



Town Plan

Adopted July 10, 2024

The cover illustration was painted by Lilla Buzzell, 1873-1954. Long known as Granby's town artist, Lilla studied art in New York in her youth, but returned to live in Granby for the rest of her days. In her later years, Lilla lived mainly off the land, in a "bread box" (the van body of a delivery truck). More information about Lilla and her art can be found in "Thru the Woods...Down the River...Over the Hill...Granby, VT," a town history, which is referenced throughout this plan.

Executive Summary:

This document states the considerations and priorities upon which the majority of the townspeople want decisions on future town developments to be made. The planning commission has made every attempt to make this plan consistent with public comments received since the town instituted a planning process in 1988. The planning commission recognizes the importance of public involvement in the town planning process, since most plan implementation measures – regulatory or nonregulatory – must be consistent with the goals and strategies laid out in the town plan, as per 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act.



Sunset in Granby, photo by Terri Williams

Community Profile

The last in electrical connection but a first in community connection.

Granby has a rich history of community collaboration and perseverance. From its Holiday in the Hills fundraising and awareness event in the early 1960's to bring the electrical grid to the Town, to the foundational Legacy Forestry Program of 1990 which conserved 1850 acres of land around Cow Mountain and Cow Mountain Pond, or the continuance of its successful one-room schoolhouse to provide education to its students until 2006, Granby has stayed committed to creating a community that works together for the betterment of the people and the land. Granby may be one of the smallest towns in the state, but it is large in community perseverance and connection.

Granby Demographics:

Granby is one of the least populated incorporated towns in Essex County, Vermont. As of the 2020 census, there were 81 people living in the Town, slightly fewer than the 88 counted in the 2010 Census. The population density is 2.1 inhabitants per square mile. The racial makeup is predominately white (98%) with the remaining 2% being composed of Black or African American, Native American, Asian and individuals of two or more races. For most of its early history, the population of the Town was concentrated on the ridge tops, especially along Porrell Road. In recent years, most of the Town's population has been concentrated in the valleys and along the hillsides.

Granby is also an aging town, even more so than the rest of the state. The median age is 62.6 years, significantly higher than the county average of 51.5 years and the median age for the state at 42.8 years (2021 ACS Estimates). Contributing to the high median age is the fact that there are less than ten children (ages 0-18) in town and there have been no in-migrations to the town since 2021. The average household size in Granby is two people, according to local information. This is on par with the county average of 2.2 people and the state average of 2.3 people. The Vermont Department of Health offers a roadmap to an "age friendly state", a program called [Age-Strong Vermont](#), that offers ideas for how to prepare a community to best serve older adults which in turn supports all people.

Granby is at least a 25-minute drive from the next closest village center with amenities. This requires residents of Granby to have a private vehicle to get them needed goods and services. There is no public transportation available.

Changing/Decaying Demographics:

The changing demographic makeup of the Town of Granby will affect municipal priorities in the future. Of most concern is the declining and aging population and the distance from basic goods and services. The Town will be faced with decisions related to access to public services, availability of high-quality affordable housing in which people can age in-place, improving energy efficiency especially when considering the distance from basic goods and services, and augmenting a sense of community that can serve as a draw to new residents.

“Granby, fragile and unique, set apart from the rushed pace of the surrounding metropolitan areas, with its forests and streams, its splendid special life of wilderness. Make sure it will always have a future; that those of you who care will keep Granby on the map.”

--- from Thru the woods... Down the river... Over the Hill...Granby, VT, published 1990

Purpose of this document:

Towns in Vermont can design a Town Plan to help guide the growth and change within the municipality. A Town Plan is a living document, which requires review and updates. This plan will require an update after 8 years (24 VSA 4387). Having a town plan can open up funding opportunities and other incentives.

Objectives and Policies:

The Granby Town Plan is a framework and guide for reaching community goals. It attempts to balance the wide range of competing interests and demands found in the town, to coordinate the pattern of development, the use of important natural resources and to address both current and long-term needs. The policies stated within this comprehensive plan were developed to preserve and protect the town’s assets while providing a future vision for town officials, businesses and citizens of Granby. Granby’s Town Plan can work in partnership with the Town Bylaws and Town Flood Hazard Regulations to support cohesive and appropriately scaled development within the municipality.

