build on the success of Beachgrounds Park? Library, other amenities?

Find the public investment (e.g., infrastructure, streetscape) that will help to spur private development.

Potential for a Tax Increment Financing program in South Hadley? – maybe, if it can be very well-defined, focused in Falls neighborhood, incentivized, simplified.

**Mackenzie Greer:**

Sometimes one of the most visionary design ideas can give an inspiring ‘spark’.

In Pittsfield there is a Gateway plan going into effect, based on a UMass studio from 15+ years ago. Works for a regional planning agency. Experiences from various other towns…

Started her planning/design career in Pittsfield on Colonial Theater Project. When it was being revived and rehabilitated, it became the focal point for a community to build on relative to downtown revitalization.

- Pittsfield has embraced the arts. Created an “Arts Overlay District” - allowed residential use on the upper floors of its buildings. People could populate the center, offering a new way of promoting mixed space use.
- Pittsfield identified itself as a center for affordable housing, in a region where second-home ownership drives area housing costs higher.

North Adams – 14,700 people. Housing surplus and disinvestment are issues for their comprehensive plan.

- What to retain? i.e., what are our most important housing resources?
- What to let go of?...including demolition program
- MassMOCA – layering of history, adaptive reuse, building on that – *we don't have to preserve something 'frozen in time'. We can add to it, enhance it going forward.*
- Shift in leadership in No Adams – new Mayor after 26 years = opportunity.

Lee – 4,700 people

- Mackenzie's agency helps them with grants

Regional Planning efforts have revealed how land-use planning and zoning are often out of sync with redevelopment opportunities. Often non-conforming uses create hassles and burdens for landowners. Village Center zoning is helping to bring in desired uses like grocery stores, service establishments, more parking.

Walkability is a something that many communities are working on more and more. Connectivity is an important guiding principle to keep in mind, especially with older populations, mobility = freedom, access, socialization. Walkability studies that we have been doing look at pedestrian infrastructure to see what is working and what is not, then incorporate those findings into strategic Capital Improvement Plans. Towns often use volunteers, as well as finding other simple and inexpensive solutions.

Public-private (and nonprofit) partnerships are essential. No one sector can do redevelopment alone.
Public Feedback Portion of the Forum

First Speaker: What are some of the specific recommendations coming out of the charrette? (summary: concerns that many of the designs lack realism in terms of cost and practical application)


Response/Qs – we have a marina, existing bridges allow pedestrians. What are the destinations on the other side?

Peter: Idea of the bridge was to be more enjoyable for pedestrians, be more in touch with the river. Cultural center was to anchor the bottom of the riverfront park systems and walkways, with the library at the top.

Response – town doesn’t have land south of Beachgrounds, floodplain gets in the way of plans.

Peter Webster: We can’t fully defend each plan, design. These are ideas to spark town interest and action relative to goals, e.g., enhance the walking connection with Holyoke. Some other projects were more ‘accessible’ like affordable housing, some designed to bring particular types of jobs into town.

Mark Hamin: Perhaps let’s try to turn it around and have a conversation about aspects of South Hadley Falls that are very important to residents in terms of community/ economic development activities, and identify which designs best address those. One of the goals of the report and public forum is to hear from residents about which aspects were most important to them, and then to compile a list of the best design concepts relative to those consensus priorities. How important is walkability along the waterfront? How important is reactivation of Buttery Brook? And so on for other ideas informed by Master Plan recommendations.

Second Speaker: It would have been helpful to be inspired by the creative thinking from the design teams. A particular issue not mentioned much in the panel or designs, from the Master Plan, is the issue of the disconnect between the Center and the Falls. Geographic, cultural, social disconnect. Thoughts about how that might be addressed at multiple levels, including design levels? Also, do panelists have any suggestions about Community Preservation Act and its potential to address issues raised here. (Summary: more chance to view designs would be great, especially to address disconnect of two-center South Hadley. Also, more tools for toolbox, e.g., CPA?)

