

# Granby Center Town Study

December 2025

TOWN OF  
**GRANBY, CT**

*The Pride of the Valley*

BFJ Planning



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# **TOWN OF GRANBY, CONNECTICUT**

## **GRANBY TOWN CENTER STUDY**

December 2025

### **Prepared on behalf of**

Granby Center Advisory Committee  
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Granby, CT 06035



### **Prepared with the assistance of**

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# Introduction

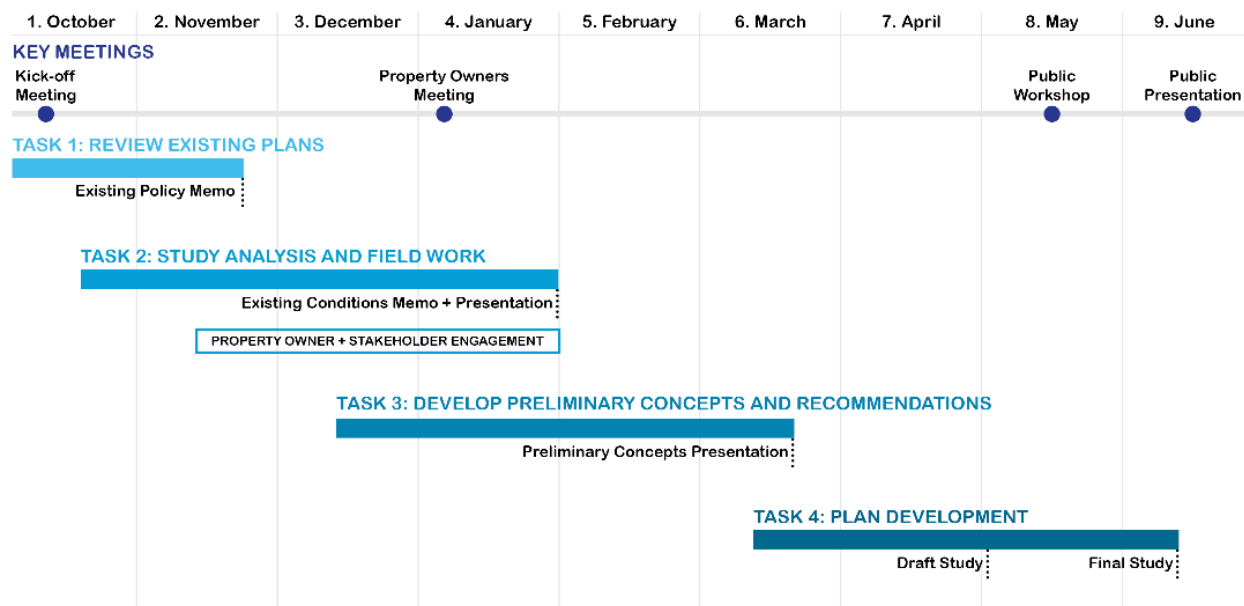


## Goal of the Study

This Granby Center Town Study is an outgrowth of several recommendations outlined in the Town of Granby 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The Town of Granby issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) in July 2024 seeking a consultant to assist the Town in the preparation of a Plan for Granby Center. BFJ Planning was selected to collaborate with the Granby Center Advisory Committee (“Committee”) on the development of the plan.

The key objective of the Study is to provide a framework that supports a connected, healthy, vibrant, and resilient Center for businesses, residents, and visitors, aligning with Granby’s POCD. Over the course of a nine-month period, BFJ worked with the Committee and various community stakeholders to develop a conceptual Plan that will serve as a roadmap to guide future planning and development within the Town Center. The Plan is intended to serve as a reference for the Town, elected officials, and business/property owners when making decisions related to capital investments, zoning, and land use.

Figure 1-1: Project Timeline



## Town of Granby 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development Vision and Goals

The 2016 POCD for Granby outlines several goals for the improvement of Granby Center. It is the Town’s most densely populated area, and the only area in town where most properties are connected to public sewer and water. The area is also the primary area for governmental, commercial, medical, and residential activity. The POCD focuses on creating a vibrant and cohesive mixed-use area that benefits both residential and business communities. The vision for Granby Center emphasizes an inclusive and pedestrian-oriented lifestyle, with enhanced connectivity throughout the Center.



The following goals for Granby Center are outlined in the POCD:

1. Continually develop and re-develop the Center as a cohesive, dynamic, mixed-use area for the benefit of the residential and business community.
2. Improve pedestrian access throughout the Center and link area businesses, particularly those separated by State Routes 10, 20, and 189 with sidewalks and crosswalks.
3. Maintain the Center Green as a special focal point within the Center.
4. Increase the number of and variety of businesses, particularly restaurants.
5. Promote organized social and special events within the Center.
6. Study, review and understand traffic flow within the Center.
7. Expand public sewer, water and natural gas lines.
8. Add additional street and business lighting to enhance nighttime activity and advocate for underground wiring.
9. Obtain a greater mix of new housing units, particularly multi-family and rental units.
10. Work to preserve historic buildings and the character of the Salmon Brook Historic District.
11. Promote harmonious and attractive signage and landscaping throughout the Center and unify the Center through other visual linkages.
12. Develop a comprehensive, conceptual design plan for the Center.
13. Provide improved pedestrian access and convenient services particularly for the senior citizens who reside within the Center.

This Granby Center Town Study addresses each of these goals through strategies and recommendations related to walkability and connectivity, zoning for a mix of uses, beautification, and design.

## **Planning Process and Public Outreach**

### *Granby Center Advisory Committee Meetings*

The Board of Selectmen established the Granby Center Advisory Committee (“Committee”) to oversee the study of Granby Center. The BFJ Planning team met approximately once per month with the Committee to ensure that the plan’s progress aligned with the priorities and vision of the Granby community. All Committee meetings were held at Town Hall and open to the public, as well as streamed online via Granby Community Television (GCTV). Meetings typically consisted of an update from BFJ on plan progress, interim deliverables, and community engagement, followed by a discussion and feedback from the Committee, as well as an opportunity for public comment and questions.

### *Stakeholder Meetings*

In December 2024, the Planning team conducted a walking tour with the Salmon Brook Historical Society. Members of the organization highlighted key historical assets near Granby Center, underscoring the Town’s heritage and local identity.

Figure 1-2: Granby Congregational Church



Property owners within Granby Center were invited to meet with the Planning team in January 2025. The purpose of this meeting was to gather insights on property owners' experiences in Granby Center and explore strategies to advance the area's economic goals. Participants engaged in a roundtable discussion addressing key issues, challenges, and opportunities, while also identifying ways the Town can support property owners in creating a more vibrant Town Center. Key takeaways from the meeting included the need to improve walkability, parking, and connectivity, establish consistent zoning, allow for mixed-use development, and support beautification to create a more cohesive Granby Center. A full meeting summary can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 1-3: Property Owners Meeting





## Public Workshops

Prior to the initiation of the Granby Center planning process, the Committee organized a Public Workshop in March 2024, attracting approximately 150 members of the public. Attendees represented a cross-section of the community, including various age groups, business and property owners, Town staff, and local organizations. Participants were asked to map the boundaries of the Granby Center, rate different priorities, sketch improvement ideas, and provide feedback on current usage.

Attendees were asked to indicate on a map where they consider Town Center to be located. The darker blue areas in Figure 1-4 represent the highest concentration of responses. The Study Area defined by the Committee, as well as the proposed Granby Center Zone described in Chapter 4: Town Center Recommendations, align closely with community input received during this exercise. After further review and consideration, the Committee recommended an expanded Granby Center Zone (see Figure 4-1).

Figure 1-4: Town Center Mapping Exercise



When asked to rank their top priorities for the Town Center, community members highlighted walkability, inclusive design, environmental sustainability, business connectivity, and beautification as key areas of focus (see Figure 1-5).

Figure 1-5: Public Workshop Priorities Ranked

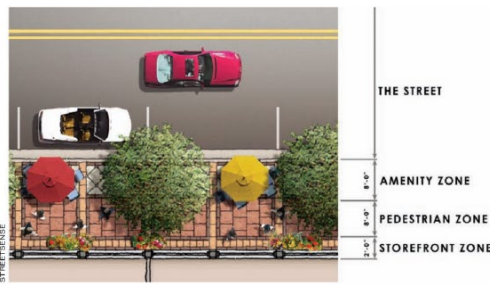
Rank	Priority	Avg.
1	Walkability	9.02
2	Inclusive design	8.52
3	Environmental Sustainability	8.42
4	Business connectivity	7.99
5	Beautification	7.9
6	Access to green spaces	7.84
7	Places for indoor gathering	7.77
8	Access to seating / Public spaces for outdoor social gathering	7.53
9	Historical features	7.52
10	Well-lit outdoor spaces	7.46
11	Housing - all incomes	7.46
12	Close access to services	7.41
13	Signage that is clear	7.27
14	Bike Lanes (racks, etc)	7.15
15	Tax diversification/economics	6.98
16	Intergenerational activities	6.47
17	Play spaces for children	6.24
18	Community and sensory gardens	5.82
19	Places to create	5.49

Figure 1-6 highlights the top five precedents selected by community members as well-suited for Granby Center. Key concepts, such as accessibility, connectivity, walkability, a mix of uses, bike friendliness, and the adaptive reuse of historic buildings were highlighted as desirable characteristics for the Town Center. Across multiple exercises, the workshop results highlighted a strong community vision for a connected, vibrant, and pedestrian-friendly Town Center with diverse commercial offerings and enhanced social spaces.

Figure 1-6: Precedent Analysis Exercise



1. Accessible/Connected Pathways



2. Model for Walkability



3. Mixed Use



4. Bike Friendly



5. Reusing Old Buildings



An additional Public Workshop was then held on May 15, 2025, to solicit community feedback on zoning and design proposals for the Town Center. This opportunity for public feedback helped ensure that the Granby Center Town Study and recommendations are representative of the community vision.

The meeting consisted of a presentation from the BFJ Planning team, an interactive dot-mocracy activity with poster boards, and an open house for participants to view the responses from other tables. Attendees were given red and green dot stickers to indicate their preferences: green dots for design concepts they supported and believed should be prioritized, and red dots for those they did not support. Below is a summary of comments that were made during the interactive exercise. A full meeting summary can be found in Appendix A.

#### Design and Beautification:

- Participants widely approved of expanding the Town Green. There were additional suggestions to include water elements, more seating, a playground, and landscape buffers between the Green and the surrounding state roads.
- Community members expressed support for more consistent signage throughout the Town Center that is reflective the New England aesthetic.
- Participants stated that the existing lighting style is sufficient, yet there are opportunities for greater consistency and usage across the Town Center.

#### Transportation Network:

- Participants supported an expanded pedestrian network, with several recommendations to link the municipal center to the commercial center of the town.
- Some participants mentioned the need for more bike racks throughout the Town Center.
- Residents observed that there is no public transportation in the Town Center and suggested incorporating a bus stop.
- It was generally agreed upon that there is enough parking provided in the Town Center, but there can be high demand at specific locations during peak hours.

*Figure 1-7: Public Workshop Interactive Exercise*









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## Planning Background



The following chapter describes recent planning efforts and studies that provide context for this Granby Center Town Study. The Town has undertaken several initiatives to advance the goals established in the POCD. Rather than starting from scratch, the recommendations outlined in this Plan are intended to build upon the foundation of previous work and continue to advance the vision for Granby Center.

## **Strategic Plan (2022)**

In 2022, the Granby Board of Selectmen (BOS) guided a process to adopt a Strategic Plan (Plan). The BOS solicited draft goals and objectives from a number of the Town's boards and commissions and then held a number of public workshops. In early 2023, the BOS adopted a Plan that reflects a consensus of the community values expressed throughout the process.

The Plan contains a number of goals and objectives that flow from the following mission statement: "The Town of Granby is dedicated to providing quality services in an equitable, responsive, and cost-effective manner thorough careful planning, collaborative community partnerships, and professional management."

The goals and objectives address issues like: 1) sustainable grand list growth; 2) financial stability; 3) effective management of Town infrastructure; 4) providing a safe and livable community; 5) promoting long-term stability of open space, agriculture and agrotourism; 6) evaluating conservation and sustainability measures; 7) promoting improvements to the Town's communication systems; and 8) coordinating the efforts to the Town's various non-profit and volunteer organizations.

When soliciting draft goals and objectives in development of the Strategic Plan, several of the objectives listed specifically target Granby Center. The Development Commission emphasizes the goal to continue the improvement and enhancement of Granby Center.

These objectives may include:

- Pursue streetscape improvements to create a cohesive environment in Granby Center.
- Hire a firm to assess the Town Green and propose a design plan for the area.
- Evaluate the Zoning Regulations to allow additional uses and mix uses.
- Provide additional housing opportunities in the Town Center area, including improvements to existing properties.
- Partner with local businesses to promote branding of the area.
- Seek opportunities to host events in the Granby Center area—programming opportunities for the Town Green, farmer's/artisan market, holiday events and recognitions, etc.

Measurable outcomes of this goal are:

- Grant securement for streetscape improvements
- Funding allocation for Town Green design firm and design plan outcome
- Zoning Regulation changes
- Housing data
- Number of events held in the area

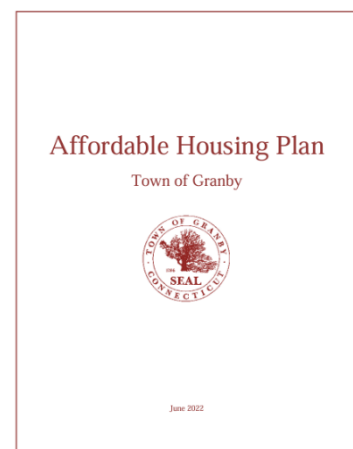
The Planning & Zoning Commission also describes objectives specifically related to Granby Center. One objective is to pursue the enhancement of Granby Center through both streetscape and landscape improvements, additional residential opportunities, beautification of existing buildings, increased connectivity, and the promotion of a mix of uses. Outcomes could include:

- Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements
- Uniform sidewalk lighting, planter boxes, benches etc.
- Study and plan for the Town Green area
- Mix of housing options (Zoning Regulation change)
- Mixed uses (Zoning Regulation change)
- Façade improvement program
- Work to increase the number of special events within the Center

Strategic Plan: <https://www.granby-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1024/Strategic-Planadopted132023?bidId=>

### **Affordable Housing Plan (2022)**

The Affordable Housing Plan, published in June 2022, describes the Town of Granby's mission to strive to provide a diverse mix of housing opportunities, including a range of affordable housing options within the community. The plan acknowledges challenges to increasing the number of affordable housing developments in Granby, specifically in relation to the limited public water and sewer service townwide, lack of public transportation options, and large areas of preserved open space. Despite these constraints, Granby is committed to increasing the diversity and affordability of housing types for all community members.



Several recommendations in this plan relate to Granby Center. For instance, the plan recommends examining the regulations governing development of multi-family housing. Multi-family housing is currently only allowed by right in the Center Commons (CC) Zone. Obtaining a Special Permit approval is required in any other zone that allows multi-family developments. The plan discusses potential ways to modify the Zoning Regulations to provide more consistency and to support future multifamily housing development, such as expanding the districts that allow multi-family housing to be built as of right, increasing the multi-family housing density where public infrastructure allows, decreasing the minimum lot size required for multi-family development, and introducing deed-restricted affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Plan: <https://www.granby-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/158/Affordable-Housing-Plan---Final-June-2022-PDF>

### **Plan of Conservation and Development (2016)**

Granby's 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) was prepared in accordance with Section 8-23, of the Connecticut General Statutes, entitled Preparation, Amendment or Adoption of Plan of Conservation and Development. These ten-year cycle Plans are designed to provide guidance and information to all the Town's boards, commissions, public officials and residents. According to

State Statute, POCD contain policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, are designed to promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people, and recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes. Such plans also recommend the most desirable density of population, make provisions for the development of housing opportunities, and promote choice and economic diversity in housing.

Granby's POCD was prepared by a Subcommittee, appointed by the Granby Planning and Zoning Commission. The Subcommittee reviewed State Statutes, the Town's 2005 Plan, other Town Plans of Conservation and Development, and held public workshops. Throughout the process the Subcommittee referred to and made modifications to the Town's original Fundamental Values, which were first outlined in the 1993 Plan.

The Committee spent considerable time discussing and considering the need for a variety of housing types, environmental concerns, various patterns of development, infrastructure capacity within the municipality, the State POCD, the Capitol Region POCD, population, social and economic conditions and trends, and the needs of the municipality including, human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation, and preservation of agriculture.

In preparation for the next ten-year POCD, a Subcommittee was officially formed in September of 2025. This Subcommittee, known as the Plan of Conservation and Development 2026 Committee, is scheduled to present its Plan in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes in late 2026 for formal adoption by Granby's Board of Selectmen.

2016 Plan of Conservation and Development: <https://www.granby-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/143/Plan-of-Conservation-and-Development-PDF>

### **Planning and Zoning Commission Revisions to Zoning Regulations**

The Planning and Zoning Commission often reviews and updates the Zoning Regulations. These changes are either in response to petitioner applications or are also often Commission initiated actions. Several recent changes to the regulations include an amendment to allow attached accessory apartments by right; a provision to allow the submission of simplified site plans; changes to landscaping requirements to encourage the planting of native species; and other minor revisions and corrections. This shows that the Commission views that the regulations can and should adapt, and be responsive, to changing trends and times and that the Commission will review and consider recommendations from this study.

While this study focuses on Granby Center, it is important to recognize other ongoing projects in Town that can complement this Study. This includes both a study of Salmon Brook Park and Ahrens Park, which are town facilities in close proximity to the Granby Center study area, and the library planning project, which is within the proposed Granby Center Zone.

Zoning Regulations: <https://www.granby-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/612/Zoning-Regulations-updated-92025-PDF>

## **Parks and Recreation Study**

Granby Parks & Recreation completed a master planning process for Salmon Brook and Ahrens Parks. This process evaluated existing park facilities (including fields, playgrounds, parking, and walking paths), gathered community input, and developed a long-term vision for upgrades and new amenities. Park Study 2025 will serve to guide future improvements and renovations for both parks.

Park Study 2025 project information: <https://www.granby-ct.gov/384/Park-Recreation-Board>

## **Library Renovation and Planning Project**

The library is undergoing a phased renovation and planning project to modernize and expand its facilities. Short-term improvements include new carpeting, fresh paint, upgraded lighting, and new meeting room furniture to improve functionality and comfort. In the medium to long term, the library is exploring a building expansion to add a larger Children's Room, a dedicated Teen Area, and more program and meeting spaces. A feasibility study and strategic planning process, supported by a capital campaign consultant, are guiding the project to ensure it meets community needs and funding requirements. These efforts aim to enhance accessibility, user experience, and the library's role as a central hub for lifelong learning and community engagement.

Library Renovation and Planning project information:

<https://gplnextchapter.blogspot.com/2025/09/library-expansion-and-renovation-project.html>









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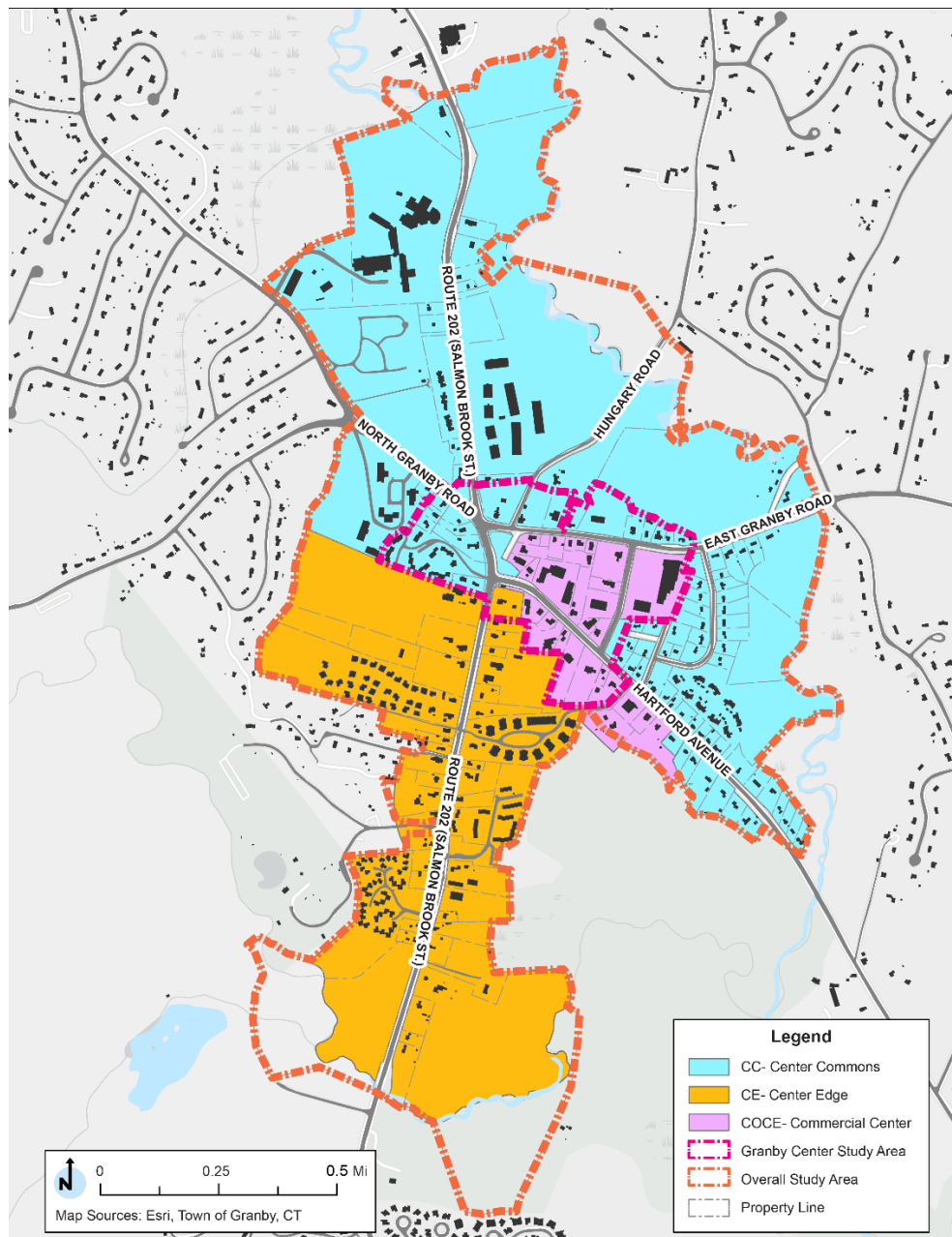
## Study Area Existing Conditions



### 3.1 Study Area Boundaries

The following chapter describes the existing physical and regulatory conditions of the study area. The study area was developed by the Committee at the outset of the planning process and includes two components: the Overall Study Area and the Granby Center Area, which are shown in Figure 3-1. The Overall Study Area provides broader context to understand the conditions within Granby Center. While these areas shaped the initial existing conditions analysis, the planning team later refined the boundaries, ultimately developing a more precise Granby Center Zoning District based on community input, Committee discussions, and a detailed analysis of existing conditions. The Granby Center Zoning District is described in greater detail in Chapter 4: Town Center Recommendations.

Figure 3-1: Overall Study Area



### **3.2 Population/Demographics Overview**

The Town of Granby is divided into two Census Tracts. The eastern portion of the town, encompassing Granby Center, is included in Census Tract 4681.02. According to the 2020 Decennial Census, this tract has a total population of 3,991. The median age is approximately 49.6 years old, which is significantly higher than the median ages for Hartford County (40.7) and the State of Connecticut (41.1). Notably, nearly 30% of residents in Granby are aged 62 years and over, highlighting a substantial aging population. This demographic trend highlights the need to support infrastructure that facilitates accessibility and aging in place. There is also a significant trend of home ownership in this area, as 82% of the 1,675 occupied housing units are owner-occupied, while only 18% are renter-occupied.