This plan contains goals, objectives, and policies for each of the required elements of a town plan (24 VSA 4382(a)). Another requirement of this plan is to be consistent with a series of statutory goals listed in 24 VSA 4302. For any goals that do not apply to the town or are incompatible with it, this plan documents the goal’s inapplicability or incompatibility with local desires. Overall, Granby strives to maintain the quality and quantity of the forested landscape, improve its historic, cultural and social resources, and transform Granby into a resilient, energy independent community.

Using this plan:

As Granby works toward its goals, this document should:

- Inform decision-making, influence the Town’s budget and capital expenditures, community development efforts, and natural resource protection initiatives,
- Inform adjustments to the Town’s zoning bylaws, ensuring that zoning regulations are working for the best interest of the Town and its residents,
- Be given full effect in all appropriate regulatory proceedings, such as Act 250. *(One of the criteria in an ACT 250 permit requires that the project conform to any applicable local or regional land use plan or capital plan),*
- Support further studies. Some aspects of the Plan are based on limited evaluations or on evaluations that should be updated,
- Be a tool for ongoing community discussion. The information can be valuable but should constantly be reviewed and amended (as needed).

Community Engagement:

The Granby Planning Commission was tasked with the preparation of the Town Plan. The Plan must be updated and readopted on an eight-year basis according to Vermont State Statutes. Work on this plan began in January 2024. The Planning Commission distributed a community visioning survey to gather insights into where the Town should be heading over the course of the next eight years. Topics of inquiry in the survey included housing, the natural environment, recreation, local economy, social and cultural opportunities, education, transportation, energy, and improving the use of historical resources within the community. The public was invited into the planning process throughout the creation of the Plan.

Vision Statement:

“Granby will be a place that...

- Continues to steward the land and keep the forested landscape active and healthy,
- Advance its energy resilience and independence, and
- Improves its historic, cultural, recreational and social resources to build a vibrant, connected community”.

All of these elements will “keep Granby on the map” and draw individuals and households that are seeking a pristine natural environment within a close-knit community that works together toward its goals.



Moose in Granby, photo by Terri Williams

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Planning for the Land:

1. Land Patterns & Natural Resources

The land and waters of Granby are a source of great pride and are carefully stewarded by its residents. Outlined in the 2016 plan, Granby recognizes the gift they have: high quality health of its air, water, and lands. Still applicable today, the 2016 plan wrote,

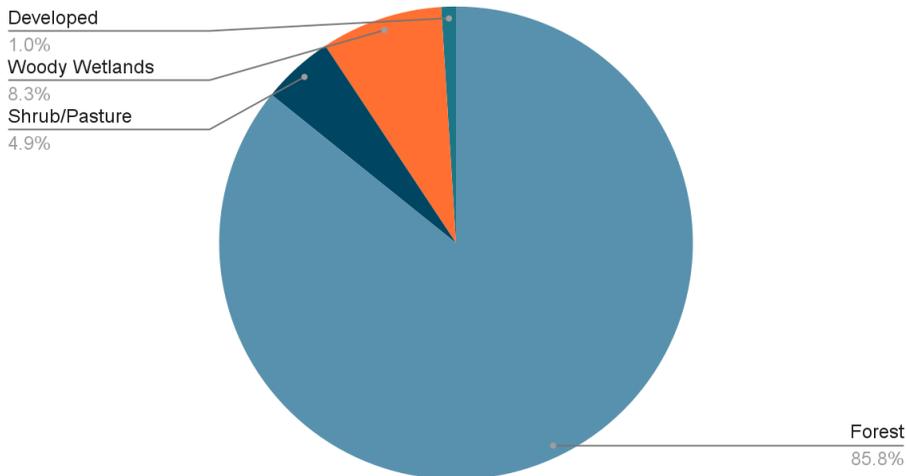
“The conditions of the environment, air and water provide the residents with very desirable living conditions. We have no major local sources of air pollution, including noxious odors and noise. As a result, visibility can be unlimited and breathing is easy and healthy. This adds to the enjoyment and appreciation of being and working in the outdoors and living in Granby. We wish to discourage local activities that are potentially harmful to the local atmosphere, plants, and animals; the global atmospheric environment and its related weather and climate features; and the bodies of the local inhabitants, especially their respiratory and auditory tracks.