Third Speaker: Floodplain is an obstacle but you can’t fill it in. You can turn it into a positive. Commercial and recreational and visitor facilities can be built around it, the work done in the floodplain accommodated to the flooding. Rapid City, South Dakota put a recreation area through the middle of the town. Now it’s a great feature of the town.

This town should be together. If we design this part of the town (SHF) without using this opportunity to bring the town together more…there are other lines to pull it together i.e. along the river. We need to keep it in mind to do that. (Summary: put nature at the center of the Falls and develop around it, use various means like riverway to create connections between upper and lower parts of SH)

Fourth Speaker: SHF homeowner (mom with little girl attending) not originally from MA. Bus access would be great. Want to add a porch but zoning setback prevents. Question for Hubbard re: eminent domain. What about gentrification? How does your community get around that in dealing with distressed properties, i.e. balance public good and respect for private citizens. (Summary: immediate tangible im-
provements like bus access, zoning code that meets goals rather than impeding homeowners, and balancing upgrade with gentrification issues?)

**Robert Hubbard:** Eminent domain is a last resort. We prefer to use block grant funds to help fix up homes with existing owner or new investor. Demolition – we’ve been fairly aggressive in Gardner with this where appropriate. People walking away from underwater mortgages. Sometimes selectively demolishing a home to create parking in tight neighborhoods, but only as a last resort. Better to meet with homeowners.

**Fifth Speaker:** Town acquired with library property, also the Fibermark building. The Select Board is wrestling with what to do. Leaking roof, mold, $200,000 to repair roof alone. Economic and Community Development Committee and Select Board would love to see from this process some thoughts about disposition of that building. (Summary: Any ideas from panel about how to deal with Fibermark building?)

**Sixth Speaker:** SHF resident. We face quality of life issues. You won’t ever get a pedestrian bridge over the river. Nobody goes from the Falls to Holyoke walking. There is no reason to. QoL issues – noise, loud car stereos, exhaust, modified cars. Can’t get a good night’s sleep. Laws are not enforced. Beachgrounds Park now an additional source of noise. Landfill affects SHF as much as those who live near it – 5 am trucks go up Spring St. Road was not designed to carry 50 ton trucks. People park on the sidewalks, people don’t shovel snow or there’s a car there. Dangerous for kids, families.

I’m on the canal restoration committee. Plans for bikepath/walkpath. Half done, go underneath bridge and picnic tables put in a year ago are already burnt down. (Quality of Life issues are an immediate concern – poor enforcement of existing codes and regulations such as parking, low walkability, noise and vandalism.)

**Seventh Speaker:** QoL issues important. Interested in sustainable development. Environmental, economic…Main question is what are we to expect as a community with regards to information from the UMass program on the students’ ideas? What are we going to see? Don’t want to dismiss out of the box thinking, creativity and innovation. Some of us are interested in all of the ideas. Timeline issue as well. A lot of points we’ve heard about need to be addressed sooner rather than later. But what is SHF going to look like in 2040? That question holds for Holyoke as well… (Summary: Let’s address both QOL and big picture, urgent needs and long-term.)

**Mark Hamin:** We’ve produced draft reports coming out of the November Public Forum. We are getting feedback on that this evening, on the design information Peter presented, and then those drafts will be revised and submitted to the town and available for public review and public comment very soon. A final version will be issued shortly after that. The dialogue will continue over the next several months.

Recommendations will include short, medium, and long term…small scale and easy to do as well as more visionary and challenging ideas.

**Seventh Speaker continued:** new library is forthcoming, the more I think about it the more I like the design. But raises an issue for MA…will we always be trying to convey the old New England factory look, or will we try a new look? i.e., fifty years from now should we look more like Shanghai or Detroit. (summary: How much do we look to the past to inform our design, character?)

**John Dyjach:** Neither, but the history of an area is so important that design has to be a mix. Holyoke library is also a mix of modern and historical styles. Look back, but also look to the future.