According to the 2022 American Community Survey, Granby has a higher median household income compared to the County and State. The median household income is \$116,200, exceeding both the Capitol Region's (\$88,190) and the State of Connecticut's (\$90,213) median household incomes.

### **3.3 Market Analysis and Regional Development Trends**

A Market Analysis Report was conducted for Granby Center, evaluating local economic conditions and regional development trends. The following section gives an overview of key takeaways, while the full report can be found in Appendix B.

The analysis focuses on Granby's position within the broader Hartford County and neighboring submarkets. The study assesses retail, commercial, and residential markets to pinpoint areas of potential growth and identify pressures from competing developments in surrounding communities. Due to both challenges and opportunities within the retail, commercial, and residential sectors, this study recommends allowing flexible zoning that permits a mix of uses that can respond to market demands and future trends. Proposed zoning and uses are described in further detail in Chapter 4: Town Center Recommendations.

#### *Granby's Locational Advantage*

Located approximately 20 miles northwest of Hartford, Granby offers residents access to one of the region's most significant employment centers. Hartford, known as the "Insurance Capital of the World," is home to leading companies such as The Hartford, Aetna, and Travelers. These firms provide a range of career opportunities in finance, insurance, and corporate management, attracting professionals from across the region. Granby's proximity allows residents to benefit from the high-paying roles and career stability that Hartford offers while enjoying a suburban lifestyle.

Bradley International Airport, located just 12 miles from Granby in Windsor Locks, is a major economic driver for the region. The airport facilitates thousands of jobs in aviation, logistics, retail, and customer service, supporting both local and regional economies.

Situated approximately 15 miles from Granby, the Day Hill Corporate Area in Windsor is another significant employment hub. This area hosts major corporate offices and facilities.

Granby residents also benefit from proximity to prominent educational and healthcare institutions. The University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington and Hartford Hospital provide a wide range of employment opportunities in medical, research, and administrative fields. These institutions are within a 30-minute drive.

Furthermore, within Granby itself, small businesses in retail, dining, and professional services contribute to the local economy. While smaller in scale than the major employers in surrounding areas, these businesses provide convenient employment opportunities and everyday services within the community.

### *Retail Market*

Granby's retail market features a blend of local businesses and select national retailers that cater to residents' essential needs. Commercial activity is concentrated in Granby Center, strategically situated at the intersection of Salmon Brook Street (Route 10/202) and Hartford Avenue (Route 20).

Granby Center primarily caters to everyday needs with businesses such as banks, medical offices, personal services, and restaurants. Discussions during community meetings emphasized the need for Granby Center to attract businesses that encourage residents and visitors to linger and explore, such as boutiques and unique retail offerings that cannot always be purchased online.

While not exhaustive, examples of Granby Center's businesses include:

- **Dining Options:** Granby Center offers a variety of dining experiences that serve residents and attract visitors from nearby towns. Unique venues include @ The Barn Restaurant, The Bear's Den, La Figata, Rancho Viejo, and Han Asian Cuisine. Quick-service options include Wayback Burgers (see Figure 3-2), Lox Stock & Bagel, and Starbucks, while dessert destinations like Icy Rolls and Grassroots Ice Cream add variety to the Center.
- **Food Stores:** Granby Center is anchored by **Geissler's Supermarket and its connected shopping plaza**, located at 9 Bank Street (see Figure 3-3).
- **Personal Services:** Granby Center includes several personal service businesses that cater to grooming and wellness needs such as Platinum Studio, Granby Nail Salon, and Ivy Nails & Spa.

Despite this variety, Granby Center's retail offerings primarily address everyday necessities, lacking the diverse and unique retail experiences that encourage extended visits and attract a broader audience.

*Figure 3-2: Granby Village Shops*





Figure 3-3: Geissler's Shopping Center



### *Commercial Small Office Market*

Granby Center's office sector is predominantly service-oriented, catering to the needs of the local community through a variety of professional services. Healthcare providers such as Granby Dental, Salmon Brook Dental, and Starling Physicians Granby Internal Medicine play a critical role in delivering essential care to residents.

Financial institutions are also a significant part of Granby Center's office market, with banks like Liberty Bank, Westfield Bank, Northwest Community Bank, and Windsor Federal Savings, providing financial services. These institutions support both personal and business banking needs, contributing to the stability and functionality of the local commercial landscape.

### *Vacancy Rates and Rental Trends*

Granby Center's retail and office market is constrained by several key vacancies. Significant empty spaces include the former Bank of America site (see Figure 3-4). These remain unoccupied and underutilized, diminishing the center's overall appeal and foot traffic necessary to support nearby businesses.

Figure 3-4: Vacant Site



### *Residential Market*

The town maintains a high homeownership rate, with approximately 90% of households being owner-occupied. This dominance of single-family homes serves families and long-term residents well but presents challenges for younger individuals, first-time buyers, and seniors seeking smaller or more affordable housing options. The limited diversity in housing types has constrained Granby's ability to attract and retain a broader demographic, highlighting the need for more varied housing options to meet the needs of a wider range of residents.

Granby's rental market features several high-end developments, positioning the town as an appealing option for high income tenants. Station 280 (see Figure 3-5) and the Grand Luxury Apartments offer modern units with amenities tailored to professionals and families.

*Figure 3-5: Station 280 Development*



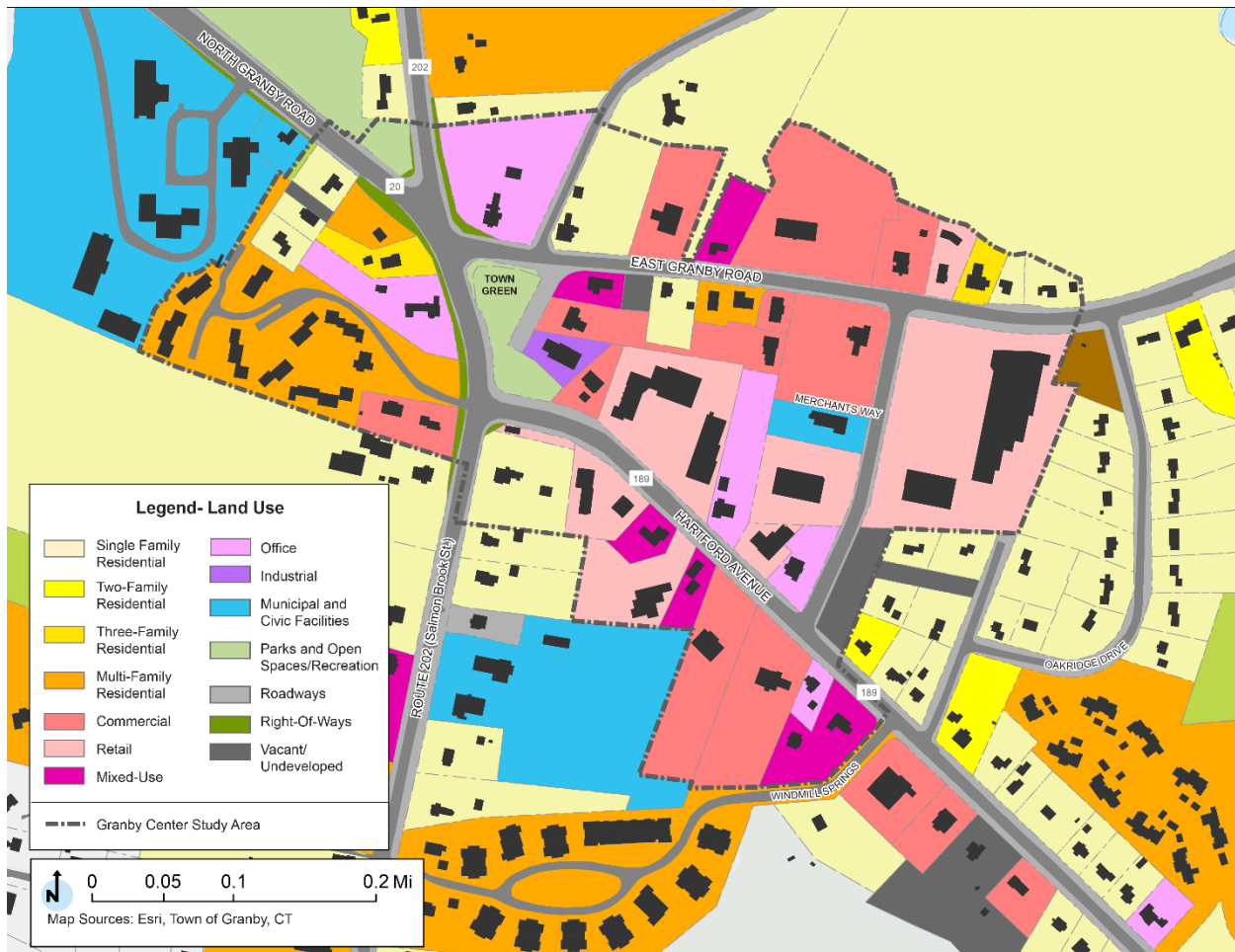
Recent rental housing developments have filled quickly, demonstrating a strong demand for housing in the area. Despite the success of these projects, the focus on high-end units highlights the need for greater diversity in rental options to ensure the market remains inclusive and accessible to a broader demographic, including young professionals, seniors, and essential workforce populations. Expanding affordable and mid-range rental opportunities will be key to addressing this gap and supporting the community's long-term growth.



### 3.4 Existing Land Use and Development Patterns

Commercial and retail uses combined account for a significant portion of the total area within Granby Center. Multifamily uses make up a smaller portion of the area, but include key developments, such as Stony Hill Village. Office and mixed-use parcels are scattered throughout the Town Center, contributing to its diversity of uses (see Figure 3-6).

Figure 3-6: Land Use in Granby Center Study Area



### 3.5 Current Zoning Regulations

The Granby Center Zone is divided into four subdistricts (see Figure 3-7). The majority of the area is zoned as Commercial Center. The Center Commons district also accounts for a significant portion of the area to the east of the Town Green. A small portion of the area to the southwest is zoned as Commercial Edge. Additionally, the Historic Overlay District runs through the area, which can be seen in Figure 3-8.

Figure 3-7: Existing Zoning in Granby Center Study Area

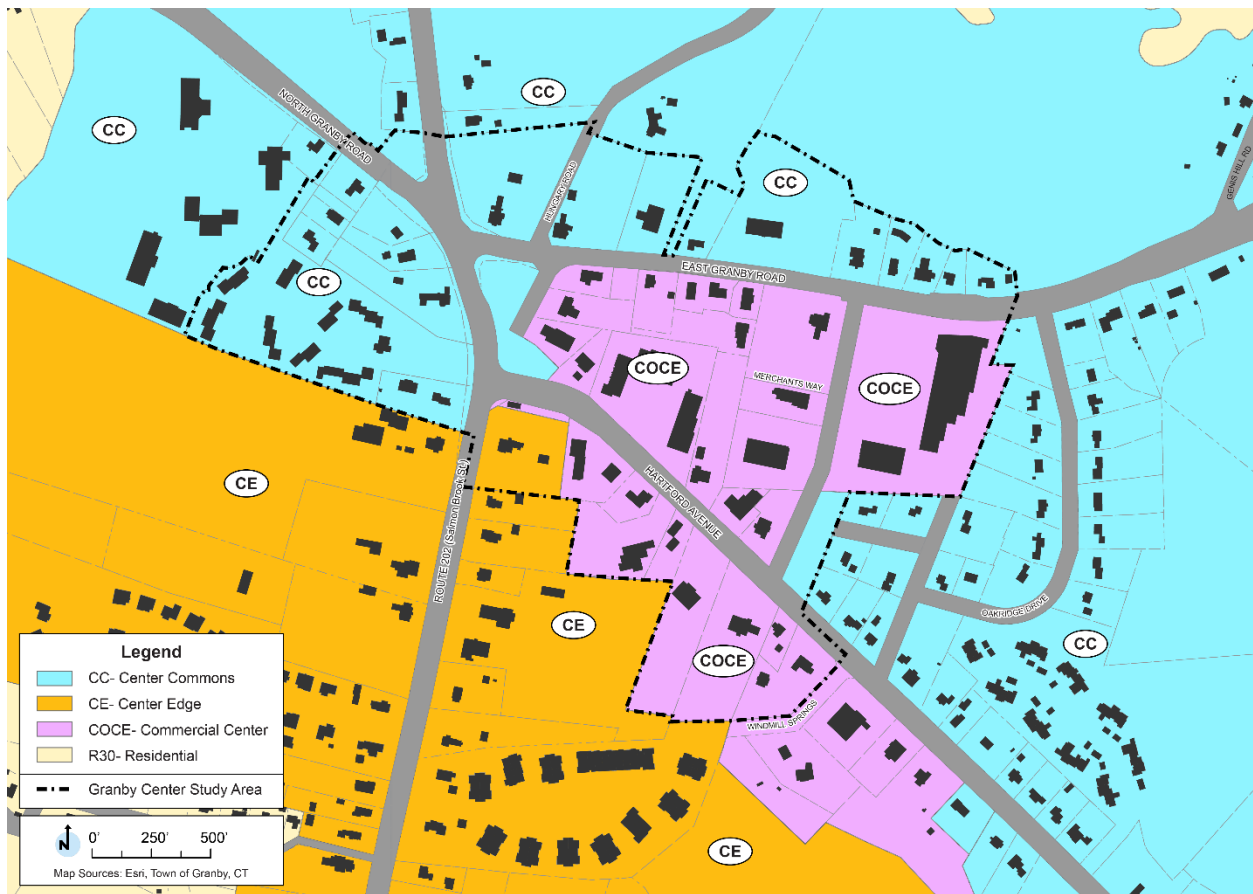
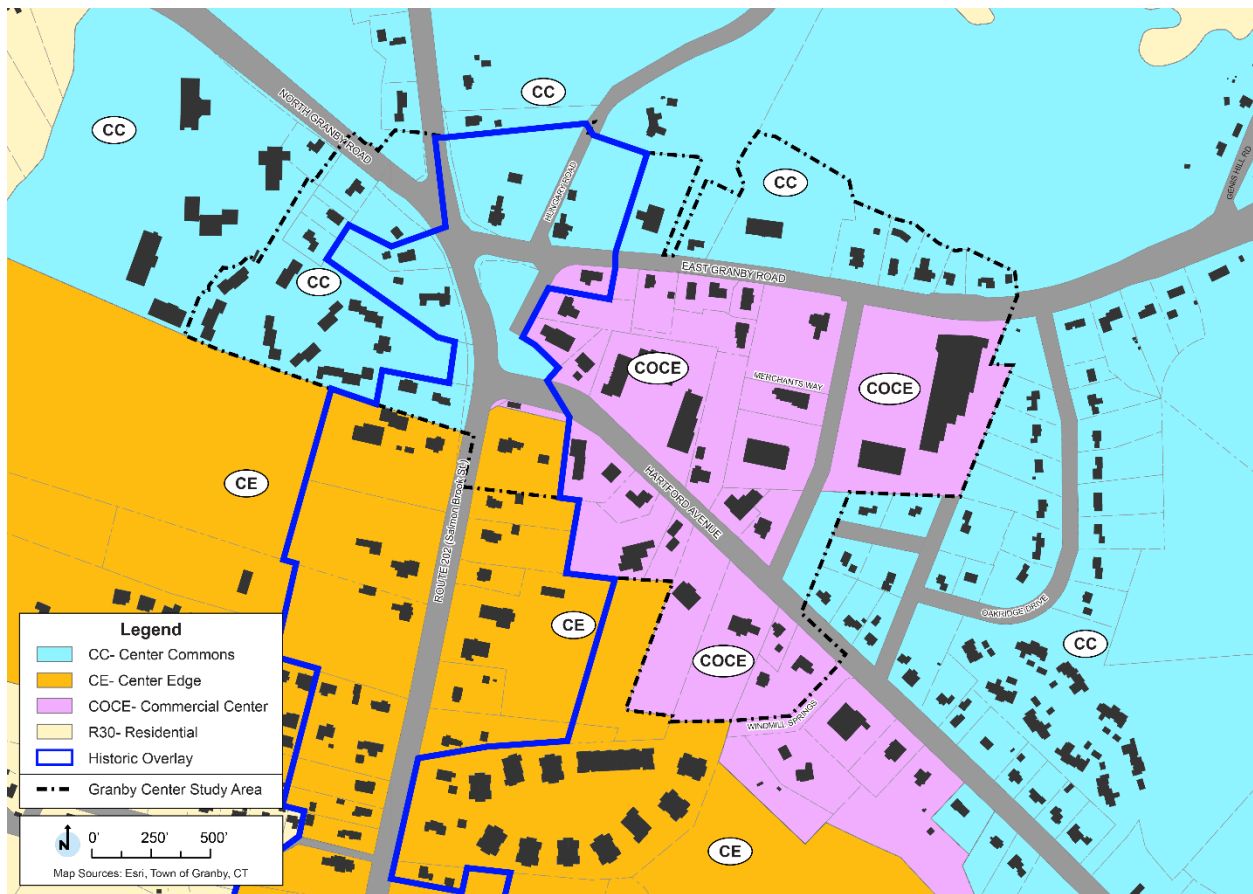


Figure 3-8: Historic Overlay in Granby Center Study Area



The four subdistricts within the existing Granby Center Zone area are outlined below:

1. Commercial Center (COCE);
2. Center Commons (CC);
3. Center Edge (CE); and
4. Granby Center Historic Overlay District.

Table 3-1 summarizes the various area and bulk standards for each of the subdistricts.

Table 3-1: Granby Center Schedule of Area and Bulk

	<b>COCE (Commercial Center)</b>	<b>CC (Center Commons)</b>	<b>CE (Center Edge)</b>
Min. Front Yard (Feet)	25 ft	50 ft <sup>a</sup>	50 ft <sup>d</sup>
Min. Side Yard	10 ft	20 ft	20 ft
Min. Rear Yard	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft
Min. Parking	Outlined in Section 7	Outlined in Section 7	Outlined in Section 7
Max. Building Height (Stories/Feet)	3 / 45 ft	3 / 45 ft	2.5 / 30 ft
Max. Building Footprint	8,000 SF for a single commercial building	8,000 SF for a single commercial building	4,000 SF for building with non-residential purposes
Max. Lot Coverage	30%	30% <sup>b</sup>	25% <sup>e</sup>
Min. Lot Area (SF)	20,000 SF	30,000 SF <sup>c</sup>	30,000 SF
Min. Lot Frontage (Feet)	100 ft	150 ft	150 ft
Min. Lot Depth	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft
<sup>a</sup> “The building front yard shall be a minimum of 50 feet, except that the Commission may permit a front yard of less than 50 feet, but not less than 30 feet, where other area buildings have front yards of less than 50 feet. In determining the front yard the Commission shall consider the front yard setback of existing buildings located within 400 feet of the proposed new building.” (Center Commons Zone Special Criteria 3.12.2, p. 46)			
<sup>b</sup> See Center Commons Zone Special Criteria 3.12.2.			
<sup>c</sup> “Special Permit uses shall only be allowed on a lot containing a minimum of 40,000 square feet, except where an existing home will be used for both residential and commercial purposes.” (Center Commons Zone Special Criteria 3.12.2, p. 46).			
<sup>d</sup> “The building front yard shall be a minimum of 50 feet, except that the Commission may permit a front yard of less than 50 feet, but not less than 30 feet, where other area buildings have front yards of less than 50 feet. In determining the front yard the Commission shall consider the front yard setback of existing buildings located within 600 feet of the proposed new building.” (Center Edge Zone Special Criteria 3.12.3, p. 47).			
<sup>e</sup> See Center Edge Zone Special Criteria 3.12.3.			

## 1. Commercial Center Subdistrict

The Commercial Center Zone, the commercial sub zone, allows business or professional uses and restaurants (limited seating) as principal permitted uses and retail uses (and other commercial offerings) are allowed by special permit. Residential uses are not permitted in the Commercial Center Zone.

The maximum area of the footprint of a single commercial building is 8,000 square feet.

The Commission may waive the minimum landscape area of Section 4.2.5 to achieve the goals of this zone as stated herein.



Adjacent property owners are encouraged to share curb cuts leading to the adjacent roadways. No new curb cuts will be permitted within this zone, except that any existing lot legally established prior to the date of adoption of this regulation shall have the right to access the adjacent roadway. Existing curb cuts may be relocated.

Pedestrian access to the proposed building, from the nearest street, shall be incorporated within the site design. Pedestrian and vehicular access from adjacent sites shall be incorporated where feasible.

Bulk requirements (Lot Areas, Yards, Coverage, Heights and Frontages) are governed by those in the C2 Zone in Section 5, except that the minimum front yard shall be 25 feet.

## **2. Center Commons Subdistrict**

The Center Commons Zone is a diverse area of office buildings, public service use, retail use and housing. It contains the Granby Town Hall, Police Department, Senior/Youth Center, Board of Education Building, Library and the Granby Cemetery. It allows for a wide range of uses along these lines, but retail and commercial uses require a special permit and typically a lot area of 40,000 square feet (although there are exceptions).

The design, scale, size and use of individual developments shall be designed in a manner that is reasonably consistent and compatible with existing uses.

The site design for any proposed new development and for the re-use of any existing building must blend with the traditional area site design as appropriate for the specific location. This would typically include lawn between the structure and the street and parking to the side or rear of the building within the Historic District.

The maximum area of the footprint of a single commercial building is 8,000 square feet.

The building front yard shall be a minimum of 50 feet, but exceptions can be made to 30 feet minimum to blend in with surrounding context.

Bulk requirements (Lot Areas, Yards, Coverage, Heights and Frontages) are governed by those in the R30 Zone in Section 5, except as follows; the minimum front yard may be 30 feet as outlined above; the maximum height is 45 feet; the maximum stories is 3; and the maximum coverage is 30 percent.

## **3. Center Edge Subdistrict**

The Center Edge Zone serves primarily residential, public service, recreational and open space uses. It contains multifamily developments, the Historic Society, the Granby Center Fire House, the Visiting Nurses Association and the South Congregation Church. This area contains most of the Granby Center Historic Overlay District.

The Center Edge allows a tailored range of principal permitted uses, including single-family dwellings, home occupations, agriculture and detached accessory dwelling units (apartments). Limited commercial uses (not including retail) are allowed by special permit.

Building design shall follow a residential style to blend and enhance the historic character of this area. Use of carefully chosen architectural details, such as cornices, brackets, shutters, columns and awnings are encouraged within such areas. The exterior colors of building materials

shall mirror or be compatible with the colors of nearby buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The site design for any proposed new development or for the re-use of an existing building must blend with the traditional area site design as appropriate for the specific location. This would typically include lawn between the structure and the street and parking to the side or rear of the building within the Historic Overlay District.

The maximum area of the footprint of a building that is used for non-residential purposes is 4,000 square feet.

The building frontage (front yard) shall be guided by the average frontage of existing buildings located within the immediate vicinity of any proposed new building or addition.

Bulk requirements (Lot Areas, Yards, Coverage, Heights and Frontages) are governed by those in the R30 Zone, except that the minimum front yard shall be 30 feet.

#### **4. The Granby Center Historic Overlay District**

The Granby Center Historic Overlay District is a specific area outlined within the Granby Zoning Map and located within the comprehensive Granby Center Zone. This overlay has additional requirements and regulations applied to it, which are in addition to the requirements and regulations of the underlying Center Zone the property is located within.