Basic to the quality of life in Granby for people, animals, and plants is the abundance of pure water in Town. It occurs in many different formats (wetlands, streams, ponds, surface springs, and subsurface flows) and in many places throughout the Town. It is a resource that is vital to all the aspects of life in Town; human, plant, and animal. Its present quality and quantity and its historic flow paths and volumes must be preserved in the future. There are three areas designated in town as conservation land. They are Cow Mountain Pond, Little Cow Pond and Mud Pond. There is a conservation easement on Nurse Mountain” (Town Plan, 2016, p20).

It is clear from the review of Granby's past Town Plans that the community cherishes the forested landscape in which it is located. With over 85% of the land in the Town covered in Deciduous, Evergreen and Mixed forests, it's no surprise that the landscape is intricately woven into the town's values.

The composition of Granby's land is 85.7% forested, 4.8% shrubland and pastures, 1% developed, and 8.3% woody wetlands and open water. (ANR Natural Resources Atlas <https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5/>) From the data, Granby's development has been quite condensed (1%), being pocketed in the lower corner of the town's boundaries, leaving much of the municipality as forested and woody wetland landscapes.

Land Coverage



Forest and Habitat Blocks:

Granby is surrounded by and contributes to a robust natural ecosystem. With nearly 86% of the town covered in forests, Granby is home to large blocks of wildlife habitats. An additional 8% of the land is woody wetlands. The expanse of forests and woody wetland has been achieved through both regulatory and non-regulatory means; Zoning works to keep development

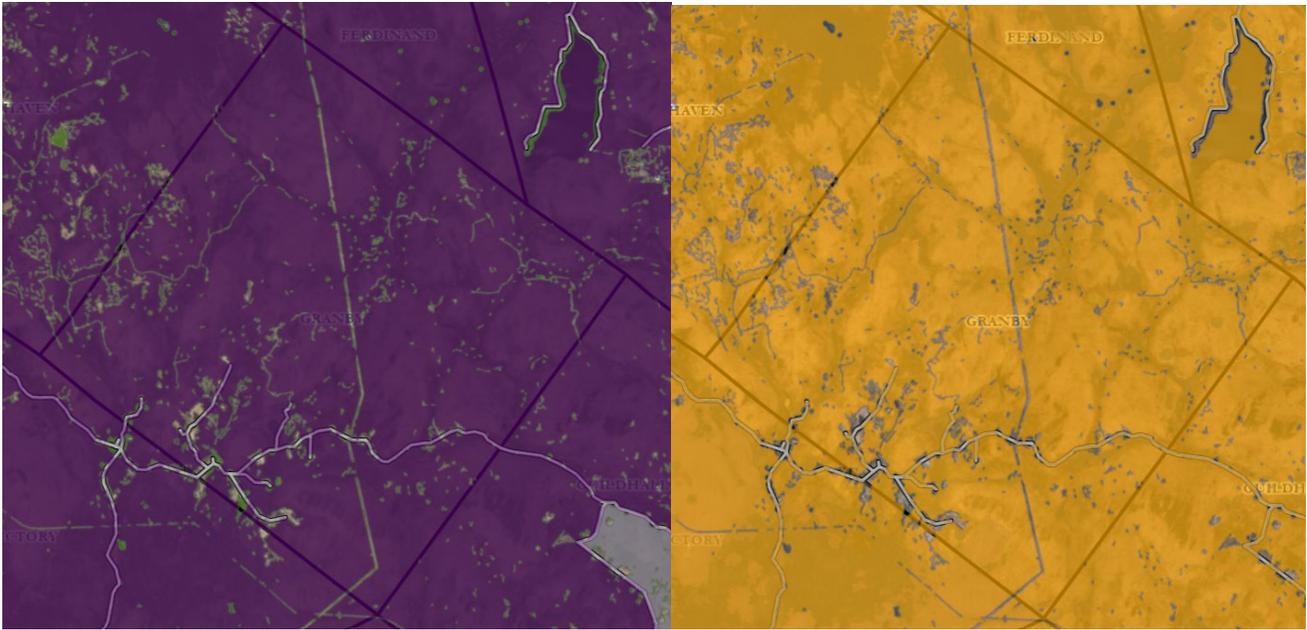
centralized around the main road through town and conservation easements protect the working landscape from being transformed into land for development. There are vernal pools, wetlands, and locations of threatened or endangered animal and plant habitats throughout the town.