**Robert Hubbard:** In Gardner we like red bricks a lot. New Library in Gardner was an anchor for urban renewal program. We have significant environmental issues in a lot of our properties. Intentionally put the library on a 21E (i.e., brownfield) property – otherwise it never would have been cleaned up. Need to go beyond the old ways of thinking about design. You must be more aggressive in creating
partnerships. But if the public sector doesn't do it, the private sector won't do it. In Gardner we haven't figured out how to fit a really modern building into the downtown. You would have more flexibility if you were doing a larger area.

**Mackenzie:** What doesn't work, or an issue I often have with design, is when you say 'let's do a historical remake of something'; some minor details are thrown in but it's not well done (superficial). The town of Lenox recently did a streetscape. The historical commission actively fought for replicas of their Westinghouse gas lamps. It was an important detail, part of their history, crucial architectural feature, and it's been very successful.

**Eighth Speaker:** Back to QOL issues. It's really important to work together. Not sure how many people from the Falls are here, don't know many, I'm not too mobile but I'd like to meet you. Not sure who was here at the November meeting. Let's figure out how all of us can be here - I don't want to be making decision for the Falls! I live at the other end of town. (summary: We need to be sure we are engaging directly with the people who live in the Falls so that these are their decisions.)

**First Speaker again:** Can you state the other projects, especially ones around the new library site and the veterans bridge?

**Peter Webster:** Three projects in that zone –
A proposal for the park itself
Amphitheater on the island section of the park
Museum of CT River (natural life, history) with walkway out to riverside– up on piers above floodplain. Takes you into the sounds of the river and the falls, away from street noise.

**First Speaker:** How does the town go about acquiring property from owners who don't seem to want to sell. For example, three adjacent to St. Patrick's aren't interested.

**Robert Hubbard:** Spent a fair amount of time over the last six months in Gardner trying to assemble 7-8 parcels in an old industrial area for a Police Department facility. The property owners say they want to be treated fairly, but they are thinking it's a chance to 'get rich'. Eminent Domain is a last resort but it can help 'improve the negotiating atmosphere' if you also have a well-developed urban renewal plan. It's a real estate and a legal issue, you need to approach it in the right way so you don't take steps in the beginning that will hurt you in the end. (“And I say that from not having done that.”)

**John Dyjach:** Importance of addressing issue of auto-related uses – 21E (i.e., site contamination) issue. Tax or title issues can be another angle, or a proposed site to relocate those businesses. A Redevelopment Authority has those tools.

**Robert Hubbard:** The environmental issues can be helpful in a way. The EPA and state DEP have funds available. Economic development funds are drying up, while the EPA is getting more active and easier to work with.

**Ninth speaker:** Visioning and brainstorming. I was active with the library project. Four years ago when it started, it was as much a vision as anything the students presented tonight. The façade of the library pays homage to industrial heritage with brick, but the rear side is energy collecting and modern. I've been a resident for 17 years. As a resident of the Falls I understand the QoL issues. One thing that separated the Falls from other parts of towns was a lack of outdoor gathering spaces. Grant readers liked that part of the library proposals – space for farmers market etc. – and these can provide connections with other parts of the Falls. (Summary: visioning is very important – the library started that way. Also, the library incorporates elements like public spaces to serve all of South Hadley, like a farmers market, and these are the kinds of things that create those connections people have talked about.)
Richard Harris: I have done eminent domain elsewhere. Contrary to expectation, towns always end up paying top dollar, much more than negotiated. Regarding CDBG – Holyoke is an entitlement community, receives grants every year. CDF2 communities like South Hadley can only receive block grants every two years, so it's more difficult to plan a long term CDF strategy, but we are doing that.

What's critical is that the future of SHF is inevitably intertwined with the future of the corresponding area in Holyoke. We have an economic target area. Eight years ago we did not have the ability to work together. The incomplete parcel along the river, owned by Holyoke Gas and Electric. The ability to revitalize the Falls depends on developing relationships with organizations in Holyoke.