The primary use of existing homes within the Granby Center Historic Overlay District portion of the Center Edge zone is residential use.

### **3.6 Utilities**

#### *Sewer*

Granby's wastewater is collected and treated at a water pollution control facility in the Town of Simsbury. Many properties in Granby Center's core area have access to the wastewater sewer system. It is overseen by Granby's Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) and guided under Connecticut State Statutes. According to data gathered from the flow meter at the Granby/Simsbury town line in 2022, the annual average daily wastewater flow was 113,800 gpd.

#### *Gas*

Granby is served by Connecticut Natural Gas (CNG). Many properties within Granby Center's core area have access to natural gas, however, the 2016 POCD recommends working with CNG to extend gas lines throughout the Center.

#### *Water*

Granby is served by The Salmon Brook District Water Company and the Aquarion Water Company. The Salmon Brook District Water Company serves Granby Center, while the Aquarion Water Company serves the area of south Salmon Brook Street and Canton Road. The majority of properties within Granby Center are connected to public water.

### *Electrical*

Electrical service for Granby is provided by Eversource. Eversource is the utility company that is responsible for the physical infrastructure that delivers electricity to all of Granby. This includes supplying, transmitting, and distributing electricity. In the deregulated State of Connecticut, residents and businesses have the option of choosing a different third-party supplier for the generation of their electricity. Electrical service is tailored to the needs of the individual property and is not based on a certain size or capacity that may be needed for a specific town area.

### *Communication*

The main companies that provide communications/telecommunications services to the center area of Granby are Cox and Frontier. Other providers that may offer services include: T-Mobile, Verizon, Xfinity (Comcast), Spectrum, Earthlink, Starlink, etc. The services that are provided by these or similar companies include phone, television, and internet. Services are provided at various speeds and capacities via fiber optic, 5G, cable, DSL, phone/land line, and satellite. Specific services and speeds vary between companies and may also vary by specific property locations. Communications/telecommunications are deregulated in the State of Connecticut.

## **3.7 Granby Public Schools**

Granby Public Schools serve as a strong example of a district committed to academic excellence, community involvement, and student growth. With approximately 1,700 students across grades PreK-12, the district has a favorable student-teacher ratio and a dedicated faculty and staff of just over 300 people.

Granby Public Schools is committed to ensuring that students become resourceful learners and effective communicators who positively contribute at the local, national and global levels. Granby Memorial High School ranks as the 18th school in Connecticut according to the U.S. News & World Report. Each school consistently performs well above state averages on standardized assessments and offers an excellent return on investment for below average per pupil expenditures in the state.

Granby Public Schools is known for strong academics, outstanding athletic programs, and robust extracurricular activities such as the award-winning fall play and musical performance each spring. In addition to serving students grades PreK-12, Granby also hosts a post-secondary transition program for students ages 18-22, called Granby B.E.A.R. Transition Academy. This program supports students with developmental disabilities in preparation for a successful and fulfilling life after high school. Granby Public Schools maintains partnerships with community resources, businesses and community colleges to promote local and community-based experiences, positive social relationships, and independent living skills.

The enrollment history and projections in Granby Public Schools demonstrate a slightly declining school enrollment. Between 2017 and 2025, total enrollment declined by approximately 200 students or nearly 10%. This trend of declining school enrollment can be seen both statewide and nationally.

*Table 3-2: Enrollment History and Projections in Granby Public Schools*

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PK-2</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>9-12</b>	<b>PK-12 TOTAL</b>
2017-2018	380	406	419	657	1,862
2018-2019	391	413	404	655	1,863
2019-2020	402	381	416	586	1,785
2020-2021	369	346	436	572	1,723
2021-2022	404	354	424	576	1,758
2022-2023	394	379	400	552	1,725
2023-2024	389	379	398	566	1,732
2024-2025	349	384	389	566	1,688
2025-2026	357	379	395	549	1,680
2026-2027	342	376	399	552	1,669
2027-2028	353	337	416	526	1,632
2028-2029	357	335	404	518	1,614

### **3.8 Transportation**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) recently completed intersection improvements in Granby Center. The project included the widening of Route 10/202/189 to provide 11-foot travel lanes with 4-foot shoulders. This widening allowed dedicated left-turn lanes in certain locations, combined through/right-turn lanes, and right-turn lanes. As part of the project, DOT also installed pedestrian facilities throughout Granby Center. Sidewalks and decorative lights were installed along both Salmon Brook Street and on East Granby Road from the Town Green to Bank Street.

### **3.9 Opportunities and Constraints**

The existing conditions analysis for the Granby Center Study Area, as described above, presents several opportunities for future improvements in the Town Center in alignment with the goals stated in the POCD and the Center's existing identity. For instance, there is already a diverse mix of uses within Granby Center, including residential, commercial, and office. Creating zoning that supports the expansion of mixed-use development within Town Center is one opportunity for growth that responds to both the market demand and existing Town Center character. Additionally, given the constraints with high traffic volumes and state jurisdiction of roadways surrounding the Center, enhancing pedestrian infrastructure and business connectivity will facilitate a more walkable, vibrant downtown. The following chapter identifies specific



strategies and recommendations for achieving the Granby Center vision, while reflecting the existing built environment and regulatory conditions outlined above.

### **3.10 Granby's Fiscal Planning & Condition**

Granby is governed by a Town Charter and operates under a Board of Selectmen (BOS) and Town Manager form of government. The five-member BOS is the legislative body and appoints/hires a Town Manager. The Town Manager is the administrative Chief Executive Officer of the Town and is responsible to the BOS for the supervision and administration of all town departments. The Town Manager also oversees the Town's boards and commissions with the exception of those elected by the people and in accordance with the Town Charter and Connecticut General Statutes. The BOS appoints a Town Treasurer and Town Attorney who serve two-year terms.

An elected six-member Board of Finance (BOF) serves as the Town's budget creating authority and is responsible for presenting and recommending the annual budget to the voters for a "machine vote" approval. The BOF also appoints the Town Auditor. A seven-member Board of Education (BOE) is elected in accordance with the Town Charter and Connecticut General Statutes.

The Town Manager prepares annual budgets, excluding the Board of Education budget, with the Town's administrative departments and the Director of Finance. The budget is presented to the BOS for review and changes. The BOS and the BOE submit their budget to the BOF for review and final adjustments which is then formally presented to the voters for approval. The BOS, BOE, and BOF meet regularly to set guidelines and goals during the annual "budget season". The Town of Granby also develops ten-year fiscal projections for operations and capital projects to be prepared for the future.

Financial statements of the Town are prepared and conform to generally accepted accounting principles of the US (GAAP) and governmental accounting principles set by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

As a result of historical sound fiscal management practices, strong operating fund balances, high tax collection rates, a growing Grand List, and prudent long-term debt (reduction) management, the Town of Granby is in excellent financial health. The Town also holds high investment grade financial ratings from S&P Global at AA+ and Moody's at Aa2. These healthy fiscal indicators and very strong ratings will be of importance as Granby looks to consider future initiatives that require investment, such as infrastructure and capital assets.







4

## Town Center Recommendations

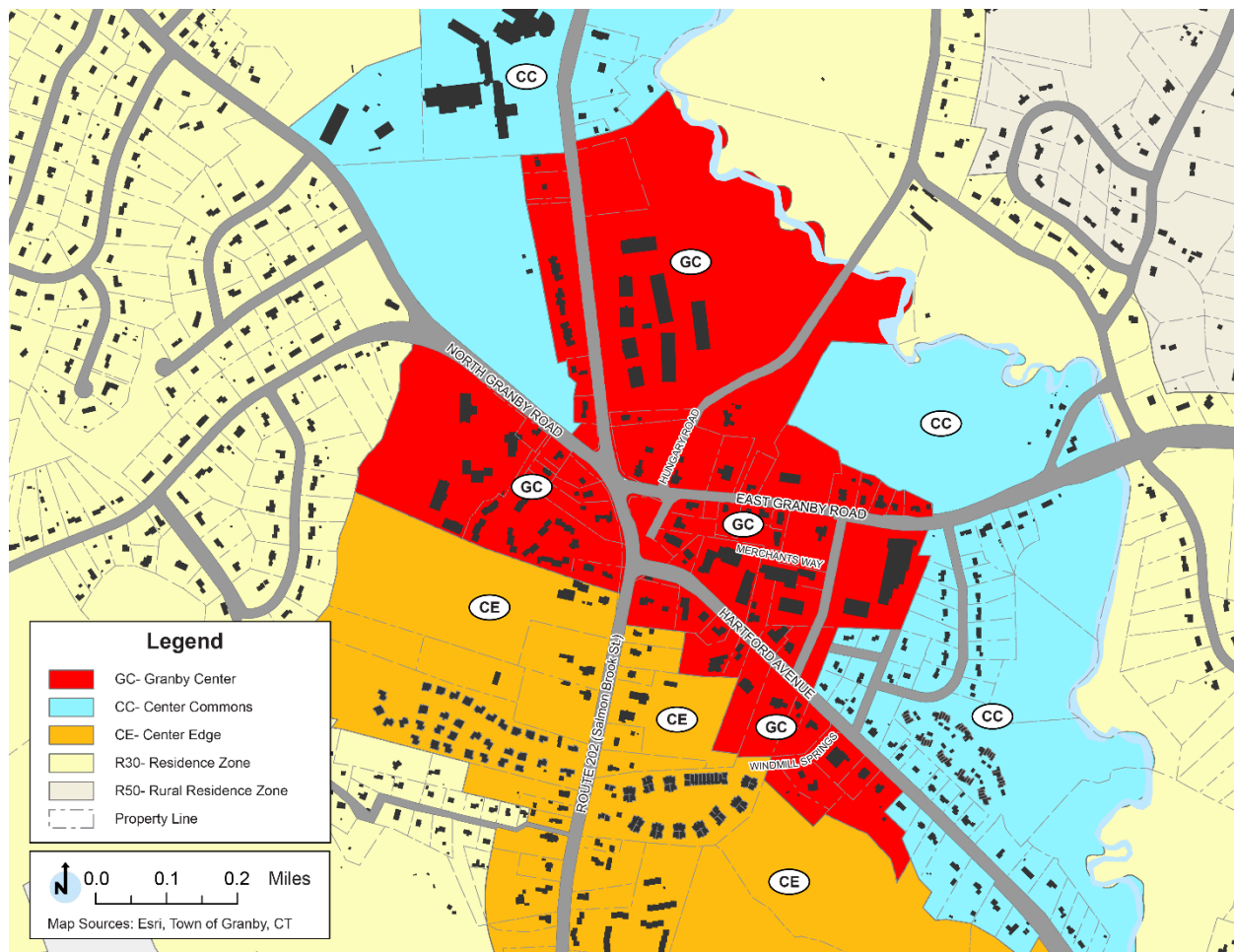


## 4.1 Recommendations Regarding Land Use and Zoning

### Granby Center Zone

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Granby Center Zone currently consists of multiple zoning districts: Commercial Center (COCE), Center Commons (CC), and Center Edge (CE). Both the Committee and Granby Center property owners have noted that the presence of three separate districts within the Center results in a lack of cohesion and creates confusion regarding regulations. To address this issue, this study proposes establishing a unified Granby Center (GC) Zone that fosters connectivity and supports a diverse mix of uses (see Figure 4-1). Beyond the commercial core, the GC Zone extends to Town's municipal complex, connecting Town amenities, such as the Library and Senior Center, to the downtown area. The boundaries of the proposed GC Zone were developed through an existing conditions analysis, review of existing zoning boundaries, and input from Committee and community members.

Figure 4-1: Proposed Granby Center Zone





### *Granby Center Zone: Proposed Uses*

The following uses could be permitted in the GC Zone to allow a vibrant, mixed-use environment that offers a diverse range of services and housing options. Allowing residential uses would increase foot traffic, enhance the sense of activity, and provide continued support for retail businesses. Additionally, expanding the range of permitted uses could attract more visitors to the area and help reduce retail vacancies. The proposed uses respond to the market demand, showing support for a mix of housing options, as well as mixed-use buildings that contain retail, restaurants, and offices.

#### Permitted Uses\*:

- Multi-family 1-4 units
- Business or professional offices
- Restaurant, limited seating
- Retail sale
- Banks/financial institutions
- Personal services, including barbershops, beauty shops, cleaning establishments
- Museums/galleries
- Printing, photography and similar services
- Governmental buildings and facilities including fire houses
- Accessory uses customarily incidental to permitted uses

*\*If any bank or retail uses include a drive-through, a special permit is required.*

#### Special Permit Uses:

- Mixed use buildings containing both residential and nonresidential uses
- Multifamily 5+ units
- Restaurants subject to Section 8.16
- Day care centers, preschool and similar uses
- Retail sales of alcoholic beverages
- Movie theaters with a maximum of 80 seats
- Commercial educational, instructional or recreational services
- Utility use
- Open air markets
- Bed and breakfast establishment
- Fueling Stations
- Electric Vehicle Charging Facility

Table 4-1 shows a comparison of existing uses in the CE, CC, and COCE Zones as compared with the proposed uses in the GC Zone. It is important to note that many of the uses proposed in the GC Zone are currently permitted by Special Permit (shown in orange) in the COCE Zone. These uses, including, retail sale, banks, personal services, and museums/galleries, are proposed as permitted uses in the GC Zone to encourage implementation of a diversity of uses within the Center. Mixed-use buildings

and multifamily uses would also be allowed by Special Permit. Table 4-1 also shows proposed changes in uses in both the CE and CC Zones. These changes were discussed by the Committee after consideration of the overall Granby Center area and the new proposed GC Zone.

Table 4-1: Proposed Granby Center Uses

USE	CE	CC	COCE	Proposed Granby Center
Business or Professional Offices	●	●	●	●
Restaurants, Limited Seating	●	●	●	●
Restaurants, Subject to Section 8.16	●	●	●	●
Retail Sale	●	●	●	●
Rental and/or repair	●	●	●	●
Mixed Use Buildings	●	●	●	●
Multi-Family Use, 5+ Units	● (8 acres)	● (5 acres)	●	●
Multi-Family Use, 1-4 Units	●	●	●	●
Banks/Financial Institutions	●	●	●	●
Personal Services, inc. barbershops, beautyshops	●	●	●	●
Daycare Centers, Preschool	●	●	●	●
Museums/Galleries	●	●	●	●
Performing Arts	●	●	●	●
Movie Theaters, 80-Seat Maximum	●	●	●	●
Commercial Education, Instructional or Recreational	●	●	●	●
Fueling Stations for Motor Vehicles	●	●	●	●
Electric Vehicle Charging Station	●	●	●	●
Utility Use	●	●	●	●
Retail Sale of Alcoholic Beverages	●	●	●	●
Open Air Markets	●	●	●	●
Printing, Photography or Similar Service	●	●	●	●
Governmental Buildings/Facilities	●	●	●	●
Single-Family Dwellings	●	●	●	●
Home Occupation*	●	●	●	●
Agriculture	●	●	●	●
Attached Accessory Apartment*	●	●	●	●
Family Child Care/Group Child Care Home	●	●	●	●
Bed and Breakfasts	●	●	●	●
Churches/Religious Buildings/Similar Organizations	●	●	●	●
Neighborhood Retirement Housing/Assisted Living	●	●	●	●
Detached Accessory Apartment*	●	●	●	●
Antique Sales*, Subject to Section 9.8	●	●	●	●
Accessory Uses Incidental to Permitted Uses	●	●	●	●

● Permitted Use ● Special Permit Use ● Not Permitted

\*This use is in conjunction with a single-family home. While single-family uses are not permitted in the GC zone, previously existing single-family uses with special permits will be permitted to continue to operate.

### *Granby Center Zone: Area and Bulk Standards*

The following zoning recommendations for the GC Zone largely adhere to the existing area and bulk standards of the existing COCE Zone but will permit multi-family uses up to four units on all lots (see Table 4-2). The minimum front yard setback would remain the same, however, creating a maximum front yard setback of 30 ft will encourage a “downtown feel” with businesses positioned closer to sidewalks. There is no front yard maximum proposed on State roads to encourage the existing “New England frontage” in certain areas (see Figure 4-2), such as East Granby Road (Route 20).

*Figure 4-2: Proposed New England Frontage*



The current allowable density of 15 dwelling units per acre is proposed to remain unchanged. However, to address concerns about large-scale developments in Granby Center, the maximum density could be reduced to 12 dwelling units per acre for lots larger than 1.5 acres. This adjustment will help limit the total number of units permitted on larger lots within the GC Zone.

Additionally, as part of any Special Permit or Site Plan Approval, the Planning and Zoning Commission should look at public benefits, such as private easements for sidewalks and road connections, as well as open space, as indicated in the Granby Center Town Study.



Table 4-2: Proposed Granby Center Zone Area and Bulk Standard

	Center Commons (CC)	Commerical Center (COCE)	Proposed Granby Center Zone
Min. Front Yard (Ft)	50 ft	25 ft	25 ft <sup>1</sup>
Max. Front Yard (Ft)	-	-	30 ft <sup>2</sup>
Min. Side Yard (Ft)	20 ft	10 ft	10 ft
Min. Rear Yard (Ft)	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft
Max. Building Height (Stories/Ft)	3 / 45 ft	3 / 45 ft	3 / 45 ft
Max. Building Footprint	8,000 SF for a single commercial building	8,000 SF for a single commercial building	8,000 SF for a single commercial building
Max. Lot Coverage	30%	30%	40%
Min. Lot Area	30,000 SF	20,000 SF	20,000 SF No Min. for Multi-Family 1-4 Units
Min. Lot Area for Multi-Family Uses	5 Acres	N/A	20,000 SF For Developments of 5+ Units
Max. Density (Dwelling Units per Acre)	15 units per acre	15 units per acre	15 units per acre <sup>3</sup>
Min. Lot Frontage	150 ft	100 ft	75 ft
1) The minimum front yard setback shall be 35 feet on State roads. 2) The maximum front yard setback does not apply to State roads. 3) Permitted density is 12 units per acre for lots greater than 1.5 acres.			

#### Granby Center Zone: Buffer Area

Section 4.2.5 of the Granby Zoning Regulations states that, where any commercial, industrial or multi-family use abuts a residential zone, a 25-foot-wide landscaped buffer strip shall be provided extending the length of the zone boundary, seeded and properly planted with trees and shrubs to ensure a proper break between the two uses. The same buffer should be required in the GC Zone for any properties that abut single-family residential uses. This would help maintain the existing aesthetics for single-family homeowners located near the Center.

#### Granby Center Zone: Parking Requirements

Due to public concern regarding sufficient parking within the Town Center, the parking standards for residential uses are proposed to remain same as the existing Zoning Regulations. The following commercial parking requirements are based on parking generation standards developed by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). Additionally, the existing Zoning Regulations allows the Commission to permit a reduction of up to 25% of the required parking spaces due to shared use of parking facilities when the parking needs of the joint users occur at different hours of the day. This incentive for shared use parking should continue to be implemented.

Table 4-3: Proposed Parking Requirements

Use	Existing Minimum Requirement	Proposed Minimum Requirement (Granby Center Zone)
Multi-Family 1 bedroom	1.5 per unit	1.5 per unit
Multi-Family 2 bedrooms or more	2 per unit	2 per unit
Elderly Multi-Family	1 per unit	1 per unit
Commercial Office	5 per 1,000 SF	3.5* per 1,000 SF
Medical Office	6 per 1,000 SF	5* per 1,000 SF
Retail Stores	6 per 1,000 SF	4* per 1,000 SF
Shopping Centers	5.5 per 1,000 SF	5* per 1,000 SF

## 4.2 Town Center Design Standards and Recommendations

### *Design Standards*

#### Architectural Design Standards

The architecture styling for new development in Granby Center should replicate what's best about Granby's historical character and the New England region in which it is located. New development in Granby Center should follow the general principles of New England architectural design to reinforce a stronger sense of place (Figure 4-3). New England architecture is characterized by simple, functional designed buildings with steep, gabled roofs (often facing the street or front of the lot) with or without peaked dormers. Rather than a single large building, several smaller buildings are used to create the same amount of space. The buildings exhibit simple massing arrangements accentuated by chimneys, and their facades are made of clapboard or shingle siding with asymmetrical arrangements of entrances and fenestration, including small vertically proportioned windows. The use of local materials, such as wood and stone, also characterized the New England style. Stone is generally employed as a foundation material with the use of wood clapboard or shingles above to create a simple effect of rustication, where heavier materials on the base help ground buildings to the landscape. In addition to the above, architectural styles observed in the Granby Center Historic Overlay District, further help define Granby's sense of place and serve as another source of local architectural character. These buildings exhibit a wide range of architectural styles covering two centuries with dominant features that include projecting or wrap-around porches, decorative elements especially at the eaves, columns or pilasters, and cornices supported by brackets. With the above said, it should be noted that modern and creative interpretations of the above elements are encouraged and acceptable. It is the intention of these guidelines to avoid simple replication or the "Disneyfication" of Granby Center. And while traditional building materials included painted wood and cut stone, the use of high-quality synthetic materials and stone veneer may be acceptable if handled with purpose toward contributing positively to the historic atmosphere the community seeks to nurture in Granby Center.

Figure 4-3: Architectural Precedents



Source: Northeast Private Client Group



Source: Baywater Properties





Source: The American Legion

### Sidewalks/Pathways

To encourage more walking and improve the pedestrian experience in Granby Center, new pedestrian investments are proposed in Section 4.4 Transportation and Connectivity. New sidewalks and pathways should be designed to make walking as comfortable as possible.

Sidewalks along streets should be designed whenever practicable with three potential zones:

- (1) The Landscape & Furnishing Zone to accommodate tree planting, grass verge and to provide for placement of street furniture, signage and lighting.
- (2) The Pedestrian Throughway Zone provides clear uninterrupted pedestrian passage across the frontage along the street.
- (3) The Building Frontage Transition Zone is the portion of the frontage between the building and the pedestrian throughway, which allows for the creation of activities such as patios, outdoor seating and eating areas, and plantings along the property's frontage. This area also accommodates the placement of building features such as lighting, signage, projected architectural moldings, movable planters, and signage boards.