Habitat blocks are areas of contiguous forest and other natural habitats that are unfragmented by roads, development, or agriculture. Vermont's habitat blocks are primarily forests, but also include wetlands, rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, cliffs, and rock outcrops. Forests included in habitat blocks may be young, early successional stands, actively managed forests, or mature forests with little or no recent logging activity. The defining factor is that there is little or no permanent habitat fragmentation from roads or other forms of development within a habitat block.

In 2018, Act 171 was passed by State legislation. Municipal plans must now comply with 4348 (a)(2)(F), which states the town and land use regulations must indicate those areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and plans for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. Granby significantly contributes to the state's largest concentration of priority interior forest blocks, which supports a diversity of wildlife, including wide-ranging species.

The Agency of Natural Resources' (ANR) "Biofinder" mapping tool provides critical insight into the ecological function of unfragmented forest blocks, which provide core habitat as well as vital connectivity to larger forest blocks beyond town boundaries. The following map is from a statewide representation of all habitat blocks larger than 20 acres, as derived from NOAA Coastal Change Analysis Program (CCAP 2006 Era Land Cover Data and ancillary data (Vermont roads and E911, etc.). The map on the left is largely covered in dark purple, indicating highest priority forest blocks. The map on the right is largely covered in orange, indicating highest priority

habitat blocks and wildlife corridors. Development has primarily hugged the existing roadways and the area of clustered development in Granby.



Forest Blocks Map (left) Habitat Blocks & Wildlife Corridors Map (right)
Vermont ANR

The forested landscape is important to the Town of Granby, environmentally, economically, and culturally. The Town recognizes the importance of providing a natural ecosystem that has a wealth of biodiversity, space for animal habitats and migration, and be a vital source of carbon sequestration in the adaptation of climate change. Economically, the forestry and outdoor recreation industries rely on a healthy forested ecosystem. Finally, it is a part of Granby's values and identity to continue to be a community that cherishes its forests.

After a century of forest regeneration, Vermont is now losing forest cover. While some of this loss comes from conversion of forests to agriculture and commercial uses, the main cause is incremental, low density residential development. Subdivision is contributing to parcelization as well. While large areas of the state were once made up of large parcels owned by a single family or company, properties are now often split and sold to many different buyers. Parcelization impacts forests, even when the land is not converted for development. Overall, economically and environmentally sustainable forest management is very difficult on parcels smaller than 50 acres. As climate migration to the Northeast Kingdom intensifies, so could the parcelization of our habitat blocks and connectivity corridors. The Town will need to give special consideration to the effects of development on these critical natural resources.

Conserved Land:

The Town of Granby, Vermont is bordered by Guildhall in the southeast, East Haven in the northwest, Ferdinand and Maidstone to the northeast, and Victory to the southwest. Along the northern border of Granby there are 22,000 acres in the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area. To the south there are 16,000 acres of the Victory State Forest that are within the Town's boundaries.

The town itself has the nation’s first Forest Legacy tract, Cow Mountain Pond. The Forest Legacy program is a premier land protection program that started in 1993 here in Granby. The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is a conservation program administered by the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with State agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or land purchases. Protection of private forests through FLP maintains a multitude of public benefits including:

- Opportunities to hunt, fish, and hike,
- Clean and abundant drinking water,
- Habitat for fish and wildlife, and
- Timber, fuel wood, and other forest products.