MA General Law makes it hard to have a TIF etc. State has to approve it, not just local legislative body. ED districts too. It's costly and cumbersome to get the tools in place. We need to see how we can marry our economic objectives with Holyoke's objectives – they have more organizational resources.

Tenth Speaker: I live in the falls area. Watched the Texon(?) building falling apart for the last six years. What is keeping the town from tearing that thing down?

Richard Harris: It's owned by Holyoke Gas and Electric. They need US Army Corps of Engineers permit to demolish. It's on the Canal which is on Historic Register, so mitigation plan is necessary. Town has an agreement on mitigation measures, but then HGE has pulled out. Two years ago town filed letter with USACE, and told the corps that we will accept anything the corps decides. (Eventually the building is going to come down). We can't force other parties to act.

Helen Fantini presents flyers for the ‘Rise of the Falls’ April SDAT Charrette, planned around the revitalization of the Falls. The advance team is present tonight, here to plan another charrette.

Hamin: We're at the end of our time, but not at the end of our process. Panelists will be creating executive summaries that will be incorporated into final report and recommendations. The process then continues with the SDAT/AIA charrette in April.

Harris: I have Peter's slide show. He will post individual slides on the town's web site. You can comment on it via email.

Note transcription by Sally Miller, MRP candidate and public forum organizer, LARP Department, UMass; edited by Mark Hamin

Outline of Public Meeting Discussion

Summary of findings of last meeting/ public participation methods by E. Brabec

- Demographic findings
- Age of housing
- Advertising methods
- Visioning results
- Design teams overview

Design team process by Peter Webster

- Analysis, Charrette, Development of projects
- Locations that came up in many discussions
- Connecticut River
i. Bridge to Holyoke

a. Ideas that people wanted to see focus on:
   i. Buttery Brook
   ii. Beachgrounds Park
   iii. Open Space Network
   iv. Cultural center
   v. Library as bookend for ideas along waterfront

1. Panel: Planning and redevelopment experts
   a. Robert Hubbard, Gardner, MA
      i. Looked at Master Plan – many recommendations, so observed difficulty in getting things done.
      ii. Advice is to focus on identifying focus toward highest priorities.
      iii. Importance on showing positive results to reinforce effort.
      iv. Look for grant money.
         1. DHCD
      v. Website catalog of “troubled properties”
      vi. EOEA – good tool to have in toolkit. South Hadley has this already.
      vii. Mass General Law 40Q – get it designated by the state. Investments and increase in property values can be used to reinvest in the district (rather than general fund).
      viii. Redevelopment Authority? big step, only to be taken if have identified a specific project that needs a Redevelopment Authority presence.
         1. Advantages of Redevelopment Authority are: avoiding state’s cumbersome procurement process, and eminent domain
   b. John Dyjach, Holyoke, MA and resident of South Hadley, MA
      i. Involvement in audience on Ferry St. Condo Project – observed effectiveness of Town Planning Board and Town Planner (Richard Harris)
      ii. Economic Development Planning – SHF is not that far off from where it wants to be
      iii. Importance on building on what is here (Beachgrounds Park, St. Patrick’s Church, Library). How does the Falls take advantage of the things already in place?
      iv. Improving gateways – not too costly, would be effective
      v. Zoning in SHF should be as flexible as possible
      vi. Movement back to walkable city
      vii. Improve bus access to SHF
         1. Lobby PVTA
      viii. Establish priorities – do some more accomplishable projects from list to see results, helps encourage private investment
      ix. TIF – incentive program for companies to grow and invest here in exchange for
tax breaks. Impressive level of detail, but could be a lot of hoops to jump through as a business

c. Mackenzie Greer, BRPC, Adams and North Adams, MA
   i. Refreshing to think about big, grand, out-of-box ideas
   ii. Pittsfield in final stages of gateway project initially inspired by LARP studio 16-17 years ago
   iii. Regional planner, so will share some specific projects from area
      2. North Adams, MA – surplus of housing stock because of population loss. Need to develop priorities for what is important to retain and what to let go of (demolition program). Mass MoCA – layering of history. Building on historical identity of community. Don’t have to preserve something from past frozen in time, but can build on it. Commitment by local authorities or community members to making improvements is key.
      3. Lee, MA – small community (~4,700 population). Encourage grant application (e.g., CDBG)
   iv. Projects that have been worked on locally
      1. Village center zoning
      2. Walkability – studies on this are simple and solutions identified by them can be easy
   v. Often people rallying around a project – public/private interaction – is energizing