At a minimum, a sidewalk must contain the Pedestrian Throughway Zone and where necessary one of the other zones, so that a minimum width of 8 feet is achieved. In all cases, sidewalks shall be

designed to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

Pathways are pedestrian routes that provide circulation through the interior of the main block in Granby Center as shown in the plan in Section 4.4 Transportation and Connectivity. They also provide pedestrian and bicycle only connections through properties. As discussed elsewhere in the Plan, pathways in Granby Center are proposed to develop over time, built as new development is built and through easement agreements between the Town and private property owners (see Section 4.2 on Site Plan Approval and Special Permits). Pathways are narrower than sidewalks and are comprised of a single zone for pedestrian through movement. However, wherever possible and practicable, pathway design should include lighting, landscaping and trees along their edges, especially where pathways traverse the edges of parking areas, and the occasional bench when there is room. Pathway design should seek in all cases to make their use as attractive and enjoyable as possible, which will in turn encourage people to park once and walk to various destinations in Granby Center. Pathways should be five feet in width at a minimum and designed to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

### Landscaping

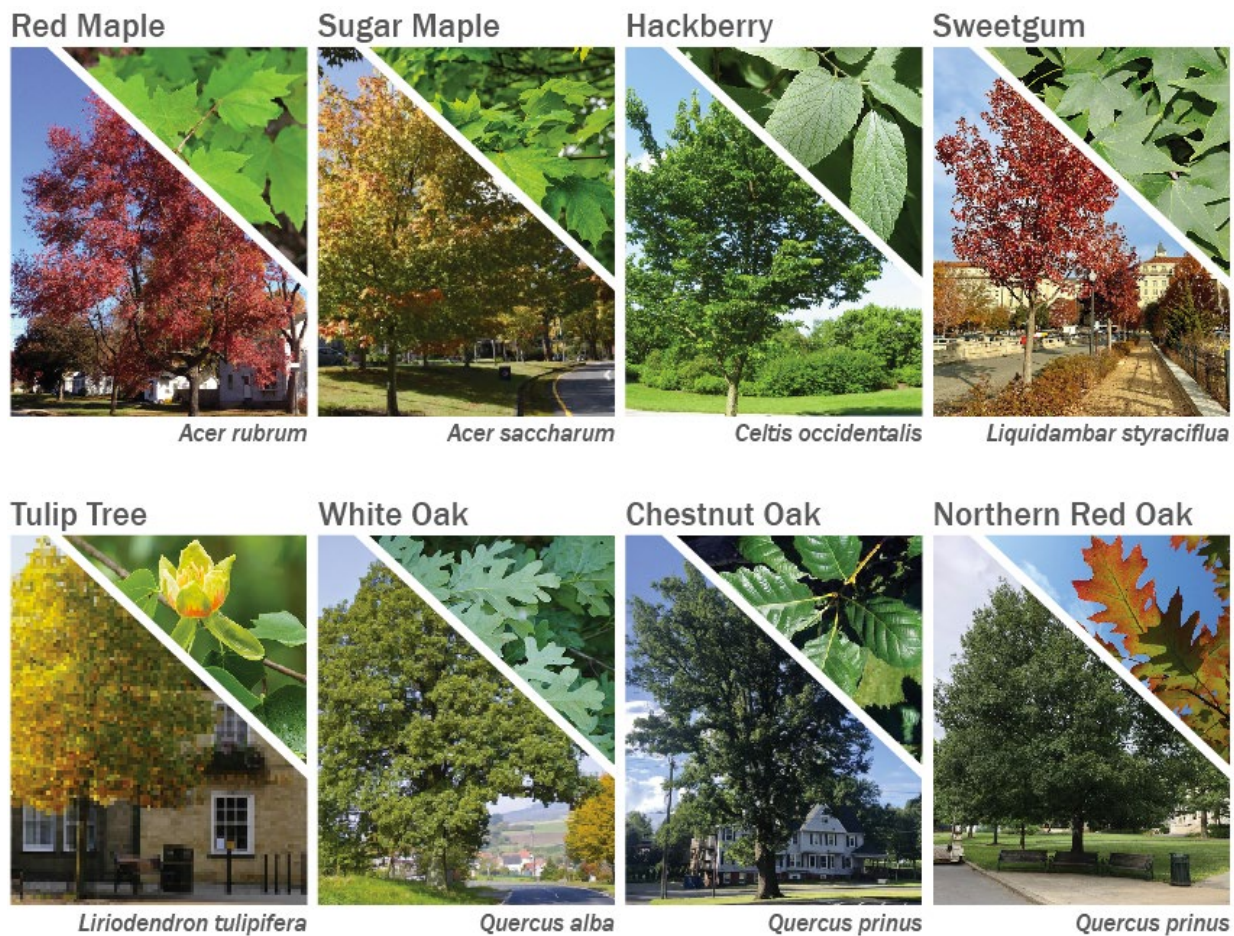
Thoughtful landscaping is essential to maintaining and strengthening Granby's identity as a verdant, semi-agricultural community. Table 4-4 below includes hardy, native trees that are appropriate for planting on streets and green spaces. Native trees, which support biodiversity, require less maintenance because they are specially adapted to the local climate. Native trees are also tied to the local landscape and character of a place. One of Granby's most famous landmarks is the Granby Oak, a white oak tree that is about 500 years old and one of the oldest trees in Connecticut.

Table 4-4: Landscaping Palette

Common Name	Scientific Name	Flowers, Autumn Colors
White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	Autumn colors are red, burgundy, and purple.
Chestnut Oak	<i>Quercus prinus</i>	Autumn colors are yellow-brown to orange.
Northern Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Autumn colors are russet-red to crimson.
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Bright red flower clusters bloom in spring before leaves. Autumn colors are red to deep scarlet.
Sugar Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Autumn colors yellow, orange, and scarlet.
Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Autumn color is a mild yellow.
Sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Autumn colors are golden with orange and red.
Tulip Tree	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Distinctive orange tulip-like flowers that bloom in spring. Autumn color is golden yellow.



Figure 4-4: Landscaping Palette



## Signage

### Commercial Signage:

One of the most effective ways of creating sense of place is to use more attractive signage. A wide variety of sign styles from attractive carved wood signs to large interior illuminated light-box wall or pole signs can be observed in Granby Center. Other sign styles include awning signs, cutout-applied letter signage, hanging window signs, illuminated letters and corporate logo signage. Each store utilizes its own style of sign each with its own typeface and graphics. In an environment with so many signs, each competes for attention (and with the architecture), instead of conveying its message simply and effectively.

New commercial signage in Granby Center should seek to reinforce the area's historic sense of place. The Town may consider reviewing its regulations on signage and seek to adopt regulations that allow review of signage with a stated preference for a preferred signage style and placement (in all cases to accentuate rather than compete with the architecture). Appropriately in areas where a more historical sense of place is sought, traditional wood carved, gold lettered signage tends to prevail



with signage externally lit through incandescent or LED lighting. These would contribute positively to Granby Center and over time improve the character of the area. Variation across signage can be obtained using a range of colors for the main sign board and placement of business logos within the signage. Figure 4-5 illustrates the important role good signage can play in improving the appearance of the built environment.

*Figure 4-5: Example of Coordinated Signage Program*



#### *Municipal and Informational Signage:*

Investments have been made to improve municipal signage in Granby Center as evidenced by the maroon and white signage banners adorned with the Town's seal. This design scheme presents a far more compelling image than standard CTDOT signage (still seen in many places). The Town should apply this design to an expanded signage program to highlight gateways into Granby Center (e.g., from Route 20, Route 202 and Hartford Avenue), mark the Town Green, and call attention to other municipal facilities. Standard CTDOT signage within Granby Center should be replaced whenever possible to layer in a local character. The idea here is not only to make Granby Center more attractive but begin to brand it through signage. Upgrading the municipal signage could also serve as a template and motivation for business owners to update commercial signage.

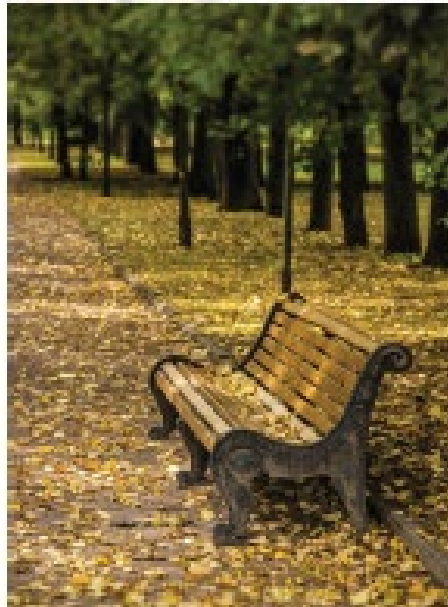
A uniform signage program for all public signage, including street signs, should be created (see Figure 4-5 for an example). This would cover all municipal and public signage, including traffic, street and points of interest in Granby Center.

#### Street Furniture

Furnishing Granby Center with a consistent line of street elements, including benches, trash cans, and light fixtures that reflect Granby's New England character, will foster a cohesive Town Center district. These streetscape elements demonstrate intentional planning and reinforce a sense of place.

Benches provide comfortable places for rest and increase accessibility of public spaces, especially for older adults and people with reduced mobility. Trash cans reflect the Town's stewardship of the public realm. Wooden or ornamental steel benches and trash cans would contribute positively to the aesthetics of Town Center, and can be complemented with the town seal, echoing the town's street signs. Trash cans should include covers to avoid attracting wildlife.

*Figure 4-6: Bench Precedents*



*Figure 4-7: Trash Can Precedents*



Public comments at the May 15, 2025 public workshop affirmed support for the existing lighting fixtures, which are deemed appropriate for Granby's architectural context. It is recommended, however, that a specific model or models be chosen to increase consistency throughout the Town Center. Additionally, lighting fixtures on larger streets should be taller and brighter, while fixtures on pathways should be human scaled.

## Sustainability

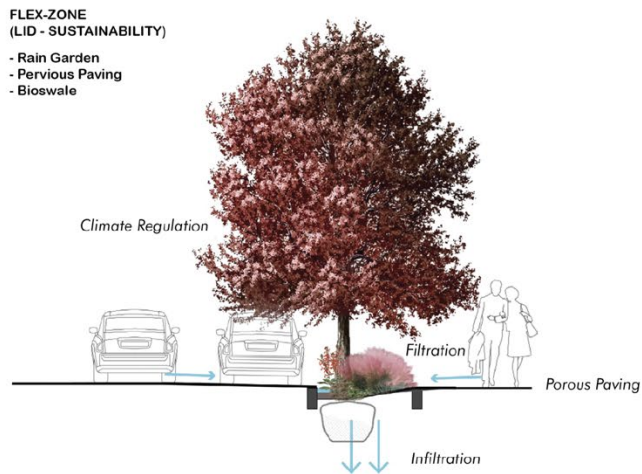
Improving sustainability in Granby Center is an important aspect of improving the Town Center and protecting Granby now and into the future. In addition to encouraging energy efficient buildings that achieve or match Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards, new development should adopt Low Impact Development (LID) strategies to further protect and preserve the Town's important natural resources and create a more verdant built environment in Granby Center. Key objectives of Low Impact Development include:

- (1) Preserving existing vegetation;
- (2) Controlling storm water at its source;
- (3) Creating multi-functional landscapes;
- (4) Reducing impervious surfaces and
- (5) Modifying drainage paths to minimize the flow of runoff to storm drainage systems and large detention areas.

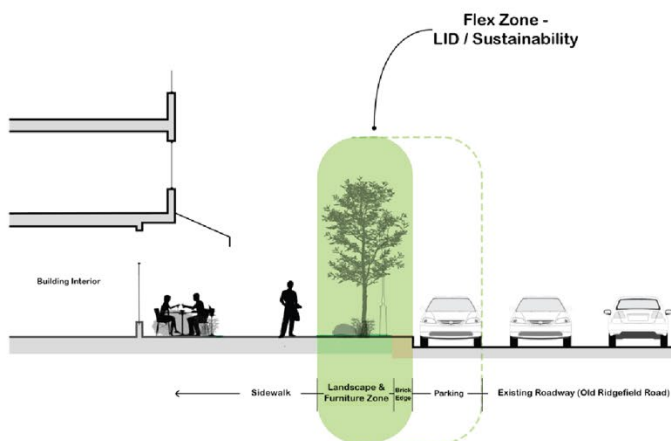
These principles can be applied to streetscapes and parking areas alike, as shown in Figure 4-8. Streetscape and parking lot design should include grassy planted areas, permeable surfaces where appropriate, and tree pits to assist with storm water management and ground water infiltration. This will not only minimize storm runoff impacts such as flooding and pollution but will also create a more comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment. Future parking areas (or renovations to those that already exist) should seek to incorporate permeable surfaces for parking stalls, while travel aisles can be made of a more durable material that directs runoff to permeable areas and onward to water collection devices.



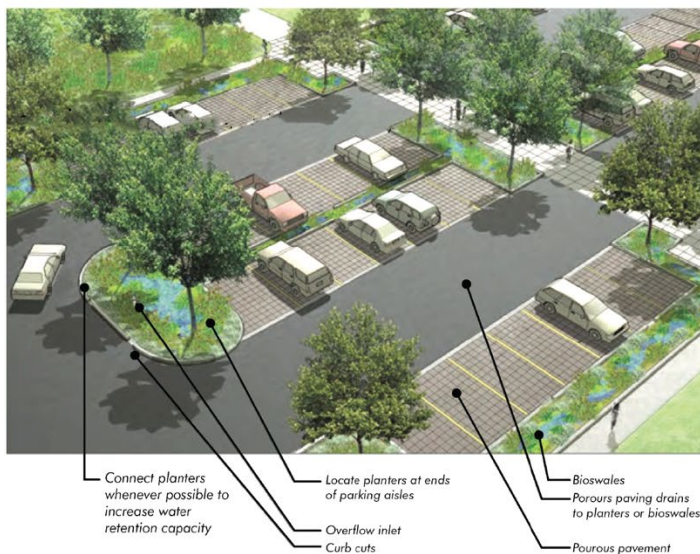
Figure 4-8: Illustrative LID Applications



(A) Streetscape Application



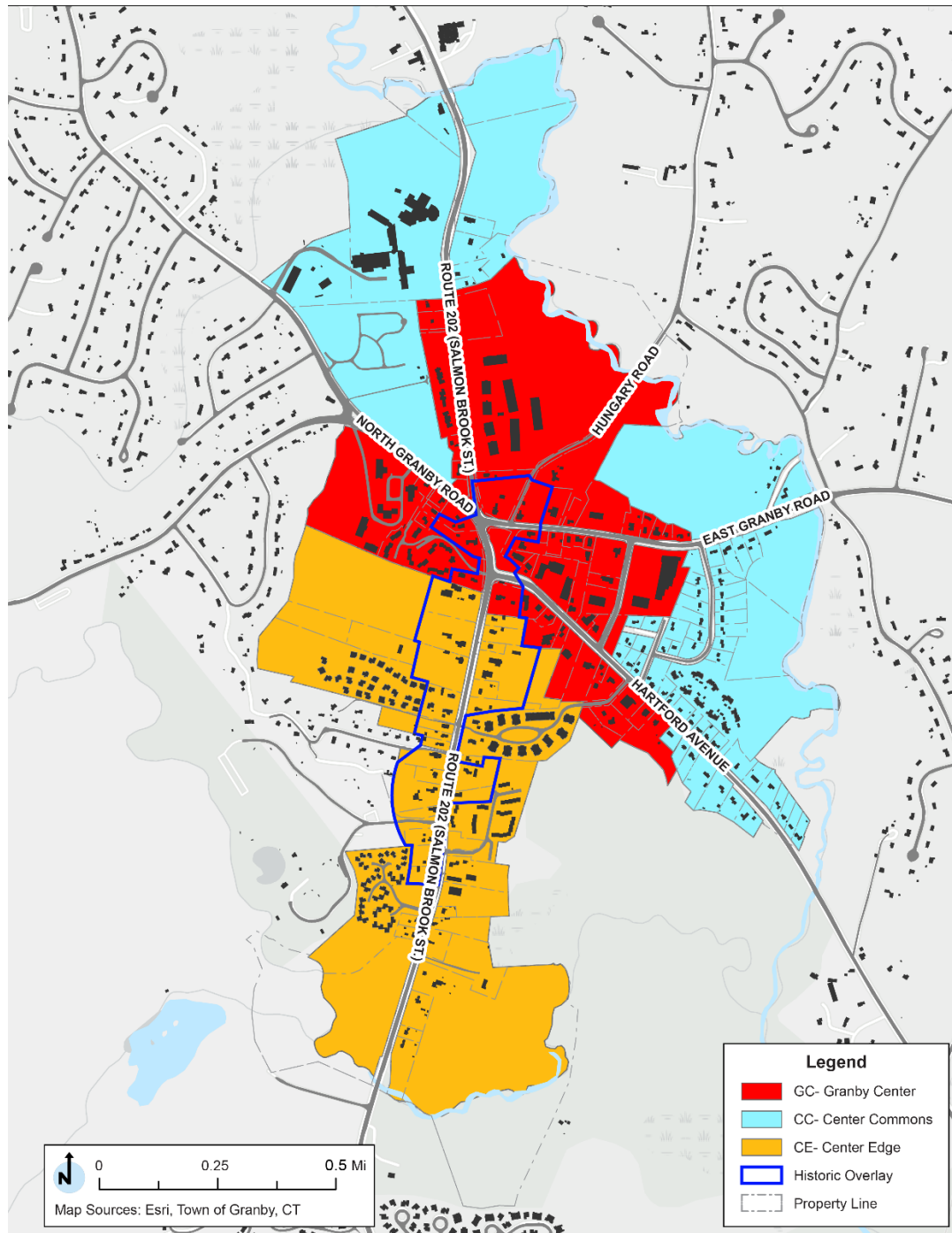
(B) Parking Lot Application



### Historic Preservation

At present, there is a Historic Overlay District (see Figure 4-9) on the western side of the Granby Center. The district is on both National and State registers. To better preserve the historic structures in this overlay zone, it is recommended to allow for additional uses within them, as long as the building is preserved and any additions/modifications meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards. Please refer to the memo included in Appendix C for further details.

Figure 4-9: Granby Center Historic Overlay District with PROPOSED Zoning

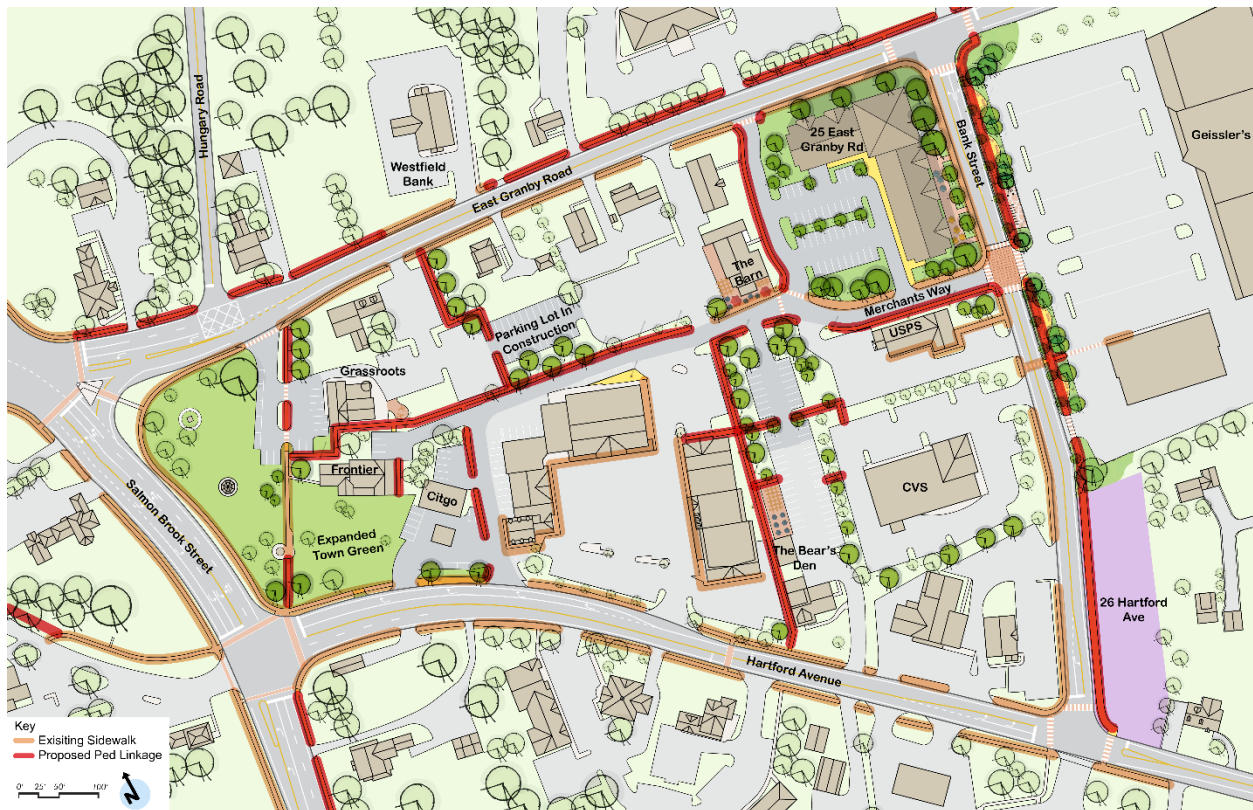


## 4.3 Town Center Design Concepts

### Design Plan

The Design Plan (Figure 4-10) is an aspirational vision that shows a cohesive core for the Granby Center with enhanced connectivity, landscaping, and urban design. Each element of the Design Plan is discussed in more detail in the following subsections. Additionally, 25 East Granby Road and 26 Hartford Avenue were selected to illustrate how the updated zoning regulations and design guidelines could be expressed on opportunity sites. All design concepts are visions that would be voluntarily pursued by property owners. The intention is to represent the potential improvements of the new zoning regulations and design guidelines.

Figure 4-10: Granby Center Design Plan



### 25 East Granby Road

25 East Granby Road is the site of a former bank and approximately 25,000 square feet of impermeable pavement. Figure 4-11 shows how the site could be transformed to include up to 27 new housing units, commercial space, and civic space that interact with the public realm.



Figure 4-11: Concept for 25 East Granby Road



Figure 4-12: Mixed Use Precedent



## 26 Hartford Avenue

26 Hartford Avenue is one of the few undeveloped lots in the Town Center. Three visions for what this space could be transformed into are presented: a mixed-use option, a park/green space, and a parking lot (Figures 4-13, 4-15, and 4-17). Because the lot is privately owned, these examples are meant to illustrate potential uses. Additionally, under the proposed zoning, a 25-foot landscaping buffer would be required to abut the single-family housing to the East of the site.