The land continues to be conserved as a forest block and is logged periodically for timber to offset municipal expenses to maintain public trails and access. Cow Mountain Pond lands contain a main public trail and spur trails to access Cow Mountain, Cow Mountain Pond, and Little Cow Pond.

Current Use Enrollment:

The Town of Granby has the most acres of enrolled forested lands in the state of Vermont, followed by Eden with 20,696 acres of enrolled forested lands. This is another tool that helps keep the defining features of forests and wooded wetlands in the Town of Granby.

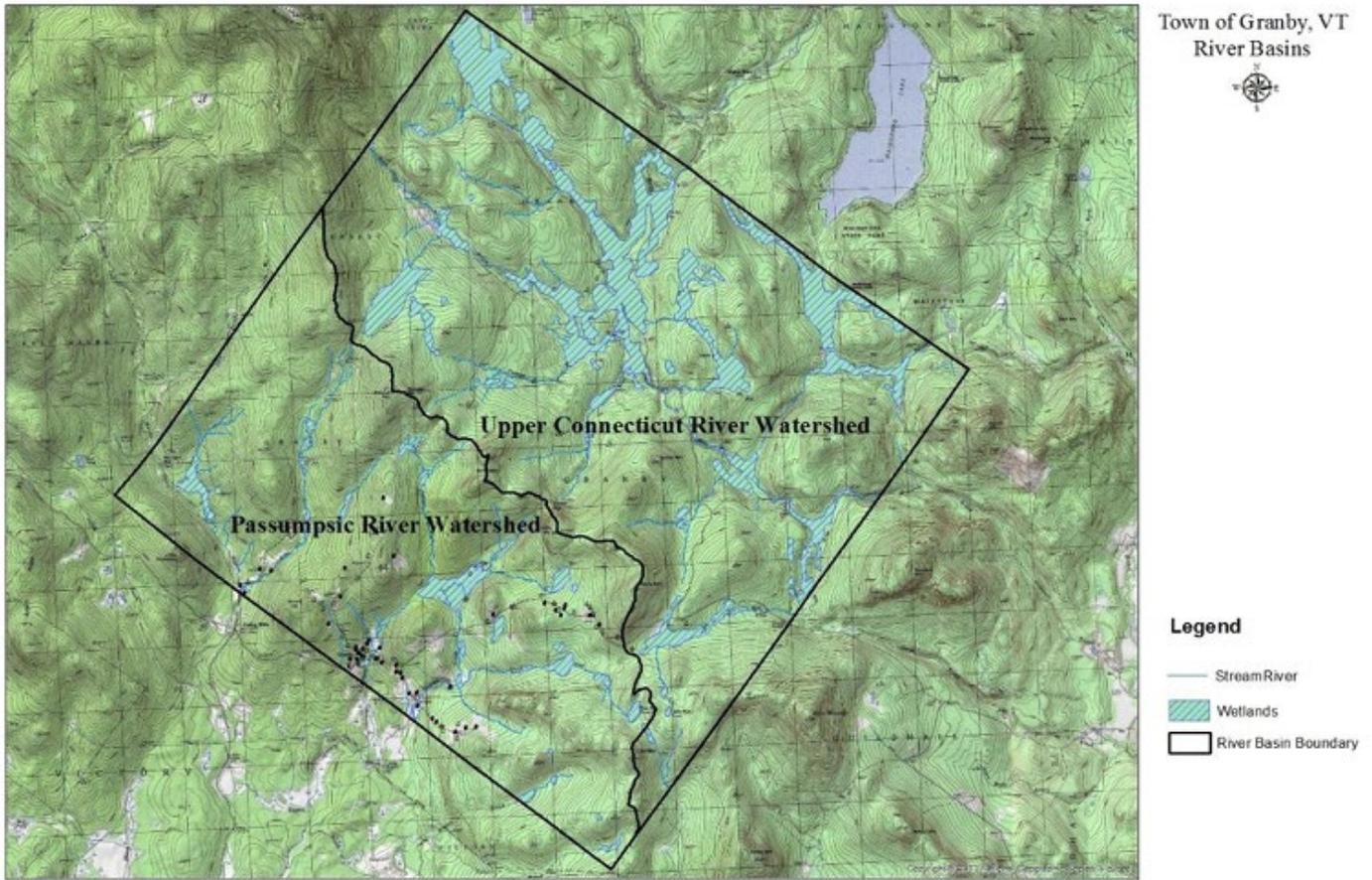
Figure 1.1: Current Use Enrollment

Total Number of Parcels	Enrolled Homestead Acres	Enrolled Non Residential Acres	Enrolled Forest	Enrolled Agricultural
29	321	20790	21,023	88

Source: Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review, FY2023 Annual Report, 2022 Data

Waters and Wetlands:

Geographically Granby is bi-sected from its southern point to its northwest boundary by a range of 2000’ mountains. South of this mountain range is the Passumpsic River Basin and north of the range is the Upper Connecticut River Basin. In the Upper Connecticut River Basin waters flow north northeast draining into Granby Bog and surrounding wetlands. In the Passumpsic River Basin waters flow south southeast.



Tactical Basin 16 consists of the Upper Connecticut River and direct drainages to it from the Canadian border down to the Passumpsic River. It includes the Nulhegan River, Willard Stream, and Paul Stream watersheds among others. Basin 16 is a largely forested watershed that includes extensive