2. Community comments
   a. SH resident: What are specific recommendations from the charrette?
      i. Peter Webster: new pedestrian bridge to Holyoke, marina on river, cultural center south of park as bookend, museum, multiple ideas about affordable housing in existing industrial area to balance/support local industries
         1. Community member: already have a marina, bridges are already walkable, town doesn’t own much land south of Beachgrounds Park – land between bridge and dam might be more feasible but floodplain problems exist.
      ii. Mark Hamin: Which aspects are most important as economic development opportunities? What’s most important so we can compile priorities? Did you encounter ideas at November public meeting that have much promise?
   b. SH resident: Needed more time to examine and think about student design project. Disconnect between South Hadley and SHF – how can we address that with design and social efforts? Community preservation act? (Thank you to Mackenzie Greer for inspiring ideas.)
   c. SH resident: Floodplain possibilities – commercial, recreational, visitor center on floodplain if you design with it in mind. SH and SHF should be more connected. We should
design this part of town without taking rest of town into consideration. Have to work together and use this opportunity to pull town together.

d. SHF homeowner, not originally from MA. Goes to Holyoke to take bus to Northampton, would love easier way to get to work. Would love to put porch on, but have 2/3 of setback they’d need. To Robert Hubbard: how do you draw the line between what’s for the public good and what’s for the private interest? When does addressing troubled properties become gentrification?

i. Robert Hubbard: First step: Block grant funds to fix houses, abandoned homes fall into hands of city and demolition is used in some of these cases, selectively demolishing one or two housing to supply parking (try to fix house up first). Must meet with neighborhood before doing this.

e. SH resident: Fibermark building: town committees wrestling with how to move forward with this building because expensive to fix up. Ideas for creative uses??

f. SHF resident: Pedestrian bridge won't happen (too expensive and not needed, no one walks to Holyoke). Quality of life issues: noise (car stereos, exhaust) and laws rarely enforced, landfill affects SHF just as much as people who live near landfill – trucks going up to landfill on roads not redesigned to carry that use, no one shovels snow, people park on sidewalk, destruction of projects quickly, e.g., picnic tables

g. SH resident: Sustainable development of SHF. Social progress, quality of life, economic development, environmental issues are all important. What are we to expect from UMass about students’ design ideas? Not to dismiss creativity or innovation, but some smaller things need focus now. What is it going to look like in 2040? Need to look longer into the future.

i. Mark Hamin: Have produced draft reports – going to get feedback from town and produce revised report, then make them publicly available for review and comment. Mix of smaller and shorter-term projects, medium, and large and longer term projects. Hope to identify community priorities.

h. SH resident: New library. The more I think about it, the more I like the design, but it raises a fundamental question: to what degree do we look 50 years down the road? Are we always going to try to convey old New England factory look? Should we look, 50 years from now, more like Shanghai or more like Detroit?

i. John Dyjach: History has to be part of design. Should be a mix. Holyoke is redoing their library as a mix of old and new.

ii. Robert Hubbard: Gardner likes red bricks. Haven’t yet figured out how to fit modern design into downtown. New library 7 years ago has been anchor for northern end of renewal plan. Reuse of historical buildings. Purposely sited new library on contaminated property because otherwise site wouldn’t have been cleaned up. If public sector doesn’t do it, private sector won’t do it.

iii. Mackenzie Greer: What doesn’t work: when historical details are not well done. Lenox recently did streetscape, actively fought for authentic replicas of their historical lights. Very well done, very successful.