Figure 4-13: Design Concept 1 – Mixed Use



Figure 4-14: Mixed Use Precedents





Figure 4-15: Design Concept 2 - Park



Figure 4-17: Design Concept 3 - Parking Lot



Figure 4-16: Park Precedents



Figure 4-18: Parking Lot Precedents





## 4.4 Transportation and Connectivity

### *Traffic in Granby Center*

The major roads that serve Granby Center are shown in Figure 4-19. These are state roads:

- Route 20 (East Granby Road and North Granby Road)
- Route 202/10 (Salmon Brook Street)
- Route 189 (Hartford Ave)

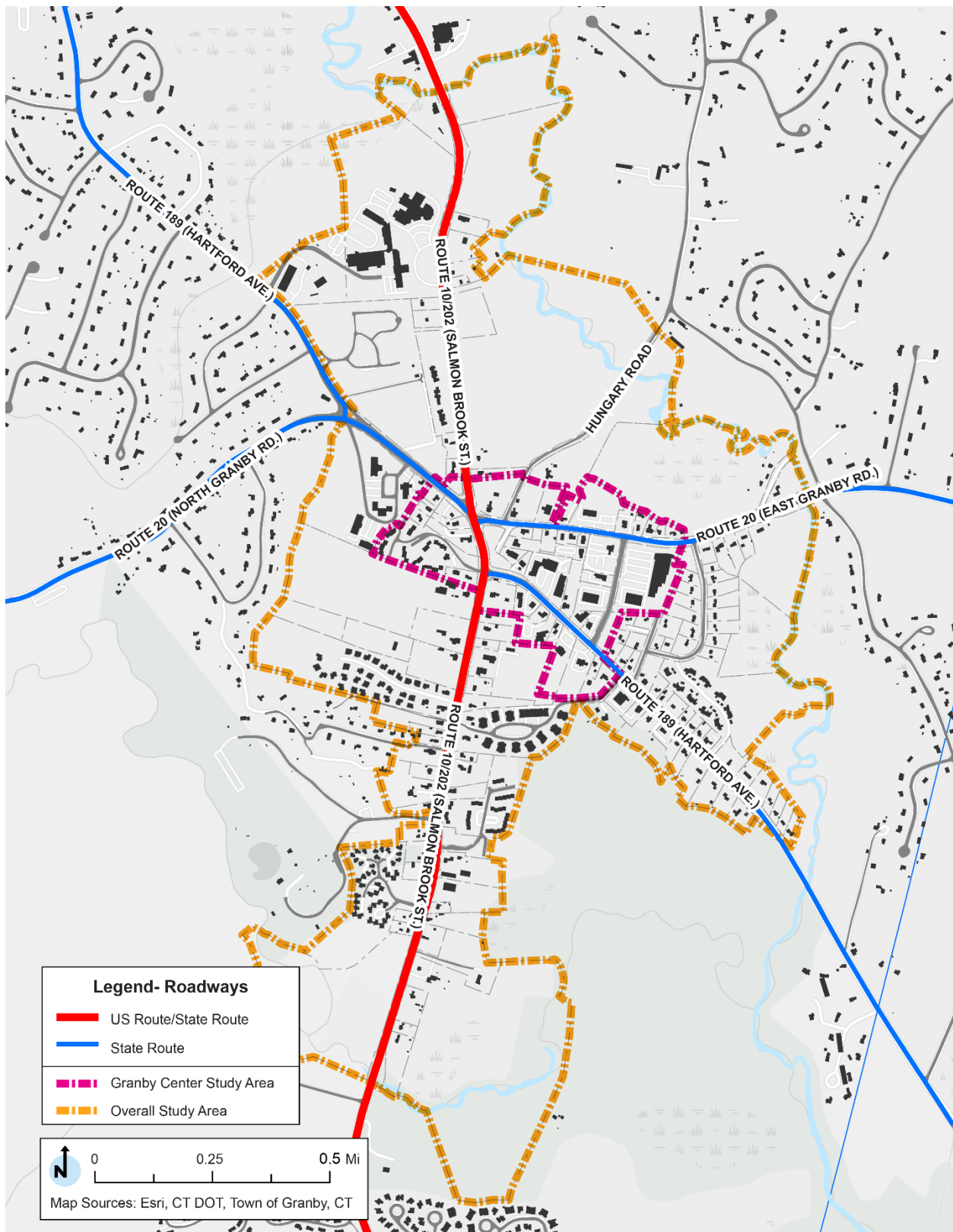
Traffic Circulation in Granby Center is dominated by two intersections: Routes 10/202 and Route 20 and Route 10/202 and Route 189. These act as one larger intersection that has been recently upgraded to the latest standards and functions by Connecticut DOT. However, residents have expressed discontent with the signal cycle length sometimes exceeding three minutes. Additionally, the pedestrian phase does not allow for a pedestrian to cross more than one leg. The signal operates with four separate vehicular split phases (one green phase for each approach) plus an on-call pedestrian phase for all approaches combined. In theory, a pedestrian could cross diagonally through the intersection, since all walk signals come on at the same time; however, pedestrians would feel unsafe walking across the middle of this large intersection.

### *Vehicle Circulation*

#### Signal Timing

Signal timing and the pedestrian phase should be discussed further with the Department of Transportation to determine if there are opportunities to better facilitate pedestrian crossings.

Figure 4-19: Roadways in Granby Center



### Extended Merchants Way

Within the central area of the Granby Town Center, which is bound by East Granby Road to the North, Bank Street to the East, Hartford Avenue to the South, and Salmon Brook Street to the West, there is limited through access between the different commercial lots. Merchants Way, the only internal road in the block, should be extended to create a central spine to the Town Center. The extension, which would pass The Barn, go behind the Granby Village Shops commercial center, and turn South at the Frontier Building to connect to Hartford Avenue by the Citgo Gas Station, would be an improvement of existing driveways that are poorly configured for traffic and do not include safe pedestrian access. With a continuous sidewalk on the North side and sections on the South side of the street, the proposed extension of Merchants Way would be an East/West spine for the Granby Town Center, supporting vehicle and pedestrian access between businesses.

To improve the pedestrian experience along Merchants Way, dumpsters, refrigeration vehicles, and similarly uncomfortable infrastructure should be concentrated together. A possible location, which is across the roadway from the pedestrian pathway, is marked in Figure 4-20.

Finally, to reduce the number of conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, a new entrance to the Citgo Gas Station can come off Merchants Way and replace the current entrance on Hartford Avenue. This reconfiguration would reduce the number of curb cuts on Hartford Avenue and decrease the amount of time that pedestrians must spend in the right-of-way.

*Figure 4-20: Merchants Way*





## Parking

To make way for safer circulation and more green space, some existing parking spots would be lost in the current concept plan. A new parking lot currently under construction and a proposed parking lot in a currently vacant green space, however, would provide a modest net increase in parking spaces in the area between Bank Street and the Town Green. As the Merchants Way extension helps connect lots and facilitate shared parking, there may be lower demand for new parking the Center. In this case, some of the area of the vacant lot could serve as a space for active or passive recreation instead of additional parking.

## *Pedestrian Circulation*

The lack of publicly owned land and roadways in Granby Town Center suggests that any plan will have to rely on more than streets alone, which traditionally serve as the structure on which to build a strong pedestrian environment. As such, this plan envisions the circulation plan as a framework around which future development can be supported and organized. The existing street network, including East Granby Road, Salmon Brook Street, Hartford Avenue, Bank Street, and Merchants Way, play an important role, but given the existing conditions observed in Granby Town Center, the proposed pedestrian circulation plan considers new sidewalks or pathways, many of which occur on private property.

In addition to the new sidewalks along the East/West Merchants Way spine, a series of North/South pathways should be added (Figure 4-21). This network, along with smaller pedestrian linkages, is proposed to connect adjacent commercial lots and allow people to park in one spot and stroll to other businesses and open spaces. In addition to improved internal circulation, further sidewalks and a potential bike lane will help link the town hall and library to the commercial center.

Bank Street, due to its lower vehicular flows compared to the state roads, is well positioned to become the new ‘Main Street’ in the Town Center. To improve the pedestrian experience and reinforce the street’s importance to the Town Center, it is recommended to add a pedestrian greenway to the East side of the road (Figure 4-22). In coordination with the property owners on the East side, a wider pedestrian pathway could buffer the existing parking lot and serve as a green anchor to the pedestrian network. A raised intersection (Figure 4-23) would increase pedestrian safety for people going the Geissler’s shopping center and the rest of the Town Center. It could also serve as a bicycle meeting or stopping area. A park-and-bike parking area along the westerly row of spaces in the parking lot for Geissler’s supermarket could serve as a main bike parking area. Further bike racks strategically located around the town center would support the main parking area (Figure 4-24). Adding bike parking would increase bicycle activity in Granby Center.

Figure 4-21: Proposed Pedestrian Circulation Network

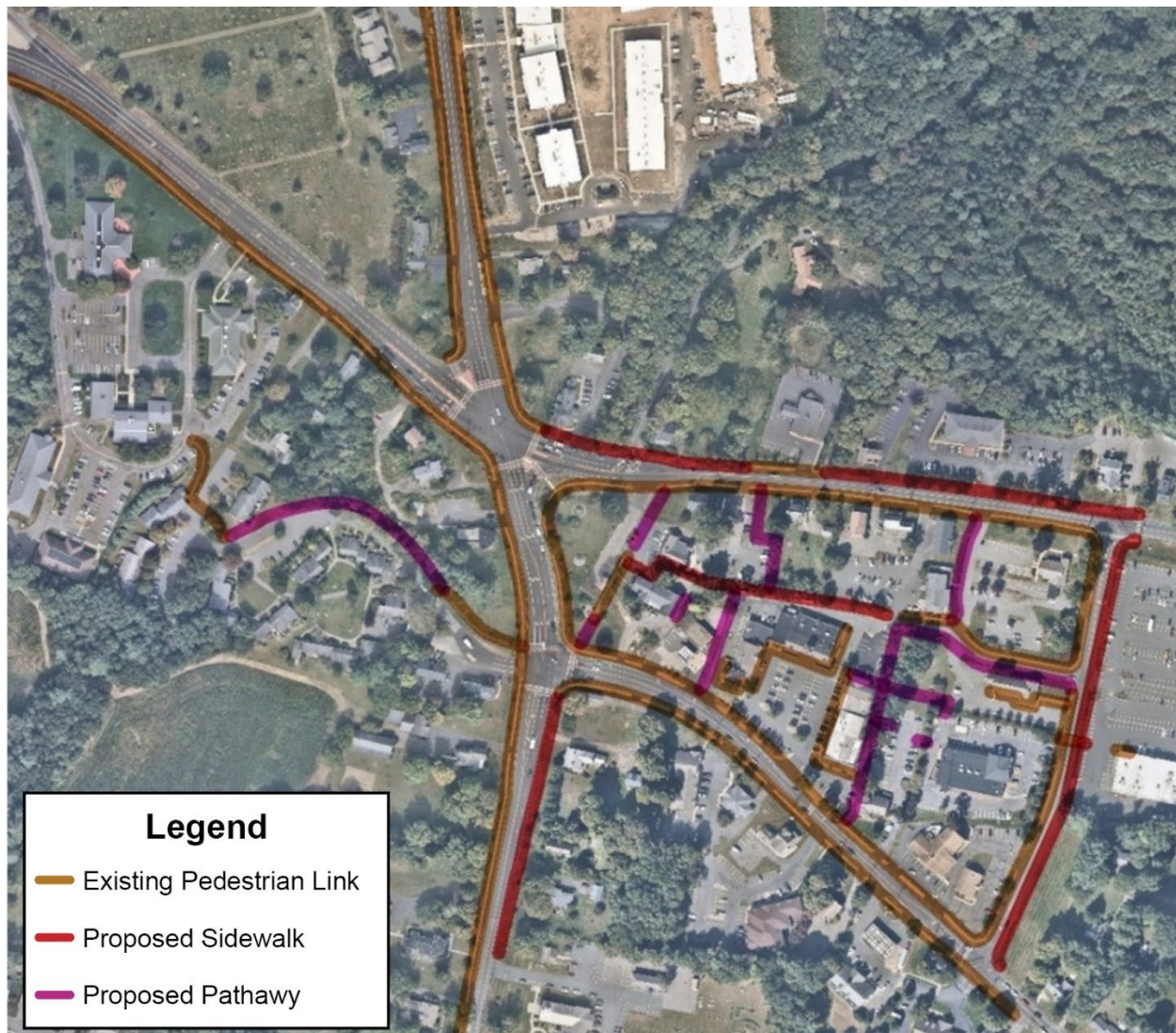


Figure 4-22: Greenway Precedents





*Figure 4-23: Raised Intersection Precedent*



*Figure 4-24: Bike Rack Precedents*





## Alternative Transportation

### Bicycle Network

The Farmington Canal Heritage Trail is located less than a mile from Granby Center either via East Granby Road (Route 20) or via Hartford Avenue (Route 189). This is a potential tourism asset for the Town as it can bring visitors to Granby Center via one of these roadways. Both roadways have significant shoulders that could be transformed into bicycle lanes through selective widenings to conform to standard widths. These bicycle lanes could connect to Bank Street where cyclists would then enter Granby Center (Figure 4-25). Residents and bike users who attended the May 15 workshop indicated that Hartford Avenue is a safer bike route, so it is recommended to prioritize a bike lane there (Route 189). Connecting the Town Center to the Farmington Heritage Canal would create new opportunities for biking.

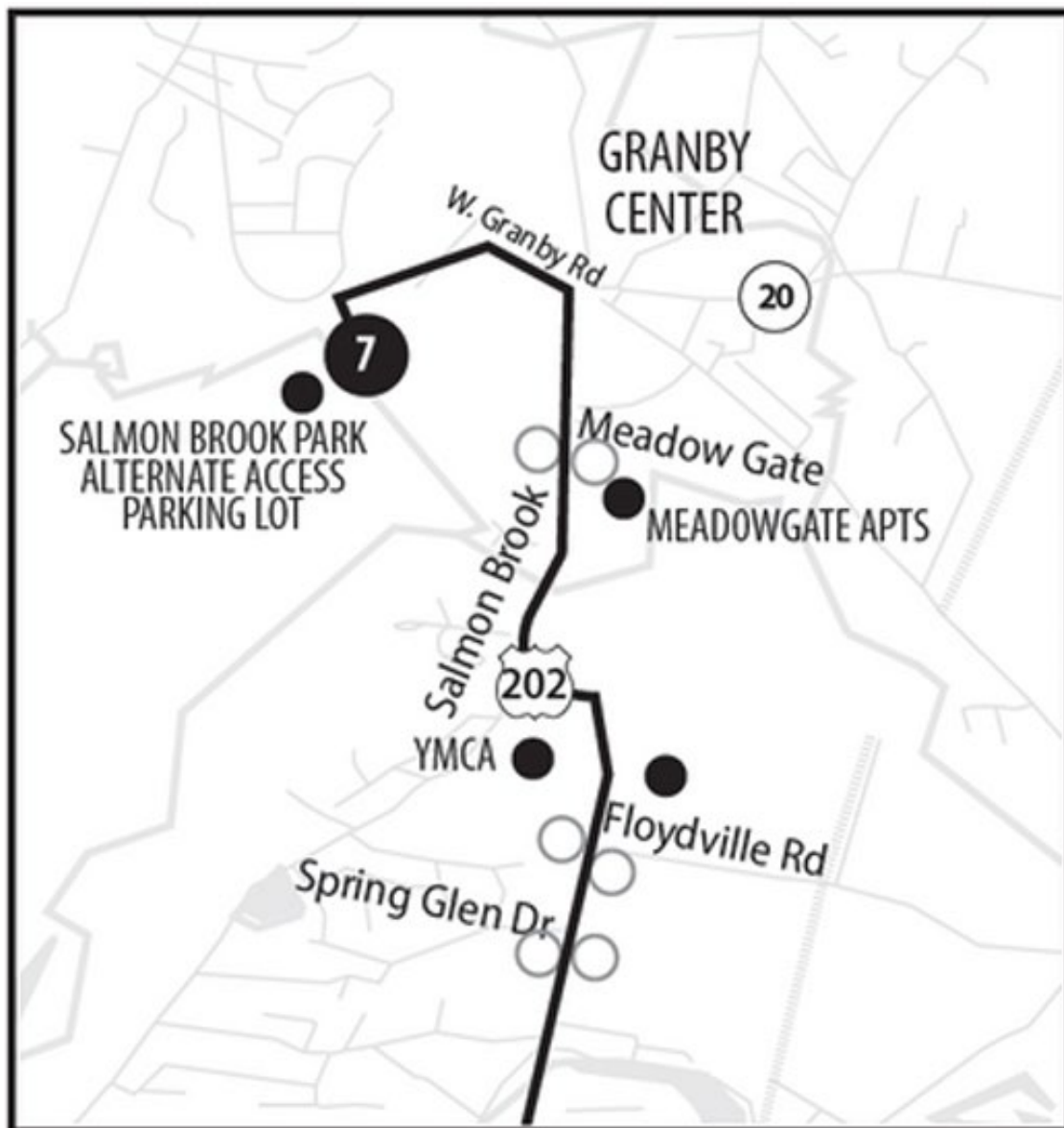
Figure 4-25: Proposed Bike Network Expansion



## Bus Network

Due to the lack of public transportation access in the Town Center, it is recommended to add a bus stop on the 912 Simsbury-Granby Express Line. As the only bus line that passes through the Granby Center (Figure 4-26), it is best suited to open access to the center and increase connection between Granby, Simsbury, and Hartford. It is recommended to add additional bus stops in the Granby Center area where ridership supports it. The new location would connect to the existing sidewalk network, directly linking the commercial center, the town hall and library, and Stony Hill Village residential development to the local public transportation network. Moving the bus stop North would allow for greater access by residents living on the bus route and potential visitors from neighboring municipalities.

*Figure 4-26: Existing Bus Route*



## 4.5 Town Green Function and Design Plan

The Granby Town Green is a focal point of the Town Center. It includes visual assets such as two war memorials and a gazebo, and it is adjacent to favorable uses, including a restaurant and an ice cream shop. To improve the functionality of the space, it is recommended to increase its footprint, improve its connections to the pedestrian network, and add amenities.

There are two opportunity zones to increase the Town Green's footprint. First, the southern tip of Park Place could be depaved, increasing connection between the eastern and western sides of the park. To help account for lost parking spaces, the 'on-street' parking could be formalized to allow for more efficient allocation of space and improved vehicular circulation.

Second, the existing 'green island' adjacent to the Citgo lot could be reconnected to the Town Green by shifting the Frontier Building's employee parking entrance. Shifting the entrance to the rear of the building and connecting it to the Merchants Way extension would create a simple circulation strategy to connect these spaces (see Figure 4-27). It is also possible to arrange the entrance to the Frontier employee parking through the existing Citgo Parking lot (see Figure 4-28). Depaving the Southern tip of Park Place and moving the Frontier driveway to the rear would add about 10,000 square feet to the Town Green, or about a 20 percent increase.

The Town Green can also serve an important role in the pedestrian network. By creating a strong North/South vertical pathway through the green, the park connects the corner of Salmon Brook Street and Hartford Ave with East Granby Street. The vertical connection also resembles the typical style of New England Town Greens (see Figure 4-29) by centering the space on pedestrian mobility. Finally, the pedestrian pathway would serve as a counterweight to the new green promenade proposed on Bank Street at the opposite side of the Town Center.



Figure 4-27: Granby Town Green Proposal 1



Figure 4-28: Granby Town Green Proposal 2



Figure 4-29: Guilford Green



Figure 4-30: Branford Green



After input received during the public workshop, it is also recommended to include new park amenities such as a playground or play space. This could be located in the area near Grass Roots and could provide additional and improved seating or these could be located where the proposed park expansion is located South of the Frontier Building. Granby could consider similar activations to Branford, CT, where the municipality provides movable metal seats in the town green (Figure 4-30). Additionally, to protect users from the noise and air pollution produced by the high trafficked state roads adjacent to the site, landscaping buffers and a water element could be installed in the park.

#### **4.6 Potential Buildout**

A potential buildout analysis was conducted to determine an estimate of development within the next 10-15 years in Granby Center under the proposed zoning. To conduct this analysis, 18 sites were selected as “soft sites” within the new GC Zone, meaning there is no development currently proposed, but it could be likely to occur under new zoning. Criteria for selection included characteristics such as vacancy, building condition, lot size, and common ownership. Some smaller lots were combined with adjacent properties to account for owners who wish to assemble into a larger lot. The buildout analysis estimates a total of 285 allowable residential units. For lots less than a quarter-acre, the analysis assumes that a maximum of two units could be built given lot size constraints. For lots between a quarter-acre and half an acre, the analysis assumes that a maximum of four units could be built, which is the total number of units that could be built as-of-right in the GC Zone. For lots greater than half an acre, this estimate uses the proposed density requirements of 15 units per acre for lots less than 1.5 acres and 12 units per acre for lots larger than 1.5 acres, which could be achieved by obtaining a Special Permit. It is realistic to assume a 15 to 25% absorption rate for development given market constraints and economic feasibility for property owners. Using this absorption rate, with a maximum buildout of 285 units, it would be reasonable to expect an estimate of 43 to 71 units to be constructed within the next 10-15 years.

A potential buildout was also calculated if one were to assume that a portion of the potential ground floor area were to be used for retail. A typical commercial unit consists of approximately 4,000 square feet. Assuming these unit sizes, the estimated total number of ground floor commercial units is approximately 33. Given the same realistic absorption rate of 15 to 25%, it is estimated that 5 to 8 commercial units would be developed within the next 10-15 years. More details on the methodology used for this potential buildout analysis can be found in Appendix D.





5

Final Plan  
Implementation



This chapter discusses various strategies to implement recommendations presented in the Granby Center Town Study (Study).

### **5.1 Public Benefits**

As discussed in Section 4.2, as part of any Special Permit or Site Plan Approval, the Planning and Zoning Commission should look at public benefits, such as private easements for sidewalks and road connections, as well as open space, as indicated in the Study. Since the majority of land within Granby Center is privately owned, participation from property owners is essential to achieve a center that is connected through sidewalks and easements.

### **5.2 Grants and Capital Budget**

In recent years, both the Federal and State of Connecticut governments have offered grants for sidewalk improvements. The Town should pursue grant opportunities when available. Additionally, the Town should work with private property owners to provide the right-of-way to build such sidewalks when grant funding is made available. Examples of grants include Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)'s Community Connectivity Grant, Small Town Economic Assistance Program, and Transportation Alternatives Program.

Other beautification improvements, such as landscaping, signage, lighting, trash receptacles, etc., could be achieved through capital budget items. Allocating public funding for improvements to Granby Center will demonstrate the Town's commitment to supporting property owners and attracting tenants.

### **5.3 Expedited Public Review**

Section 4.1 outlines proposed uses in the new GC Zone. Some of the uses that are currently allowed through special permits in the Commercial Center (COCE) Zone, are proposed to become principal permitted uses in the GC Zone. This allows a mix of uses to simply be reviewed as part of the site plan application by the Planning & Zoning Commission. This change in the GC Zone should streamline the approvals process, encouraging more efficiency for both the Town and property owners.

### **5.4 Design Guidelines**

Section 4.2 discusses potential Design Guidelines for Granby Center. If the Town wishes to pursue this option, the Town can list these guidelines in a subsection of the new GC Zone in the Zoning Regulations. This would empower the Planning and Zoning Commission to evaluate site plans for their conformance with the Granby Center's Design Guidelines.

### **5.5 Shared Parking/Municipal Parking**

To facilitate walkability and connectivity, it would be ideal if Granby Center visitors could park once and walk to various locations. To achieve shared parking, some additional parking facilities may require municipal ownership. There are two properties that could potentially incorporate parking areas mentioned in the plan, 26 Hartford Ave and 18 Hartford Ave. Should the Town choose to pursue creating municipal parking areas, they would need a capital budget allocation

to purchase any sites. It is assumed that any purchase of land for such uses would be a voluntary agreement not involving eminent domain.

One strategy is for the Town to enter into a negotiation or a lease agreement with a private property owner. This could also entail a maintenance agreement.

Another approach is for the Town to establish a Municipal Parking Authority. CGS Ch. 100 Sec. 7-204 defines the powers of Municipal Parking Authorities as the ability to purchase, maintain, and operate parking facilities. A Municipal Parking Authority would help address concerns surrounding liability for shared use parking on private properties.





# Appendix A

## Public Outreach Summaries

The Granby Center Advisory Committee met for the first time on September 27, 2023. 'Public Session' was a standing agenda item on every meeting agenda. This allowed the public an opportunity to address the Committee directly. Over the course of the two years, the Committee received many comments, as reflected in the meeting minutes and meeting packets, which are available online here:

<https://www.granby-ct.gov/496/Granby-Center-Advisory-Committee>

<https://www.granby-ct.gov/AgendaCenter/Granby-Center-Advisory-Committee-25>

Comments included concerns about commercial vacancies in the Granby Center area; changes to pedestrian access and timing of the lights so it is easier to cross the road; a need for preservation and protection of historic homes; support for additional sidewalks; a need to attract outside visitors to support businesses; support for outdoor seating; concerns with reduced setbacks for townhouses; a need for fiscal responsibility; infrastructure concerns to support additional development, including sewer capacity; support for architectural and sign standards; stormwater and runoff concerns; environmental concerns; parking and parking space requirement needs; concerns about building height next to single-family residential buildings; a need to buffer commercial uses from residential uses; traffic congestion and overall density concerns; support for additional housing options; concerns about mixed-use; support for mixed-use; support to expand the Granby Center Zone further south; and support to allow more uses by right in the Granby Center Zone.

In addition to 'Public Session' during each meeting, there were several public workshops. Following are summaries of those public workshops.