wetland complexes in the Nulhegan River watershed (to the north of Lunenburg). These basin characteristics have led to many unique habitats in the basin and good water quality which have been identified as water quality protection opportunities. (<https://dec.vermont.gov/waterinvestment/watershedplanning/tactical-basin-planning/basin16>)

Tactical Basin 15, also known as the Passumpsic River Basin, drains 507 square miles, a major portion of Caledonia County and minor portions of Essex, Orleans and Washington counties. The Upper Moose River above Gallup Mills runs partially in Granby. The Upper Moose River is one of the largest rivers that is a potential B(1)water, meaning it is some of the cleanest and best for aquatic biota in the state. This watershed is largely forested and has a sentinel water quality monitoring site to ensure quality is maintained. The water quality remediation priorities in this watershed are mostly located in Lyndonville and St. Johnsbury and are focused on reducing agricultural runoff or from oil and other metals found in the waters. [Passumpsic River Tactical Basin Planning \(arcgis.com\)](#)

There are many animal and plant species in the waterways and lakes that comprise these two watershed systems.

Ponds:

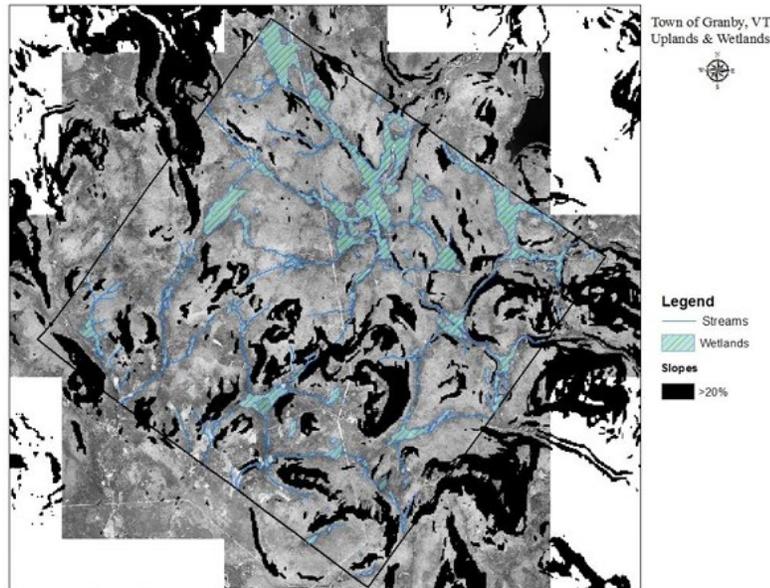
There are three ponds in Granby, Cow Mountain Pond, Little Cow Pond and Mud Pond. There is no developed access at Cow Mountain Pond and Little Cow Pond. Mud Pond has a fishing access point. Cow Mountain and Mud Pond had lay person monitoring programs to support water quality. (Agency of Natural Resources, Water Quality Division)

