

## **CPAC Roundtable Discussion Report**

On October 8, 2008, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) held a special meeting in which it conducted a roundtable discussion of the overarching goals for the planning process. Essentially, members of CPAC were asked to provide comments on two questions, which are listed below along with the responses.

### **What comprises the charm of *small town South Hadley*, as it was and now is, that residents really want to preserve?**

- Neighborhoods (i.e., social fabric) / sense of community
- Family-friendly activities
- Town Common/Village Commons- strong, vibrant center of town
- Mt. Holyoke College - beauty of grounds, architecture
- Scenic vistas, rolling hills (view of the range is particularly important)
- Riverfront- beauty, access, vista
- Minimize negative divisions among townspeople; nurture both the Commons and the Falls and appreciate each of them for their character and beauty; preserve town unity where it exists and enhance it where it doesn't
- Improvement of schools
- Community (or town) "centers" that used to exist around each elementary school and other services that have multi-uses and functions: areas for shopping, eating, walking, taking children, etc.
- The Falls area with the vibrancy it once had and could reclaim
- Small shops vs. strip malls
- Variety of housing stock and developments that fit our small New England town character
- Historic significance throughout the town
- Mom & Pop shops/eateries vs. fast food chains

### **In our work planning for the future, through the lenses of facilities, transportation, housing, historical resources, open space, etc. - how do we envision a kind of development and change which preserves and enhances this *essence of South Hadley*?**

- Have and promote activities and infrastructure and strategies to better connect with and know our neighbors
- Make our small town more walkable

- Have vibrant downtown/centers for multi-use purposes (shopping, recreation, transportation, services, etc.)
- Improve public transportation
- Create bike/hiking path from the Falls to other parts of town to the foothills of the range to enhance green modes of transportation, regionalism, quality of life, connecting the Falls to other parts of town
- Reuse/renovate existing buildings and vacant lots/buildings
- Improve schools
- Develop working definitions of key terms with more specificity i.e., what do we mean by "neighborhoods", "rolling hills", etc.
- Identify, create, approve, vote for mechanisms to preserve farms, open space, etc. --- What are these and how do we implement them?
- Encourage housing developments that preserve open space and avoid construction of single family homes on large parcels of land: use of zoning could be one of the tools to address this issue
- Align with apparent widely shared interest in saving open space and the diminished fear of creating higher density housing developments assuming they are appropriately and strategically placed throughout town.

As a conclusion, the following statement was agreed upon by CPAC as a good summation of the meeting.

**"South Hadley is a community with vast community-accessible open spaces and rolling hills and concentrated centers of mixed-use development achieved through a combination of a variety of measures including public infrastructure (such as pedestrian and bicycle corridors) and regulatory measures (such as Planned Unit Development)."**