## Public Workshop Meeting Summary

### Granby Center Master Plan

**Date:** May 15, 2025

**Location:** Granby Senior Center

### Introduction

The Board of Selectmen established the Granby Center Advisory Committee (“Committee”) to oversee a study of Granby Center. The goal of the Granby Town Center Study is to provide a framework that supports a connected, healthy, vibrant, and resilient Center for businesses, residents, and visitors, aligning with Granby’s Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Public engagement is an essential part of the design and visioning process. Along with public outreach conducted for the POCD, the Town held a public workshop in March 2024 to seek input on residents’ priorities and goals for the Town Center. More recently, a roundtable with property owners was conducted in January 2025 to gather insights on property owners’ experiences in Granby Center and explore strategies to advance the area’s economic goals. A Public Workshop was then held on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to solicit community feedback on zoning and design proposals for the Town Center. This feedback is essential to ensure that the Town Center Master Plan and recommendations are representative of the community vision.

A copy of the can be presentation accessed on the Town website:

<https://granby-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2096/BFJ-Workshop-Presentation-5-15-25>

### Workshop Summary

Approximately 45-50 people attended the workshop. The meeting consisted of a presentation from the BFJ Planning team, an interactive dot-mocracy activity with poster boards, and an open house for participants to see what other tables produced.



# BFJ Planning

Eric Myers, Member of the Granby Center Advisory Committee, opened the Public Workshop with a welcome and introduction of BFJ Planning. Frank Fish of BFJ planning introduced the project team and gave an overview of the project goals, background, and timeline.

Mr. Fish provided an overview of the studies that supported the planning process, including the 2016 POCD. Suzanne Goldberg presented the new proposed zone for the center area and its associated permitted uses, area and bulk standards, and parking requirements. Nick Cerdera presented the urban design masterplan, along with plans for the Town Green and a new parking lot. Jonathan Martin presented plans for Bank Street, and visions for 26 Hartford Avenue. Finally, Frank Fish reviewed impacts and implementation strategies.

After the conclusion of the presentation, the attendees were directed to six poster board stations to participate in a dot-mocracy round table session. Frank Fish, Jonathan Martin, Suzanne Goldberg, Nick Cerdera, and Granby Committee members acted as facilitators for each of the roundtables and were available to answer any questions. Participants were given red and green dot stickers to mark items on the boards that they agree with as priorities (green) and items that they do not support (red). Sticky notes and pens were available for participants to write in their comments.

## Summary of Public Comments

The following section summarizes comments that were made during the interactive exercise. Photos of each of the posters and their corresponding comments can be found at the end of the document.

### Zoning Changes

**Height:** Some residents expressed concern in raising the maximum permissible height from 45 feet to 48 feet. It was generally agreed that new development should reflect the existing character and scale of Granby Center.

### Urban Design Proposals

**Study Area:** Participants expressed a desire to include properties on the west side of Salmon Brook Road more directly in the design proposal.

**Town Green:** Residents widely approved of expanding the Town Green. Additionally, there were suggestions to include water elements, more seating, a playground, and landscape buffers between the Green and the surrounding state roads.

**Signage:** Community members expressed consistent support for more consistent signage throughout the Town Center that is reflective of the New England aesthetic. It was also recommended that the Town implements this uniform signage in the municipal center as an example for the surrounding commercial center.

**Lighting:** Participants did not support changing the lighting, and instead stated that the existing lighting style is sufficient, with opportunities for greater consistency and usage across the district.

**Trash Cans:** Residents generally supported beautifying trash cans but noted that bears may be a concern.

## Transportation Network

**Pedestrian Circulation:** Participants supported an expanded pedestrian network, with several recommendations to link the municipal center to the commercial center with a sidewalk. Additionally, several roundtables discussed concerns with sidewalks placed behind restaurant establishments, as they may be located next to undesirable infrastructure such as dumpsters and refrigeration trucks. There were suggestions to consolidate trash collection into one common area and provide screening from pedestrian infrastructure.

**Bicycle Infrastructure:** Some participants mentioned the need for more bike racks spread throughout the Town Center. Additionally, it was mentioned that East Granby Road (Route 20) was more dangerous for biking, so new bike routes should be prioritized on Hartford Avenue.

**Bus Network:** Residents observed that there is no public transportation in the Town Center and suggested incorporating a bus stop.

**Parking:** It was generally agreed upon that there is enough parking provided in the Town Center, but that it can be difficult at specific locations at certain times. There was support for more shared parking, but liability issues were mentioned as a possible obstacle for property owners.



## INTERACTIVE EXERCISE POSTERS

[illegible]



















## Granby Center Master Plan

### Property Owners Meeting Summary

January 8, 2025 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Granby Town Hall, 15 North Granby Road Granby, CT 06035



### Meeting Overview

BFJ Planning facilitated a meeting with property owners in Granby Center, bringing together approximately 10 stakeholders. The purpose of the meeting was to gather insights on property owners' experiences in Granby Center and explore strategies to advance the area's economic goals. Participants engaged in a roundtable discussion addressing key issues, challenges, and opportunities, while also identifying ways the Town can support property owners in creating a more vibrant Town Center.

Key takeaways emphasize improving walkability, parking and connectivity, consistent zoning, mixed-use development, and beautification to create a more cohesive Granby Center.

### Introduction

Frank Fish of BFJ Planning opened the meeting by introducing the project team, composed of Jonathan Martin, Thomas Madden, and Suzanne Goldberg. Attendees, including property owners from the Granby Center study area and representatives from the Salmon Brook Historic Society, then introduced themselves.

Mr. Fish gave an overview of the project timeline, highlighting the Public Workshop on April 3, 2025, as a key opportunity for public input. The Plan is expected to be finalized in June 2025, following a final presentation to the public.



## Issues and Opportunities in Granby Center

The following issues and opportunities were raised by property owners through the discussion facilitated by BFJ Planning.

### Transportation

- Speeding on roads in Granby Center adversely impacts feelings of safety and comfortability. Other downtowns, such as Madison, include state routes in their commercial cores, but traffic slows down significantly in those areas.
- Due to the speed of traffic and the perception that crossings are unsafe, many residents feel unsafe walking around Granby Center and prefer to drive.
- The split-phase signal timing and cycle lengths on Route 202 cause traffic backups and create an unpleasant experience for pedestrians trying to cross.
- Many people drive through Granby Center without stopping to explore the area.

### Parking

- The current supply of parking is underutilized during the week but more well-utilized on weekend nights, especially for restaurants.
- At the Geissler's shopping center, parking spaces closer to the grocery store are fully utilized, but the spaces further away are rarely full.
- Shared parking is generally agreed upon to have a positive impact on Granby Center by encouraging walkability.
- Property owners would like to see the Planning and Zoning Commission have greater ability to determine parking on a less stringent basis than the current Zoning Code permits.
- The representative of the Geissler's shopping center seemed amenable to designating "park and bike" spaces to encourage bikers in the area to explore downtown. He was also interested in the possibility of installing bike racks in the parking lot.

### Downtown Uses and Zoning

- The lack of consistent zoning throughout Granby Center makes it feel less cohesive.
- Smaller lot sizes could support the creation of a more walkable environment.
- Creating one mixed-use zone could support a more cohesive downtown and encourage a wider variety of uses.
- Allowing some residential development could increase the presence of people and a stronger sense of activity, while boosting support for retail.
- Allowing higher density and range of uses could attract people to the area and help reduce retail vacancies. The abundance of personal services, such as medical offices, makes the area less vibrant during the weekends.

### Design and Built Environment

- The lack of lighting contributes to lack of downtown vibrancy. It also may encourage speeding at nighttime.
- Beautification, such as landscaping and street furniture (benches, signs, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc.), would greatly enhance the appearance of Granby Center. Areas behind



## BEJ Planning

shopping centers should also be beautified, as they are often used as cut-throughs or walking paths.

- The historic character and New England feel should be emphasized in design.

### Town Green

- The Frontier building next to the Town Green is a great opportunity site. It is often used just for parking currently.
- There is a desire to make the Town Green a more active community space, i.e., through creating a farmers' market, holiday market, etc.

### Financing

- Potential financing techniques for implementing improvements to Granby Center include creating a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district or a Special Services District.



# Appendix B

## Market Study



## Granby Center Market Analysis & Regional Development Trends

### 1. Introduction to Market Analysis

This analysis evaluates local economic conditions and regional development trends, focusing on Granby's position within the broader Hartford County and neighboring submarkets. The study examines key indicators such as employment growth, population changes, and household formation rates to establish a baseline understanding of the town's economic vitality. The study assesses retail, commercial, and residential markets to pinpoint areas of growth potential and identify pressures from competing developments in surrounding communities.

#### 1.1 Key Areas of Focus:

##### 1.1.1 Retail Market

Granby's retail market will be evaluated by analyzing current vacancy rates and rental trends to determine the town's capacity to attract and sustain businesses. Vacancy rates serve as a key indicator of demand for retail spaces; high vacancy rates may reflect a lack of market activity, while low vacancy rates suggest strong demand. Rental trends will reveal insights into the profitability and attractiveness of operating in the area. Competitive rental pricing could indicate either an affordable and appealing market or challenges related to limited business activity. These factors will help identify which types of retail enterprises are most viable for Granby Center.

A significant aspect of the analysis will focus on competitive pressures from neighboring towns and regional shopping hubs, such as Avon and Simsbury. These areas often feature more established retail options, potentially drawing customers away from Granby. By examining the retail offerings in these nearby communities, the study can identify gaps in the market that Granby could fill. Opportunities might include niche markets or specialty retail services that align with local demand. This approach will allow Granby to position itself as a complementary part of the regional retail ecosystem while carving out a distinct identity.

Feedback from local businesses and community stakeholders will be incorporated to ensure a well-rounded analysis. Insights into consumer preferences, shopping behaviors, and challenges faced by existing retailers will provide valuable context. By combining quantitative data, such as rental trends, with qualitative insights from stakeholders, the study will deliver a comprehensive understanding of Granby's retail market dynamics and inform strategies to enhance its competitiveness.

##### 1.1.2 Commercial Market:

The evaluation of Granby's commercial market will focus on its alignment with the town center's emphasis on local services. Granby Center serves primarily as a hub for

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community-oriented businesses that cater to the daily needs of residents. These include professional services, healthcare providers, local retailers, and dining establishments. As work environments continue to shift toward remote and hybrid models, demand for traditional office spaces has declined. Instead, there is an increasing need for smaller, flexible spaces that accommodate local service providers and small businesses. This analysis will assess how these trends impact Granby Center and identify strategies to support the growth of locally-focused enterprises.

A key opportunity for enhancing the commercial market lies in creating spaces designed to meet the needs of local service providers and community-focused businesses. For Granby, this may involve developing or repurposing properties to include smaller office spaces, wellness centers, and co-working areas that support professionals such as therapists, accountants, and consultants. Encouraging these types of businesses within Granby Center can enhance its role as a service hub while maintaining the small-town character valued by residents.

## **1.1.3 Residential Market**

The residential market in Granby will be assessed through a comprehensive demographic analysis that focuses on key factors such as age distribution, household size, income levels, and the balance between homeownership and rental trends. Understanding these demographic characteristics is essential to identifying current housing needs and predicting future demand. For example, an aging population in Granby may signal a growing need for senior-friendly housing options, while shifts in household sizes could influence demand for smaller or larger homes. Similarly, analyzing income levels will provide insight into the community's ability to afford housing, which is a critical factor in assessing market sustainability.

Another key component of the analysis is housing absorption rates, which measure how quickly newly built homes are sold or rented. This metric provides insight into the balance between supply and demand in Granby's residential market. High absorption rates suggest strong demand and a healthy market, while slower rates may indicate oversupply or affordability concerns. By analyzing housing absorption alongside demographic trends and affordability metrics, the study will identify opportunities to align Granby's housing stock with the needs of current and prospective residents.

This evaluation will consider regional trends in Hartford County and surrounding areas to understand how Granby's residential market fits into the broader context. Projections on household formation, planned housing developments, and anticipated population growth will help shape recommendations for future housing strategies. These findings will guide efforts to create a more inclusive and dynamic housing market, ensuring that Granby can attract and retain residents while meeting their evolving needs.

Additionally, the analysis will explore regional development patterns and their direct and indirect impacts on Granby. This includes studying the influence of major employers,

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transportation infrastructure, and economic initiatives in nearby areas such as Hartford, Windsor, and East Granby. Special attention will be given to how Granby can leverage its proximity to Bradley International Airport and regional job hubs to foster growth while addressing challenges like limited commercial activity and population stagnation.

The study will use a mix of quantitative data from the U.S. Census Bureau, local real estate reports, and economic forecasts, as well as qualitative insights from stakeholder feedback and community input sessions. By combining these methods, the analysis will offer actionable recommendations to strengthen Granby's economic position and guide future planning efforts. This structured approach ensures that the study not only evaluates current conditions but also provides a forward-looking perspective to support sustainable development.

## **2.0 Regional Economic Development Trends and Granby's Context**

### **2.1 Granby's Locational Advantage**

Granby is uniquely positioned in Hartford County. It offers residents the benefits of proximity to major employment hubs while preserving the small-town charm that appeals to families and professionals. Its strategic location provides access to job opportunities in urban centers, suburban business districts, and key regional industries, making it an ideal community for those seeking a balance between professional growth and quality of life.

#### **2.1.1 Proximity to Hartford**

Located approximately 20 miles northwest of Hartford, Granby offers residents access to one of the region's most significant employment centers. Hartford, known as the "Insurance Capital of the World," is home to leading companies such as The Hartford, Aetna, and Travelers. These firms provide a range of career opportunities in finance, insurance, and corporate management, attracting professionals from across the region. Granby's proximity allows residents to benefit from the high-paying roles and career stability that Hartford offers while enjoying a quieter, suburban lifestyle.

#### **2.1.2 Bradley International Airport**

Bradley International Airport, located just 12 miles southeast of Granby in Windsor Locks, is a major economic driver for the region. The airport facilitates thousands of jobs in aviation, logistics, retail, and customer service, supporting both local and regional economies. Additionally, the nearby Bradley Airport Development Zone offers tax incentives that attract companies in manufacturing, warehousing, and technology. This economic activity provides a range of employment opportunities for Granby residents and strengthens the area's economic stability.

#### **2.1.3 Day Hill Corporate Area**

Situated approximately 15 miles from Granby, the Day Hill Corporate Area in Windsor is another significant employment hub. This area hosts major corporate offices and facilities for companies such as Amazon, ABB, and Voya Financial. Amazon's distribution center has



become a key employer, creating jobs across various skill levels, while technology and healthcare companies in the area further diversify the employment landscape. The accessibility of Day Hill makes it a valuable resource for Granby residents seeking nearby job opportunities.

## **2.1.4 Educational and Healthcare Employers**

Granby residents also benefit from proximity to prominent educational and healthcare institutions. The University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington and Hartford Hospital provide a wide range of employment opportunities in medical, research, and administrative fields. These institutions are within a 30-minute drive.

## **2.1.4 Local and Regional Small Businesses**

Within Granby itself, small businesses in retail, dining, and professional services contribute to the local economy. While smaller in scale than the major employers in surrounding areas, these businesses provide convenient employment opportunities and foster economic stability within the community. They also enhance Granby's unique character and strengthen its role as a hub for locally-focused services.

## **2.1.5 Proximity to Massachusetts**

Granby's location near the Massachusetts border expands its economic and cultural connections to another significant region. Springfield, Massachusetts, located about 25 miles north, serves as a hub for manufacturing, education, and healthcare. Institutions like Baystate Health and Springfield College offer employment opportunities in healthcare and higher education, complementing those available in Hartford. Additionally, the nearby Pioneer Valley area, known for its vibrant arts and cultural scene, provides recreational and economic benefits for Granby residents. This proximity enables residents to access a wider range of career, educational, and leisure opportunities, strengthening Granby's regional appeal.

By leveraging its location near these economic hubs, Granby combines the advantages of suburban living with access to a diverse array of employment opportunities and regional resources. This balance makes Granby a desirable place for professionals, families, and retirees seeking both opportunity and quality of life.

## **2.2 Overview of the Economic Landscape in Connecticut**

Connecticut's economy has shown moderate growth in 2024, with its real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increasing by 3.0% in the third quarter, slightly below the national growth rate of 3.1%. This positions Connecticut as the 26th fastest-growing state economy during this period. The state's GDP reached \$295.3 billion, representing 24% of New England's \$1.2 trillion economy, making it the second-largest in the region after Massachusetts. Key drivers of this growth include the retail, information, and healthcare sectors, which collectively underscore Connecticut's diverse and evolving economic base.

## **2.3 Granby's Economic Conditions in the Context of Connecticut**

Granby reflects some of Connecticut's broader economic trends while maintaining distinct local characteristics. The town has a median household income of \$115,989, which is significantly higher than state and national averages. This affluence highlights a community of relatively stable, high-income households. However, Granby's population declined slightly, losing 33 residents between 2010 and 2023. This trend contrasts with the modest growth seen in neighboring Windsor, which gained 328 residents during the same period. Granby's population decline, while minimal, suggests challenges in attracting younger families and working-age individuals who are vital for long-term economic vitality.

Granby's economic role within the region is both significant and nuanced. The town serves as a residential community, with many residents commuting to nearby employment centers like Hartford and Windsor. Its proximity to Bradley International Airport offers logistical advantages, yet Granby has not experienced the same level of growth seen in Windsor, which benefits directly from airport-driven economic activity. Granby's strong credit rating (AA+) underscores its fiscal stability, but the town's limited commercial base and slower population growth may hinder its ability to capitalize on regional economic opportunities.

## **2.4 Granby's Role in the Regional Economy**

Granby plays an important role in the regional economy as a bedroom community supporting the broader Hartford County area. While not a major hub for employment or commercial activity, Granby provides a high quality of life that attracts affluent residents. Its scenic landscapes, strong school system, and small-town charm make it an appealing choice for families and retirees seeking a quieter lifestyle.

Granby's role is further defined by its connection to neighboring towns like East Granby and Suffield, which share similar economic profiles. Together, these towns form a network of suburban communities that contribute to the region's labor force. Many residents work in urban centers or larger suburban areas, creating a regional interdependence. However, Granby's declining population signals potential vulnerabilities, as a shrinking labor force and limited business growth could affect its long-term economic sustainability.

## **2.5 Historical Context of Economic Stagnation and Its Implications**

Connecticut has faced persistent economic stagnation, driven by the lingering effects of the 2008 Great Recession and intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2010 and 2020, the state's population grew by just 0.9%, ranking among the slowest nationally. This limited population growth, combined with an aging demographic, constrained labor market expansion and suppressed consumer demand. The pandemic further disrupted key sectors, such as retail, hospitality, and manufacturing, leading to significant job losses. In particular, small businesses struggled with supply chain disruptions and rapidly changing consumer behaviors, making recovery uneven across the state.

Granby, like many suburban towns in Connecticut, mirrored these broader trends. Despite its reputation as a desirable residential community with strong schools and a high quality of

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life, the town experienced vulnerabilities during this period. Granby's economic reliance on a primarily residential tax base and limited commercial activity left it more exposed to the effects of declining consumer spending and the rise of remote work. Over the past decade, Granby's population declined by 3%, and school enrollments fell significantly, reflecting a broader trend of demographic shifts within the state.

While the pandemic brought challenges, it also highlighted Granby's strengths. During lockdowns, families seeking larger homes and access to outdoor recreational spaces found Granby particularly appealing, temporarily boosting demand for housing. However, this surge in interest strained the town's limited housing stock, which is predominantly composed of single-family homes. The lack of diverse housing options, such as affordable rentals or multi-family units, has made it difficult for Granby to attract younger families and first-time homebuyers, limiting its long-term growth potential.

In contrast, nearby Windsor demonstrated economic resilience during the pandemic by capitalizing on its strategic location and infrastructure. While many corporate offices shifted to remote work, reducing office-based economic activity, Windsor offset these losses with the arrival of an Amazon distribution center. These facilities created hundreds of jobs across various skill levels, highlighting the importance of diversifying economic opportunities and attracting major employers. Granby could learn from Windsor's adaptability and explore strategies to leverage its regional advantages, such as its proximity to Bradley International Airport and economic hubs like Hartford and Springfield.

## 3. Market Analysis

### 3.1 Retail Market

Granby's retail market embodies its community-focused ethos, featuring a blend of local businesses and select national retailers that cater to residents' essential needs. The commercial nucleus of this activity is Granby Center, strategically situated at the intersection of Salmon Brook Street (Route 10/202) and Hartford Avenue (Route 20). This area serves as the town's primary commercial hub, hosting a variety of businesses that contribute to its unique character.

Granby Center, the heart of the town's commercial activity, primarily caters to utilitarian needs with businesses such as banks, medical offices, personal services, and a handful of restaurants. While these services are vital, they lack the destination appeal needed to create a dynamic downtown experience. Discussions during community meetings emphasized the need to expand Granby Center's retail offerings to attract businesses that encourage residents and visitors to linger and explore.

While not exhaustive, these include:

- **Dining Options:** Granby Center offers a variety of dining experiences that serve local families and attract visitors from nearby towns. Casual options include



Geno's Pizzeria at 345 Salmon Brook Street. Unique venues include At The Barn Restaurant at 17R East Granby Road and The Bear's Den at 18R Hartford Avenue. Quick-service options include Wayback Burgers, Lox Stock & Bagel, and Starbucks, while dessert destinations like Icy Rolls and Grassroots Ice Cream add variety and charm.

- **Food Stores:** Granby Center is anchored by Geissler's Supermarket, located at 9J Bank Street.
- **Personal Services:** Granby Center includes several personal service businesses that cater to grooming and wellness needs such as, Platinum Studio located at 15 Hartford Avenue.

Despite this variety, Granby Center's retail offerings primarily address everyday necessities, lacking the diverse and unique retail experiences that encourage extended visits and attract a broader audience.

### 3.1.1 Vacancy Rates and Rental Trends

Granby Center is constrained by several key vacancies that hinder its ability to fully realize its potential as a vibrant community and commercial hub. Significant empty spaces include the former Bank of America site and multiple storefronts within Granby Village. These remain unoccupied and underutilized, diminishing the center's overall appeal and foot traffic necessary to support nearby businesses.

While detailed retail vacancy data in Granby is scarce, available listings indicate a moderate level of availability. Rental rates range from \$15 to \$18 per square foot annually, making Granby an attractive and competitive option within the region. For example, 33 Hartford Avenue features 2,300 square feet of first-floor retail/office space listed at \$18 per square foot, with smaller office spaces available at \$15 per square foot annually. These rates are notably more affordable compared to neighboring towns like Simsbury, where retail spaces on Hopmeadow Street average \$20.37 per square foot annually. Granby's competitive pricing and available spaces present a strong opportunity to attract new businesses, particularly small and specialty retailers, to revitalize the town center.

### 3.1.2 Competitive Pressures from Neighboring Towns

Granby faces strong competition from nearby towns like Simsbury and Avon, which offer more extensive and established retail options. Simsbury, for example, features larger shopping centers and a broader mix of national and specialty retailers that draw regional customers. This competition creates challenges for Granby's local businesses, which must find ways to differentiate themselves to retain residents' patronage and attract visitors.

### 3.1.3 Challenges in the Retail Environment at Granby Center

One of the main challenges is the absence of unique or destination retail spaces. Current offerings are functional but fail to deliver the charm and vibrancy of a thriving town center. To address this, stakeholders suggested recruiting non-chain specialty shops such as bakeries, jewelry stores, boutique clothing retailers, and unique restaurants. These

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businesses could create a more compelling and walkable environment, encouraging greater foot traffic and economic activity. Expanding retail options to cater to a broader demographic—including families, professionals, and seniors—was also identified as a critical strategy for strengthening Granby Center’s appeal.