i. Martha Johnson (SH resident): regarding quality of life issues. Town working together – would like to meet more people from SHF. Don’t want to make decisions for SHF because I don’t live there.
j. SH resident: Projects between new library and New Veteran’s Bridge?
   i. Peter Webster: 1. proposal for park which town is already working on, 2. amphitheater located on the island of park facing the falls, 3. Museum of CT River focused on national history or industry as extension of bridge – up on piers so worked on floodplain. Protected viewing zone that hid some of sounds from streets and picked up on views of falls.

k. SH resident: How does the government acquire property from owners?
   i. Robert Hubbard: Property owners want to be treated fairly but some also want to make a lot of money. Eminent domain is last resort but can help with negotiating. Real estate and legal issue – need good advice to proceed with that. Environmental issues can be helpful – EPA is easier to work with when you have a specific project to propose.

   ii. John Dyjach: tax or title issues are one angle to take, Redevelopment Authority has more rights to acquire property.

l. SHF resident: Visioning and brainstorming – have been active with library project. That project was as creative and outside the box as students’ ideas. Library will have streetside with red brick but will also have energy-collecting side mostly glass. Quality of life issues: lack of outdoor gathering space. Library includes that in plan.

m. Richard Harris: eminent domain actually is not cheap, often the most expensive way to acquire property. CDG2 can only receive block grant every 2 years so difficult to plan long-term CDG strategy but town is doing that. What’s critical in the future of SHF is intertwining with Holyoke – need to work with them to move Falls forward. Instead of fighting battles between the two towns, work together. Massachusetts is a hard place to give tax incentives, things don’t move quickly. Eminent domain – in RI was easier. In MA, state has to approve the plan. Hopefully with new Mayor and Council members will help with that. Hopefully can get parks open along river.

n. SHF resident: have watched Textron building fall apart over the years, why hasn’t it been torn down?
   i. Richard Harris: building is owned by Holyoke Gas & Electric. Have to demonstrate method to mitigate effect on historical features (?). Filed letter stating agreements and disagreements. Said whatever engineers say should be done, we will accept. Still waiting for response. Eventually the building will come down, probably sooner rather than later. Can’t force other parties to act.

o. Announcement: Helen Fantini. Complementary activity using some of same words, different group of people. Charrette by American Institute of Architects, Communities by Design program. Advanced Team to plan different charrette with different set of eyes, ears, and perspectives.

p. Richard Harris: have Peter’s slideshow and will put individual slides on town’s website so residents can look at them individually and send comments

*Additional notes from MRP candidates Sally Miller, Jennifer Stromsten, Joshua Chase, and Timothy Inacio; edited by Mark Hamin*

One of the biggest themes that emerged was that some have expressed interest in offering a fresh set of eyes to look at the town’s zoning. There was interest in looking for ways that zoning can be
amended to appeal to the businesses that the community members might want in the Falls area.

Another theme arose from our own experience with the Master Plan and the feedback given by the panel of planners at the last meeting: interest in focusing the Master Plan’s objectives to distinguish priorities so that the priority goals are more approachable and phased as a sequential process. An approach that made sense to all of us was using the new library project as an entry point for projects that can be expanded to the rest of the Falls area, such as optimal walkability and access, since that is an issue with many of the sidewalks and intersections already. The library project is a perfect opportunity to start on smaller but visible projects that some townspeople called for in the last meeting.

A few final items: attention was drawn to the fact that if the Town wants for Falls residents to know they are focused on the value of the neighborhood, it would be helpful to encourage them to act on existing codes as a demonstration of good faith, which is also a short-term project that doesn’t require additional materials. This arose from the comments of a resident who suggested that there are rules that are broken regularly but not addressed, decreasing quality of life. I also think the idea Peter Webster mentioned would be a great one for a big ticket project - the CT River and mill history-focused learning center/museum with a pavilion for events built over the floodplain, attached to and accessible from the bridge.