

SECTION 6 COMMUNITY VISION

A. Description of the Process

On May 23, 2013 a public meeting was held to discuss the OSR Plan update and to review the existing goals, objectives and action plan. Those in attendance provided updated information regarding open space and recreation data in town as well as revised action plan strategies and areas of concern. New town-wide resource maps were prepared for the meeting using the most recent MassGIS data. The public was also asked to comment on the accuracy of the data and any additional information available. The meeting was attended by approximately 20 people.

In addition to the public meeting, a Community Survey was mailed to all Hadley residents, a summary of which is provided below, and the complete results provide as an Appendices. Eighty seven (87) people responded and provided important information regarding issues of significance to them and the general condition of open space and recreation in Hadley. Of note is the fact that almost 50% of the respondents have been residents of Hadley for over 20 years.

B. Community Survey Results

In general, the survey respondents were substantially opposed to additional growth and development in both the residential and commercial sectors. The majority considered the Town of Hadley to be a rural, farming community and felt that it was important to preserve that character. Additionally, residents feel it is important to protect historic buildings and sites, farmland and natural resources such as wetlands and wildlife habitats. The most significant reason identified for protecting open space and natural areas, other than to maintain community character, was to protect water quality and supply.

Recreational activities that were noted as most important to improve or expand were parks and picnic areas, canoe and kayak access, and hiking and biking trails. A large majority of respondents participate in these types of activities and locations far more than using more active recreational opportunities such as ballfields and soccer fields. The most popular recreational destination in Hadley was the Holyoke Range and Skinner State Park, followed by the Hadley Dike, the Norwottuck Rail Trail, Lake Warner, and Mount Warner. The Hadley Town Common was also noted as an important open space and recreational resource and destination.

C. Revised Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

Hadley possesses a great diversity of natural resources including the Connecticut River and its tributaries, groundwater supplies, wetlands, the Mount Holyoke Range, and highly productive soils for agriculture. The Town also has a rich cultural heritage rooted in its historical agrarian economy and rural character. Combined, these assets ensure a high quality of life for Hadley residents providing clean water and air, wildlife habitat, locally grown and produced food, and recreational opportunities. Six broad goals have been identified:

1. Protect Hadley's Agricultural Lands
2. Protect Hadley's Public Water Supply
3. Preserve and Protect Historic and Scenic Landscapes
4. Protect Wetlands and Wildlife Habitat/Biodiversity
5. Improve/Expand Recreational Opportunities to Hadley Residents
6. Develop Improved Administrative Practices

The purpose of this plan is to provide recommended actions for each of the above-mentioned goals, in order to coordinate the town's resource protection efforts. The ideal open space system will accomplish multiple resource protection goals while creating additional recreational opportunities. A holistic approach to land conservation and the protection of critical resources will continue to preserve the unique and valuable character that is important to the residents of Hadley.