## 3.1.4 Opportunities for Granby Center

Despite these challenges, Granby Center has significant opportunities to carve out a unique identity:

- **Niche Retail and Specialty Shops:** Focusing on specialty stores, local artisans, and experiential retail can distinguish Granby from its neighbors. For example, promoting locally sourced products or unique shopping experiences can attract both residents and visitors.
- **Community Events:** Hosting farmers’ markets, art fairs, and seasonal festivals can draw foot traffic to Granby Center and create a stronger sense of place.
- **Leveraging Rural Charm:** Granby’s natural beauty and proximity to agricultural areas provides an opportunity to promote agritourism-related retail, such as farm-to-table restaurants or local produce markets.

## 3.1.5 Enhancing Accessibility and Infrastructure

Infrastructure improvements were identified as crucial for supporting retail growth in Granby Center. Enhancements such as better signage, pedestrian pathways, and shared parking solutions could improve accessibility and encourage visitors to park once and explore the area on foot. Addressing the current mismatch in parking utilization by creating communal parking areas and improving connectivity between lots and retail spaces will make the town center more convenient and inviting.

Aesthetic improvements, including landscaping, lighting, and street beautification, were also highlighted as essential for transforming Granby Center into a vibrant retail destination. These enhancements would elevate the area’s physical environment and create a welcoming atmosphere that attracts businesses and visitors alike.

Granby Center’s retail market has the potential to evolve into a vibrant and distinctive commercial hub. With competitive rental rates, available retail spaces, and a strong sense of community, the town is well-positioned to attract new businesses. However, addressing challenges such as limited retail diversity and competition from neighboring towns will require strategic efforts. By focusing on niche markets, enhancing infrastructure, and fostering a welcoming environment, Granby Center can become a thriving destination that meets the needs of its residents and contributes to the town’s economic vitality.

## 3.2 Commercial Small Office Market:

### 3.2.1 Current State:

Granby Center’s office sector is predominantly service-oriented, catering to the needs of the local community through a variety of professional services. Healthcare providers such as,

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Salmon Brook Dental at 35 Hartford Avenue and Granby Family Medicine, play a critical role in delivering essential care to residents. In addition to these medical offices, the area is home to approximately seven dental practices and a range of other professional service providers, highlighting its focus on meeting local demand.

Financial institutions are also a significant part of Granby Center's office market, with banks like Liberty Bank, Westfield Bank, Northwest Community Bank, and Windsor Federal Savings, providing essential financial services. These institutions support both personal and business banking needs, contributing to the stability and functionality of the local commercial landscape.

### **3.2.2 Vacancy**

A prominent vacant property in Granby Center is the former Bank of America site, located across from the Geissler's shopping plaza. This site presents a significant opportunity for redevelopment, whether to address gaps in financial services or to be repurposed for other service-oriented uses. Its central location within Granby Center makes it a key asset for enhancing the area's commercial vitality and attracting additional foot traffic to support nearby businesses.

Granby Center currently faces other notable vacancies that impact its potential as a thriving community and commercial hub. Among these is 33 Hartford Avenue, which offers 2,300 square feet of first-floor retail or office space listed at \$15.00 to \$18.00 per square foot annually. Smaller office spaces in the same property are also available within this price range, providing flexible options for prospective tenants. Addressing these vacancies strategically can play a vital role in revitalizing Granby Center and fostering a more dynamic and appealing business environment.

### **3.2.3 Challenges:**

Granby Center faces several challenges that impact the growth and adaptability of its commercial market. One significant issue is the limited flexibility in zoning regulations, which restricts the ability to repurpose or adapt existing spaces for mixed-use developments. This limitation reduces opportunities to integrate office, retail, and residential uses that could bring greater vibrancy and functionality to the area. Another challenge is the loss of significant institutions, such as the former Bank of America site near the shopping plaza. This vacant property has left a gap in the commercial fabric, representing both a missed opportunity for financial services and a broader issue of maintaining an active and cohesive commercial environment.

Operational inefficiencies in parking further complicate the market. Shared parking arrangements and underutilized spaces pose difficulties for businesses, particularly during peak hours, which can deter potential customers and diminish the accessibility of the center. Additionally, the recent sale of key properties, such as the gas station near the town center, could significantly impact traffic patterns and overall commercial dynamics. Thoughtful redevelopment of such sites is critical to aligning with Granby Center's



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community-focused goals and minimizing disruptions. Addressing these challenges strategically will be essential to fostering a thriving and sustainable commercial market in Granby Center.

## **3.2.4 Opportunities:**

Granby Center has significant opportunities to enhance its commercial market by addressing current challenges and implementing strategic improvements. A key opportunity lies in developing mixed-use projects that integrate small office spaces with retail, residential, and wellness facilities. These developments would create a more dynamic and multifunctional environment, attracting a diverse range of tenants and fostering increased activity within the center.

Another important avenue for improvement is updating zoning regulations to allow more flexibility in how office spaces are used. By streamlining zoning rules, Granby Center could encourage the establishment of small businesses and co-working spaces, aligning with evolving market trends and the rise of hybrid work models. This flexibility would enhance the center's appeal to a broader spectrum of enterprises seeking adaptable and innovative commercial spaces.

Enhancing the physical environment through investments in beautification and connectivity offers additional potential. Improvements such as better pedestrian pathways, enhanced lighting, and landscaping would make office locations more accessible and visually appealing. These upgrades would not only benefit businesses by improving accessibility but also contribute to creating a more inviting and walkable town center for residents and visitors alike.

Lastly, introducing expanded amenities like co-working spaces and wellness centers could diversify the office market's offerings. These additions would cater to the needs of modern tenants and professionals, providing collaborative and wellness-focused environments that align with current trends. By pursuing these opportunities, Granby Center can position itself as a vibrant, multifunctional hub that meets the needs of local businesses while supporting the broader community's growth and development.

## **3.2.5 Parking and Access:**

Parking and access are key considerations for Granby Center's functionality and appeal. Recent agreements among property owners to establish shared parking systems have made progress in addressing parking challenges. These systems aim to optimize the use of available parking spaces across businesses, improving overall efficiency. However, ensuring that patrons of specific businesses can reliably find parking close to their destinations remains a concern, particularly during peak hours.

Proposals to enhance walkability and connectivity within Granby Center aim to create a more accessible and cohesive environment for both clients and employees. Plans include better integration of sidewalks and pathways, which would encourage pedestrian

movement between businesses and make the area more inviting. These improvements would not only support accessibility but also contribute to a more vibrant and interconnected town center. By prioritizing parking efficiency and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, Granby Center can enhance its appeal as a convenient and welcoming destination for residents and visitors alike.

By addressing these challenges and leveraging these opportunities, Granby Center can enhance its role as a vital hub for professional services and local businesses while fostering a more dynamic and integrated community atmosphere.

### **3.3 Residential Market Analysis**

Granby's residential market reflects its role as a rural town in Connecticut's Litchfield foothills, near the Massachusetts border. Granby attracts families and professionals seeking a good quality of life, strong schools, and a small-town atmosphere. However, an examination of demographic trends, housing affordability, rental options, and recent developments shows both strengths and challenges in the town's housing market.

#### **3.3.1 Demographic Trends and Housing Stock**

As of 2024, Granby has an estimated population of approximately 11,466 residents, with a median age of 44.9 years and an average household size of 2.50 persons. The town maintains a high homeownership rate, with 90% of households being owner-occupied. This dominance of single-family homes serves families and long-term residents well but presents challenges for younger individuals, first-time buyers, and seniors seeking smaller or more affordable housing options. The limited diversity in housing types has constrained Granby's ability to attract and retain a broader demographic, highlighting the need for more varied housing options to meet the needs of a wider range of residents.

#### **3.3.2 Affordability Metrics**

Housing affordability is a pressing concern in Granby, as 22% of households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. The median home value of \$310,600 is within reach of the town's median household income of \$117,476 but leaves little room for lower-income residents. The rental market reflects similar affordability challenges. Between 2019 and 2023, the median gross rent in Granby was \$1,327. As of January 2025, rental prices range from \$1,200 to \$2,095, highlighting the relatively high cost of living in the area.

#### **3.3.3 Rental Housing Market**

Granby's rental market features several high-end developments, positioning the town as an appealing option for affluent tenants. Station 280, located at 280 Salmon Brook Street, offers modern units with amenities tailored to professionals and families. Rental prices range from \$1,785 to \$3,400, reflecting its focus on quality and convenience. Similarly, The Grand Luxury Apartments and Homes, situated at 3 Murtha's Way, provides upscale living options with rents from \$1,875 to \$5,485, catering to high-income residents seeking premium accommodations.

Additional developments expand the town's rental offerings. Greenway Village, located at 24 Mill Pond Drive, features units with rents ranging from \$2,100 to \$2,700, while The Pointe at Dorset Crossing, just over the town line at 55 Dorset Crossing Drive in Simsbury, offers rentals priced between \$2,115 and \$2,656. "The Grand Meadows" in neighboring East Granby, which includes 47 single-family homes and 116 townhomes, is scheduled for completion in 2025. These high-end developments enhance Granby's appeal to tenants seeking luxury living; however, their price points may deter younger individuals, workforce populations, and others in search of affordable rental housing.

Recent rental housing developments have filled quickly, demonstrating a strong demand for housing in the area. Despite the success of these projects, the focus on high-end units highlights the need for greater diversity in rental options to ensure the market remains inclusive and accessible to a broader demographic, including young professionals, families, and essential workforce populations. Expanding affordable and mid-range rental opportunities will be key to addressing this gap and supporting the community's long-term growth.

### **3.3.5 Regional Influences**

Granby's proximity to Massachusetts and its access to regional economic hubs like Hartford and Springfield influence the town's residential market. The town appeals to families and retirees seeking a rural lifestyle with convenient access to employment and amenities in nearby cities. However, urban centers with greater housing diversity and entertainment options may continue to attract younger residents, presenting a challenge for Granby's growth.

Granby's residential market is defined by its strong homeownership rate, high-quality rental developments like Station 280, and appeal as a rural, family-friendly community. However, rising rental prices and a lack of affordable and diverse housing options pose challenges for younger and lower-income residents. To foster long-term growth and inclusivity, Granby should consider incentivizing affordable housing developments and diversifying its housing stock. Balancing new developments with affordability can help Granby remain a desirable and sustainable community for all residents.

### **3.4.6 Opportunities for Housing Development**

Granby Center presents several promising opportunities for housing development that can address current gaps in the market and contribute to a more dynamic community. A notable site for residential infill is the vacant lot located south of the grocery store parking lot. Measuring approximately 320 feet in length and 95 feet in depth, this site is well-positioned for appropriately scaled residential development, which could provide new housing options while integrating seamlessly into the existing town center.

The former Bank of America site near the shopping plaza also represents a significant opportunity for redevelopment. This centrally located property could be reimaged to



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include mixed-use housing, with residential units above retail or office spaces. Such developments could enhance the vibrancy of the town center, increase foot traffic, and offer housing options that cater to diverse demographics. Also identified as a potential redevelopment site is an area encompassing four properties along Morgan Street. This cluster of properties could be strategically developed to create a cohesive residential or mixed-use project.

Housing developments in these areas could target underserved demographics in Granby, including young professionals and first-time renters seeking starter units, as well as empty nesters looking to downsize but remain in the community. Mixed-use projects, in particular, could incorporate housing above ground-floor retail or office spaces, fostering a walkable and vibrant town center. Such developments would not only provide housing but also support local businesses and create a more engaging community atmosphere. However, the build-out of these sites would need to account for sewer capacity constraints, potential natural gas upgrades, and water supply availability.

### 3.4.5 Infrastructure Considerations

Granby Center's ability to accommodate new housing and commercial development is closely tied to its infrastructure capacity, particularly its wastewater system, natural gas network, and water supply. The Granby Wastewater Flow Study, conducted by Tighe & Bond, provides a comprehensive assessment of the town's sewer system, addressing its current capacity, potential constraints, and future development opportunities.

### 3.4.6 Sewer Capacity

Granby's wastewater system is connected to the Simsbury Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) under an inter-municipal agreement, which allows a discharge limit of 353,280 gallons per day (gpd). As of 2022, the town's average daily flow was 113,800 gpd, representing only 32% of the allocated capacity. Temporary flow meters installed in 2023 recorded a slightly higher average of 121,950 gpd, leaving substantial room for additional development. However, the 10-inch sewer main from the Salmon Brook Street pump station to the Simsbury town line has been identified as a capacity bottleneck during peak conditions. Depending on the peaking factor used, this main can handle an additional flow of 53,100 to 125,300 gpd before becoming overwhelmed.

#### 3.4.6.1 Inflow and Infiltration (I&I)

The study also highlighted issues related to inflow and infiltration (I&I), where extraneous water enters the sewer system and reduces its efficiency:

- **Infiltration**, accounting for 17% of total daily flow, occurs through cracks and defects in sewer infrastructure and averaged 20,250 gpd.
- **Inflow**, caused by improper connections like downspouts and manhole leaks, showed peak inflow rates of 40,550 to 75,380 gpd during storm events. While not excessive compared to other systems, managing I&I will be essential for maintaining system performance as additional connections are made.

### 3.4.6.2 Future Flow Projections

A build-out analysis within the Granby Wastewater Flow Study assessed development potential over a 20-year horizon:

- **Residential Parcels:** Approximately 218 parcels could connect to the system, including single-family homes and higher-density housing.
- **Commercial and Mixed-Use Parcels:** An additional 28 commercial and five mixed-use parcels could contribute to increased flow, especially with higher-density redevelopment. The study projected future daily flows of 329,100 gpd under full build-out scenarios, which would stay within the inter-municipal agreement limit but approach the 10-inch main's capacity. Strategic upgrades to this bottleneck will be necessary to fully utilize the town's sewer capacity.

### 3.4.7 Natural Gas

Granby Center's natural gas infrastructure is limited. A 2023 meeting with Connecticut Natural Gas (CNG) representatives revealed that the existing network cannot support new developments without major upgrades. Recent projects, such as Station 280, had to rely on propane due to insufficient gas availability. Expanding the natural gas network could support future developments and reduce reliance on alternative energy sources.

### 3.4.8 Water Supply

Public water in Granby is available only in select areas. The Salmon Brook Water District serves the town center, while the Aquarion Water Company provides service to some southern areas near Route 10. Expansion of public water infrastructure would support increased density and ensure adequate resources for new housing and commercial projects.

### 3.4.9 Additional Community Impact

Moderate housing growth in Granby Center is anticipated to have a limited impact on local schools. This is largely due to the town's declining enrollment trends, which suggest that existing school capacity can accommodate additional students from new residential developments without significant strain. While any increase in housing could lead to some changes in the student population, these shifts are expected to be manageable, ensuring the continued quality of education in the district.

However, increased housing in or near Granby Center may significantly impact traffic and parking. New developments could intensify demand for parking and create challenges in maintaining efficient traffic flow, especially during peak hours. Addressing these potential issues will require proactive planning, including the implementation of shared or communal parking solutions. Such strategies could optimize the use of existing spaces, minimize congestion, and support a walkable, accessible town center. By prioritizing coordinated parking systems and thoughtful traffic management, Granby can accommodate future growth while preserving its small-town character and functionality.

### **3.4.10 Affordable Housing and Accessibility**

Ensuring affordability and accessibility in Granby Center's housing market is critical for fostering a diverse and inclusive community. Stakeholders have emphasized the importance of offering affordable housing options to attract a broader mix of residents, including young professionals, first-time buyers, and seniors. A focus on affordability would not only enhance the town's appeal but also support local businesses by providing housing opportunities for essential workforce populations.

## **4. Actionable Insights and Recommendations**

The recommendations outlined in this report are essential for guiding Granby Center's growth and development to meet the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and the broader community. By addressing key areas such as retail, commercial, residential markets, infrastructure, community impact, and sustainability, these actionable insights provide a roadmap for enhancing Granby Center's appeal, functionality, and long-term vitality. Each recommendation aims to balance economic opportunities with community needs, ensuring that Granby Center evolves as a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable hub for future generations.

### **4.1 Retail Market**

The retail market in Granby Center offers opportunities to enhance its appeal and better serve both residents and visitors. To achieve this, the following actions are recommended:

- **Enhance retail diversity:**
  - Attract unique establishments such as niche shops, boutique stores, and artisan markets to diversify the retail mix and complement existing businesses.
  - Develop a strategy to fill current vacancies, including the former Bank of America site, with businesses aligned to community needs and regional trends.
- **Leverage competitive pricing:**
  - Promote Granby's affordable rental rates, which range from \$15 to \$18 per square foot, as a cost-effective option compared to neighboring towns.
  - Highlight available spaces, such as those at 33 Hartford Avenue, for their potential to attract small businesses and startups, as well as for mixed-use redevelopment opportunities.
- **Increase community engagement through events:**
  - Host events such as seasonal fairs, farmers' markets, and cultural festivals to draw visitors and create a vibrant, community-oriented atmosphere.
  - Leverage these events to increase foot traffic for local businesses and foster a stronger connection between the community and Granby Center.



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## 4.2 Commercial Market

Granby Center's commercial market provides opportunities for revitalization through targeted development and strategic investments. To achieve this, the following actions are recommended:

- **Encourage mixed-use development:**
  - Repurpose vacant and underutilized properties, such as the Bank of America site, to create mixed-use projects that combine retail, office, and residential spaces, fostering a dynamic and multifunctional environment.
  - Focus on the cohesive redevelopment of the four properties along Morgan Street to align with town center goals and enhance the area's potential.
- **Support local services:**
  - Attract healthcare providers, financial professionals, and wellness services to strengthen Granby Center's identity as a service-oriented hub that meets the needs of residents and the surrounding community.
  - Address zoning limitations to encourage flexible office configurations, such as co-working spaces and small-scale professional offices, accommodating evolving work environments.
- **Enhance infrastructure and connectivity:**
  - Invest in pedestrian-friendly upgrades, including improved sidewalks, enhanced lighting, and clear wayfinding signage, to make Granby Center more accessible and visually appealing.
  - Promote walkability to connect key commercial areas, encouraging foot traffic and supporting local businesses.

## 4.3 Residential Market

Granby Center's residential market has opportunities to expand and diversify its housing options better to meet the needs of current and future residents. To achieve this, the following actions are recommended:

- **Diversify housing stock:**
  - Develop smaller-scale rental units and starter homes to attract younger residents and professionals seeking entry-level housing.
  - Pursue infill development opportunities, such as the vacant lot near the grocery store parking lot and the former Bank of America property, to create targeted residential projects that integrate seamlessly with the existing town center.
- **Promote affordability:**
  - Implement policies that encourage the development of affordable housing options to serve a wide range of income levels and foster inclusivity within the community.
  - Offer incentives, such as tax breaks or density bonuses, to developers who include affordable units in their projects, ensuring a balanced housing market.

- **Address regional needs:**

- Leverage Granby's proximity to major employment hubs, such as Bradley International Airport and Hartford, by marketing the town as a commuter-friendly community with quality housing options.
- Emphasize Granby's strong school system, scenic landscapes, and small-town charm to attract families and professionals seeking a desirable living environment close to key job centers.

## 4.4 Infrastructure Development

Granby Center's infrastructure requires strategic enhancements to support future growth and ensure sustainable development. The following actions are recommended:

- **Sewer system capacity:**

- Address capacity constraints identified in the Granby Wastewater Flow Study, particularly the bottleneck in the 10-inch sewer main near Salmon Brook Street. Upgrades to this critical section are essential to accommodate increased demand from residential and commercial developments.
- Reduce inflow and infiltration (I&I) into the wastewater system by repairing defects in pipes and manholes, as well as addressing improper stormwater connections. These improvements will maximize the efficiency of existing sewer capacity and reduce unnecessary strain on the system.

- **Natural gas and water supply:**

- Collaborate with Connecticut Natural Gas (CNG) to expand the natural gas network, enabling new developments to access reliable energy sources and reducing reliance on alternatives like propane.
- Improve public water availability in key areas of Granby, particularly in the town center and near Route 10. Expanding water infrastructure will support higher-density residential and commercial projects, ensuring adequate resources for future growth.

## 4.5 Community Impact

Granby Center's growth must be managed carefully to ensure that infrastructure and community services continue to support residents effectively. The following actions are recommended to address key community impacts:

- **Minimize traffic and parking challenges:**

- Implement shared parking systems to maximize the utilization of existing lots, ensuring that parking availability meets the increased demand generated by new developments. These systems can improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary congestion in high-traffic areas.
- Incorporate traffic calming measures, such as signage, pedestrian crosswalks, and speed-reduction strategies, to maintain safe and efficient traffic flow in and around

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Granby Center. These measures will help preserve the town's walkable and family-friendly character.

- **Support education systems:**
  - Monitor the impact of moderate housing growth on local school enrollment to ensure that any increases in student populations remain manageable within existing school capacities. Regular assessments can help the town proactively address potential challenges and maintain the quality of education for residents.





# Appendix C

## Historic District Information

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Granby Center Advisory Committee  
**Cc:** Abigail St. Peter Kenyon, AICP  
**Date:** May 12, 2025  
**From:** BFJ Planning  
**Subject:** Tools to Protect Historic Resources and Encourage Private Investment in Properties in Granby Center Historic District

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## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This memo presents a range of potential strategies to both protect and promote private investment in existing historic resources in the Granby Center Historic District (GCHD). Strategies are presented agnostically with no hierarchy of preference and should be viewed as options for further discussion and evaluation by the Town and interested parties. While all strategies are feasible and are presented as viable options to address the Town's needs, none represents a "silver bullet" remedy. Therefore, they could be deployed individually or in combination.

The Granby Center Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1985 and with portions overlaying three (3) currently mapped zoning districts (see Figure 1). The northern portion of the historic district overlays the CC (Center Commons) zoning district; the southern portion overlays the CE (Center Edge) zoning district. Two parcels (the "printshop" at 256 Salmon Brook Street and 2 Park Place) within the historic district are mapped in the COCE (Commercial Center) zoning district. New zoning for Granby Center is being proposed as part of Granby Center Master Plan process, and under this zoning, the historic district would overlay two (2) future zoning districts (see Figure 2). The northern portion of the historic district would overlay a newly formed Granby Center district. The southern portion of the historic district would remain as an overlay to the CE (Center Edge) zoning district. Placement of the historic district matters because zoning strategies discussed below would need to be applied across two zoning districts to cover the full historic district.

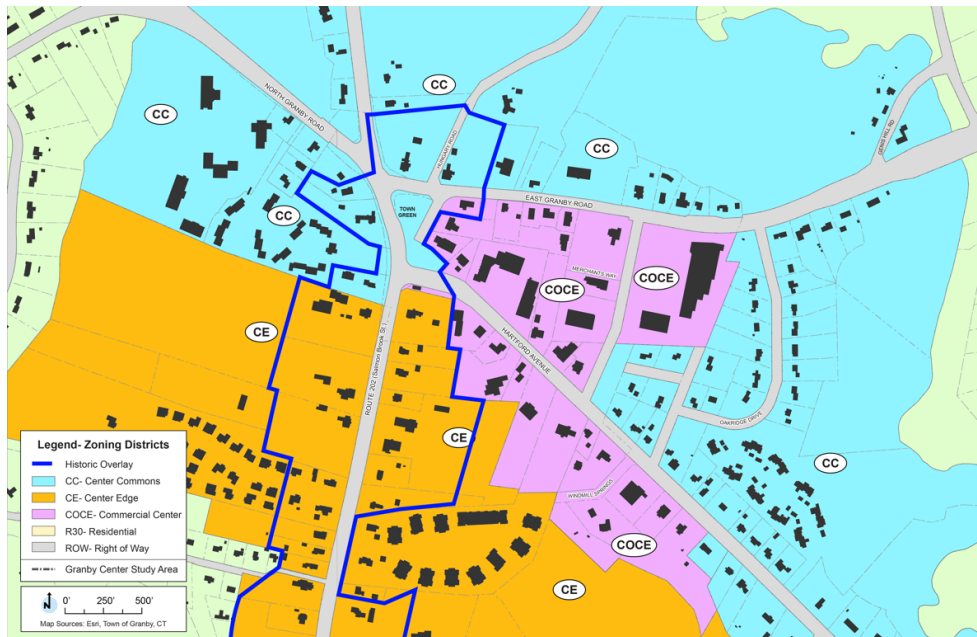
The need for regulatory revision in the historic district appears to be twofold. First, challenges expressed by members of the Salmon Brook Historical Society regarding upkeep, maintenance and preservation of the character of the district could be aided with a new regulatory approach. Second, property owners seeking to invest in the district know what the market dictates but have been stymied by an unpredictable review process. For example, a 2024 application to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a zone change for both 256 and 254 Salmon Brook Street from the CE to COCE (which allows broader commercial uses). The Commission approved the change for 256 to adaptively reuse the "print shop" as a restaurant/coffee shop; The Commission denied the change for 254 halting the adaptive reuse (and the opportunity to preserve and rehabilitate) the house into three apartments, a professional office on first floor and apartment on second floor of the detached garage. To the best of our knowledge, the applicant was eventually granted adaptive reuse of the



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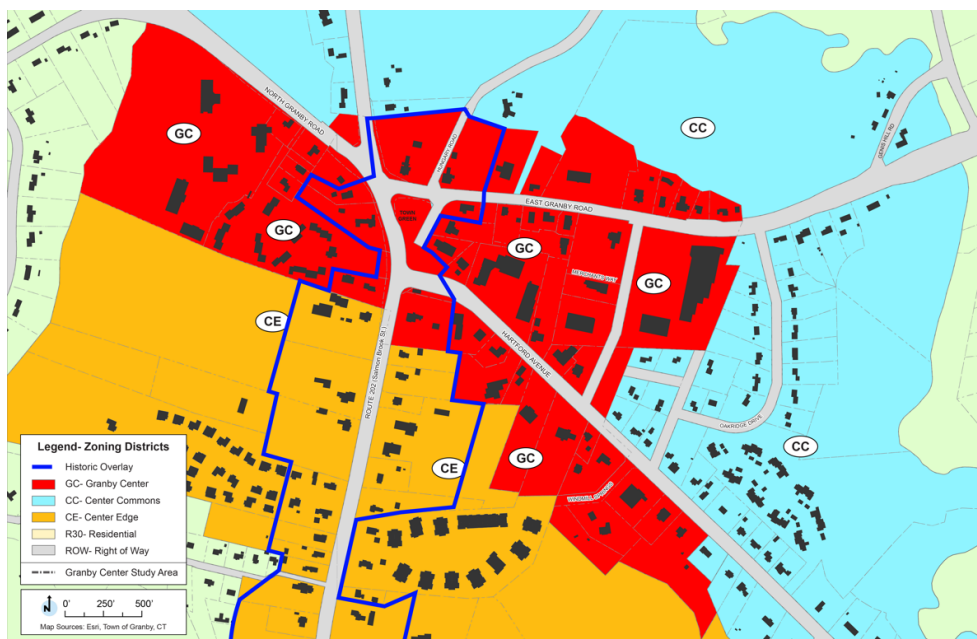
garage for professional offices only, but the main house remains as it was. Developing new regulations could both strengthen design oversight (e.g., require façade preservation) and facilitate viable adaptive reuse of existing properties, adding life to Granby Center and bringing more tax-generating properties on to the Town's tax roll. This approach has been taken in numerous places around the country to great success and seems preferable to allowing historic properties to deteriorate or be demolished.

**Figure 1: Granby Center Historic District with CURRENT Zoning**



Source: The Town of Granby and BFJ Planning

**Figure 2: Granby Center Historic District with PROPOSED Zoning**



Source: The Town of Granby and BFJ Planning

## DISCUSSION

The Granby Center Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Under this designation, property receives some protection under Connecticut Environmental Protection Act, or CEPA, and certain properties may be eligible for federal tax credits<sup>1</sup> and grants. To be eligible for federal tax credits, the structure must (1) be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, (2) meet the federal government's "substantial rehabilitation test" and work performed must meet "Standards for Rehabilitation, and (3) after rehabilitation, be depreciable use, such as a business, commercial or other income producing use.

Protection under CEPA permits anyone to take legal action to prevent "the unreasonable destruction of historic structures and landmarks of the state," defined as buildings on the National Register of Historic Places (see Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 22a-15 to 22a-19b). Most often, it is the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) that is involved in activating the CEPA, with the help of the State Attorney General.<sup>2</sup> This protection is minimal as SHPO issues findings of "adverse effect" in less than one percent of all projects it reviews. In these rare cases, SHPO requests mitigation measures to compensate for the historic loss.

Any property listed on NRHP is automatically listed on CT State Register of Historic Places and is eligible for the state's restoration grant and tax credit programs. Some property owners may not be aware that their properties may be eligible for state tax credits (in addition to the federal credits discussed above). This is something the Town could seek to promote through education outreach with the assistance of the Salmon Brook Historical Society. The State of Connecticut offers two historic preservation tax credit programs: (1) the Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit<sup>3</sup> and (2) Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit.<sup>4</sup> The first program is aimed at homeowners, and the second program is for commercial properties, including residential use of five units or more; mixed residential and nonresidential use; or nonresidential use.

Whether or not a property owner takes advantage of available national and state grants and tax credits, expanding the range of currently permitted principal uses in the portion of any district where the historic district is mapped may be warranted as this would spur greater private investment (and therefore preservation). Under present regulations for the CC district, all commercial uses are by special permit, which means applicants must go through an uncertain review process, and, while attached accessory apartments are permitted, multi-family residential uses are restricted to parcels of five acres or larger (and subject to special permit. Broadening the list of principal permitted uses would open a pathway for more properties to take advantage of available federal tax credits. For example, allowing an existing structure in the historic district to be converted to accommodate several apartments would make the property income-producing, and thus eligible for federal tax credits. Available tax credits would expand to those at the state level if the Town decided to seek state historic designation as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Eligible applicants can earn a 20% federal tax credit for qualifying historic rehabilitation projects (see [https://portal.ct.gov/decd/content/historic-preservation/02\\_review\\_funding\\_opportunities/tax-credits/federal-historic-preservation-tax-credit](https://portal.ct.gov/decd/content/historic-preservation/02_review_funding_opportunities/tax-credits/federal-historic-preservation-tax-credit) and <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/eligibility-requirements.htm>).

<sup>2</sup> <https://preservationct.org/cepa>

<sup>3</sup> Homeowners can apply for a 30% return of up to \$30,000 on the rehabilitation of their historic home listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places (see [https://portal.ct.gov/decd/content/historic-preservation/02\\_review\\_funding\\_opportunities/tax-credits/historic-homes-rehabilitation-tax-credit](https://portal.ct.gov/decd/content/historic-preservation/02_review_funding_opportunities/tax-credits/historic-homes-rehabilitation-tax-credit)).

<sup>4</sup> This program provides a 25% state tax credit on expenses used to rehabilitate a certified historic structure (see [https://portal.ct.gov/decd/content/historic-preservation/02\\_review\\_funding\\_opportunities/tax-credits/historic-rehabilitation-tax-credit](https://portal.ct.gov/decd/content/historic-preservation/02_review_funding_opportunities/tax-credits/historic-rehabilitation-tax-credit)).

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An obvious tension arises in this discussion between uses that should be allowed and those which shouldn't as they may have a detrimental impact on the character of the district. Questions about the right mix of uses are important and warrant frank discussion, but the current available uses in the historic district (i.e., those that do not require special permit and review) limit property owners' access available federal tax credits

If the goal is to preserve historic resources while promoting private investment, then the Town should consider how best to incentivize and enable property owners to do just that. Expanding available options for use of property is one option (other ideas are presented below). The key is finding an appropriate balance between preservation and allowing profitable (slightly higher and better) use of a structure and property in the Granby Center Historic District.

The alternative would be to maintain the status quo, which would leave short the desire to promote investment and rely solely on an imperative to preserve historic resources through the conscience and desire of those with means to do so. The danger is that this could ultimately lead to the loss of structures through deterioration or (aesthetically undesirable) redevelopment. While a property listed on the National Historic Register is afforded protection (as discussed above under CEPA), this protection mostly results in delaying the loss of a resource. It is a preventative strategy rather than one that proactively seeks to incentivize the preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of what is valued. Certainly, the threat of legal action can sometimes be as effective as the action itself, with CEPA serving as a bargaining chip, and this can provide time for local activists to organize, and for property owners and community members to work productively to develop alternatives. However, property owners are afforded strong rights, and, as Preservation Connecticut notes, "Preservationists must be willing to compromise, and they must be able to demonstrate that there are realistic uses for threatened historic buildings. Sometimes it simply isn't feasible to save the building."<sup>5</sup>

One option not discussed above is the creation of a local historic district. While this would bring with it greater aesthetic and regulatory oversight, it would not expand access to tax credits and would not in our professional opinion demonstratively promote private investment and therefore not ultimately further the goal of preservation in the Granby Center Historic District.

## A) DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE

A demolition delay ordinance presses pause on demolition of a historic structure and thus increases the odds that the structure will be saved by buying time for property owners and community members to work through alternatives to demolition. Typically, an ordinance outlines a two-step process to determine whether (a) a building or structure is architecturally significant and (b) a demolition delay should be imposed. **It is important to note that a demolition delay ordinance would apply and affect properties town-wide, not only those in the Granby Center Historic District.**

According to Preservation Connecticut, more than 90 Connecticut municipalities have adopted demolition delay ordinances, most of which require a 90-day waiting period before a property can be demolished.<sup>6</sup> That 90-day window has proven to be enough to save a structure.<sup>7</sup>

Preservation Connecticut has a [model Demolition Delay Ordinance](https://preservationct.org/demodelay), based on best practices, which could serve a foundation for Granby, modified to suit the Town's needs. BFJ presented the

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<sup>5</sup> <https://preservationct.org/cepa>

<sup>6</sup> See map at <https://preservationct.org/demodelay>

<sup>7</sup> <https://preservationct.org/demodelay>

Committee with an example from another Connecticut municipality at a previous meeting, which could also serve as a model for Granby.

### **B) ZONING/REGULATORY REMEDIES**

A range of zoning/regulatory strategies could be employed to further encourage preservation, restoration and maintenance of structures of historic significance in the Granby Center Historic District. These are presented as ideas for discussion purpose. They are arranged in no order of preference and could be deployed individually or in combination.

For all these, the code should set forth a clear list of standards and requirements for the property owner and project. All other standards in the Granby code would need to be met. And all ideas would carry a caveat of “provided the existing historic structure is preserved, restored and maintained per code.”

#### **IDEA 1: EXPAND ALLOWABLE USES FOR ADAPTIVE REUSE IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Expanding the list of principal permitted uses for adaptive reuse of a historic resource could help encourage preservation, restoration and maintenance of structures of historic significance in the Granby Center Historic District. Under this scenario, the Town could develop a list of allowable income-producing uses it feels strikes the right balance between the imperatives of a) preserving the historic structures, 2) maintaining the character of the historic district and 3) allowing property to be used more profitably. This topic was discussed above as a requirement for property owners to access state and federal tax credits and the example given was to allow multifamily uses in historic structures. But other uses such as offices and educational facilities (daycare, SAT/ACT tutoring services, medical offices, etc.) seem wholly compatible with successful adaptive reuse of historic structures. The US Secretary of the Interior clearly states that “many historic buildings can be adapted for a new use or updated for a continuing use without seriously impacting their historic character.”<sup>8</sup>

An alternative approach would be to allow the Planning and Zoning Commission greater discretion to grant Special Permit approval for the adaptive use of a structure in the historic district. This review process would be formally authorized in the code and the Planning and Zoning Commission would have the opportunity to evaluate the degree to which any proposal would enhance or detract from the character of the neighborhood and make recommendations to improve an applicant’s proposal if needed. We feel, however, this approach would be less effective than simply expanding the allowable uses for adaptive reuse as discussed above because of the comparative uncertainty and time associated with the review process versus having an approved list of acceptable uses. Should Town decide to take this alternative approach of providing the Planning and Zoning Commission broader discretion for adaptive reuse of historic structures, the Town of Wilton, CT employs the following text (as an example):

*Adaptive Use of Historic Buildings: It is the policy of the Commission to encourage the preservation, restoration and maintenance of existing residential and related outbuildings of historical and/or architectural significance on or near Danbury Road. Accordingly, the Commission may grant Special Permit approval for the adaptive use of said structures in [zoning district(s)] where the nature and conduct of such use shall: enhance and preserve the exterior and interior integrity of the structures; increase the functionality of obsolete or under-utilized structures, enhance and preserve the*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/secretary-standards-treatment-historic-properties.htm>



*aesthetic appearance of the remainder of the property; and, maintain the general character of the neighborhood, subject to the following standards and requirements [followed by a listing of thus].*

### **IDEA 2: DENSITY BONUS FOR PROJECTS THAT PRESERVE, REHABILITATE AND MAINTAIN STRUCTURES IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Allowing a density bonus could help encourage preservation, restoration and maintenance of structures of historic significance in the Granby Center Historic District. This expands upon the density incentive being suggested for the proposed GC zoning district in exchange for providing public benefits, such as easements for sidewalks, roads, and/or other contributions to the public realm. For historic preservation purposes, property owners who preserve, restore and maintain historically significant structures within the Granby Center Historic District could be made eligible for a density bonus, not to exceed 20 percent (for example), on said property. The additional density could be accommodated in new on-site construction or by an expansion of the historic structure (see below) and under strict historic preservation standards. Aesthetics could be controlled by the Planning and Zoning Commission through design review based on the US [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties](#), which provides guidelines for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. All other standards in the Granby code would need to be met.

### **IDEA 3: ALLOW NEW CONSTRUCTION ON PROPERTY AND/OR PHYSICAL EXPANSION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Allowing a property owner to build new construction on property could help encourage preservation, restoration and maintenance of structures of historic significance in the Granby Center Historic District. This would provide property owners with substantially greater financial capacity to complete rehabilitation of historic resources while creating an additional source of tax revenue for the Town. And, if done well, expansion of an existing structure and/or new construction on site could add visual enhancements to the district. The Town could set forth a limit on new construction (e.g., not to exceed 50 percent of the total gross floor area of an existing structure, not including density bonus if applicable). All expansion of existing structures would be under strict historic preservation standards, and aesthetics could be controlled by the Planning and Zoning Commission through design review based on the US [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties](#), which provides guidelines for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. All other standards in the Granby code would need to be met.

### **IDEA 4: ALLOW NEW CONSTRUCTION TO EXCEED CURRENT-DAY SETBACK REQUIREMENTS TO MEET THOSE OF EXISTING HISTORIC STRUCTURES**

Providing a property owner with greater flexibility regarding building disposition could help encourage preservation, restoration and maintenance of structures of historic significance in the Granby Center Historic District. This would allow new construction to meet the historical setbacks and general disposition of buildings rather than follow those specifically stated in the underlying zoning. By some respects, this allows new development to mimic that of the past to help maintain the character of the district and provide greater flexibility for the creation of a site plan that enhances the existing historical structure's street appearance. For example, new buildings would not be required to be set forward of an existing structure nor would new construction or be permitted to be placed in front of a historic structure. Aesthetics could be

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controlled by the Planning and Zoning Commission through design review based on the US [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties](#), which provides guidelines for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. All other standards in the Granby code would need to be met.

## IDEA 5: ALLOW RELOCATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES ON SAME PROPERTY IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

While relocating a building affects a building's integrity of setting, an important aspect of the historic character of a building and its environment, many codes allow this as a last resort when all other preservation options have been exhausted. Typically, relocation occurs to another site, but the Town could consider a provision to allow relocation of a building on the same site to ensure its preservation while accommodating new development. This may be a preferable option given the limitations of a demolition delay ordinance discussed above.

Even though preservationists generally eschew the practice, moving a building may in fact be an effective way to preserve a threatened structure. Relocation may enhance or even spare a valuable historic resource, thus extending its utilitarian, economic, aesthetic and historic benefits. And the practice of moving buildings is not new. Numerous examples of historic buildings that would have been lost but were saved can be found regionally and nationally.

### FOR ALL THE IDEAS ABOVE:

Ideas presented above would require additional discussion and amendments to the Town code. For example, an amendment would be required to authorize the Planning and Zoning Commission to conduct design review based on the US [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties](#). Additional code amendments would likely be necessary and desirable, including:

- Statement of Intent and Purpose (to establish legitimate public interest for adopting new regulatory measures)
- Eligibility Criteria (to establish architectural/historical value of subject building and geographical location)
- Application Requirements (to ensure applicants provide appropriate evidence to allow the P&Z to make a fair and objective determination on eligibility)
- Bulk and Density Requirements (to ensure appropriate development limits for historic properties) – e.g.,
  1. Allow development to meet FAR standards set forth in the underlying zoning district
  2. Set forth a limit for new construction (e.g., not to exceed 50 percent of the total gross floor area of an existing structure, not including density bonus if applicable)
  3. Etc.
- Eligible Use Criteria (to control an appropriate range of uses permitted for adaptive reuse) – e.g.,
  1. Allow same range of uses allowed in the underlying zoning or a more selective list of uses - provided none require a design that substantially departs from residential use appearance that is characteristic of the Granby Center Historic District
  2. Provide minimum standards for MF residential uses (e.g., minimum apartment size, requirement of separate means of ingress and egress, require substantiation of sewer capacity, etc.)
  3. Etc.

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- Architectural Standards based on the US [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties](#), which provides guidelines for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. Additional design consideration might include:
  1. Similar height, bulk, scale, proportion and style of architecture in existing historic structure
  2. Similar materials in color, scale, texture and style in existing historic structure and/or historic period
  3. Etc.
- Landscape Treatment Guidelines (to ensure that certain vegetative and physical features are preserved to the greatest extent practicable)



# Appendix D

## Potential Build-Out Analysis



### Legend

- Soft Site
- 1.48
- Proposed Granby Center Zone
- Property Line

0.0 0.1 0.2 Miles

Map Sources: Esri, Town of Granby, CT

Potential Residential Build-Out Analysis for Granby Center Soft Sites

Address	Total Lot Size (Acres)	Total Lot Size (SF)	Allowable Lot Coverage (%)	Allowable Lot Coverage (SF)	Total Gross Floor Area (SF) (3 Stories)	Allowable Units	Units with Absorption Rate (15%)	Units with Absorption Rate (25%)
254 Salmon Brook St	1.48	64,469	40%	25,788	77,363	22.20	3.33	5.55
6.8 Morgan St; 265, 261 Salmon Brook St; 3, 7 N Granby Rd (Brignole)	3.31	144,184	40%	57,673	173,020	39.72	5.96	9.93
8 E Granby Rd	1.60	69,696	40%	27,878	83,635	19.20	2.88	4.80
37 Hartford Ave	2.55	111,078	40%	44,431	133,294	30.60	4.59	7.65
25 E Granby Rd	1.89	82,328	40%	32,931	98,794	22.68	3.40	5.67
26 Hartford Ave	0.70	30,492	40%	12,197	36,590	10.50	1.58	2.63
13 E Granby Rd	0.29	12,632	40%	5,053	15,159	4.00	0.60	1.00
11 E Granby Rd	0.18	7,841	40%	3,136	9,409	2.00	0.30	0.50
301 Salmon Brook St	0.58	25,265	40%	10,106	30,318	8.70	1.31	2.18
298 Salmon Brook St	0.83	36,155	40%	14,462	43,386	12.45	1.87	3.11
298 Salmon Brook St	2.87	125,017	40%	50,007	150,021	34.44	5.17	8.61
281 Salmon Brook St	0.57	24,829	40%	9,932	29,795	8.55	1.28	2.14
275 Salmon Brook St	0.42	18,295	40%	7,318	21,954	4.00	0.60	1.00
274 Salmon Brook St	0.69	30,056	40%	12,023	36,068	10.35	1.55	2.59
10 Hungary Rd	3.83	166,835	40%	66,734	200,202	45.96	6.89	11.49
34 East Granby Rd	0.41	17,860	40%	7,144	21,432	4.00	0.60	1.00
32 East Granby Rd	0.24	10,454	40%	4,182	12,545	2.00	0.30	0.50
17 Hartford Ave	0.39	16,988	40%	6,795	20,386	4.00	0.60	1.00
TOTAL					285.35	42.80	71.34	

Assumptions:

For lots 0.25 acre and less, assume 2 units.

For lots 0.25-0.5 acres, assume 4 units.

For lots greater than 0.5 acre, assume the SP permit density (15 or 12 units/acre).

Potential Commerical Build-Out Analysis for Granby Center Soft Sites

Address	Total Lot Size (Acres)	Total Lot Size (SF)	Allowable Lot Coverage (%)	Allowable Lot Coverage (SF)	Total Gross Floor Area (SF) (3 Stories)	Ground Floor Area (SF) (1 Story)	Ground Floor Area (SF) for 10% or 50% Commercial Uses	Ground Floor Area (SF) for Commercial at 4,000 SF per Unit	4,000 SF per Unit Commerical with Absorption Rate (25%)
254 Salmon Brook St	1.48	64,469	40%	25,788	77,363	25,788	12,893.76	3.22	0.48
6.8 Morgan St; 265, 261 Salmon Brook St; 3, 7 N Granby Rd (Brignole)	3.31	144,184	40%	57,673	173,020	57,673	28,836.72	7.21	1.08
8 E Granby Rd	1.60	69,696	40%	27,878	83,635	27,878	13,939.20	3.48	0.52
37 Hartford Ave	2.55	111,078	40%	44,431	133,294	44,431	22,215.60	5.55	0.83
25 E Granby Rd	1.89	82,328	40%	32,931	98,794	32,931	16,465.68	4.12	0.62
26 Hartford Ave	0.70	30,492	40%	12,197	36,590	12,197	6,098.40	1.52	0.23
13 E Granby Rd	0.29	12,632	40%	5,053	15,159	5,053	2,526.48	0.63	0.09
11 E Granby Rd	0.18	7,841	40%	3,136	9,409	3,136	1,568.16	0.39	0.06
301 Salmon Brook St	0.58	25,265	40%	10,106	30,318	10,106	1,010.59	0.25	0.04
298 Salmon Brook St	0.83	36,155	40%	14,462	43,386	14,462	1,446.19	0.36	0.05
298 Salmon Brook St	2.87	125,017	40%	50,007	150,021	50,007	5,000.69	1.25	0.19
281 Salmon Brook St	0.57	24,829	40%	9,932	29,795	9,932	993.17	0.25	0.04
275 Salmon Brook St	0.42	18,295	40%	7,318	21,954	7,318	731.81	0.18	0.03
274 Salmon Brook St	0.69	30,056	40%	12,023	36,068	12,023	1,202.26	0.30	0.05
10 Hungary Rd	3.83	166,835	40%	66,734	200,202	66,734	6,673.39	1.67	0.25
34 East Granby Rd	0.41	17,860	40%	7,144	21,432	7,144	3,571.92	0.89	0.13
32 East Granby Rd	0.24	10,454	40%	4,182	12,545	4,182	2,090.88	0.52	0.08
17 Hartford Ave	0.39	16,988	40%	6,795	20,386	6,795	3,397.68	0.85	0.13
TOTAL					397,789.92	130,662.58	4.90	32.67	8.17

Assumptions:

10% commercial ground floor uses in newly extended GC Area.