Wetlands:

There are numerous areas where Class II wetlands are present in Granby, most concentrated on the Connecticut Watershed side of town. There are also many potential vernal pools throughout Granby. Within many of the identified wetlands, is the presence of intermediate fens, uncommon or threatened and endangered species. For precise locations and information please visit: <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/wetlands/maps> Wetlands are biologically rich habitats and are extremely important to the wellbeing of the entire ecosystem.

Uplands:

Proper management of upland areas also plays an important role in flood hazard management. Limiting clearing of upland slopes helps to attenuate flood flows and reduce stormwater runoff. Granby sets a very high standard for the stewardship of upland slopes and forested lands. The development of a Forest Stewardship plan accompanied by the appointment of a Conservation Committee allows the Town of Granby to ensure best management practices of its forestry resources. Of the 24,842 acres in the Town of Granby roughly 90% is forested.



River Corridors:

Granby's zoning prohibits construction of dwellings within 75 feet of any surface waters (ponds, streams, and rivers) and requires maintenance of a natural vegetation buffer of at least 50 feet within that area. A shoreland buffer provision permits only light thinning and selection harvesting so that breaks in the canopy are minimal, and a continuous cover is maintained. Effective July 1, 2014, the Vermont Legislature passed the Shoreland Protection Act, which regulates shoreland development within 250 feet of a lake's mean water level for all lakes

greater than 10 acres in size. Any development, redevelopment, or clearing within 250 feet of the mean water level of Mud Pond will require a state permit, and the state regulations will supersede local standards.

Developed Land:

Most of the developed land is concentrated near the intersection of Granby Road and Porrell Road, where the Town Clerk's office, former Post Office, Granby -Victory Congregational Church, Town Garage, and former Granby Schoolhouse are located. There are no commercial entities within the Town of Granby that have a brick and mortar establishment.



Granby Town Office, former post office, and Granby -Victory Congregational Church

Photo by Terri Williams

While Granby's developed land area is incredibly small, this part of the municipality could be well suited for Village Center Designation. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is currently adapting the Village Center Designation Program to better accommodate the many scales of villages throughout the state and make the designation process simpler. Stay tuned by visiting: [Home | Designation Vermont \(vtdesignation2050.org\)](http://Home | Designation Vermont (vtdesignation2050.org))

The new Designation program could support the goals of creating a vibrant village center, while keeping the essential character of Granby. A "village center" can simply be a few buildings that are nestled close together where the community comes together for events, activities, and daily necessities. Designation could also support improvement to historic structures and ADA upgrades, and could support the development of housing. Designation provides the municipality with priority consideration for various Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), VTrans and Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) grants and incentives including, ACCD's Municipal Planning Grants, State Historic Preservation grants, Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) grants, Northern Border Regional Commission Grants, ANR Water and Wastewater subsidies and loans, and various other state grants and resources (Vermont ACCD Village Center Designation benefits).

Of most relevance to Granby, Designation could support priority consideration for State Historic Preservation Grants, especially if the municipality continues to own and improve the former Granby Schoolhouse building. The designation could also support the Town Clerk's office building and the Granby -Victory Congregational Church.

Zoning:

Granby has enforced a zoning bylaw since 1993. There are three districts:

- Village: Contains much of traditional residential core and provides for neighborhood-type commercial facilities at a higher density (1 acre) to create a clustered, compact village center. This district runs along town highways from the border with Victory to SchoolHouse Brook and Roger's Ranger grave site.
- Rural Residential: Provides for rural residential development and neighborhood-type commercial facilities at a moderate density (1.5 acres), while allowing for the continuance of agriculture and forestry activities. This district incorporates all areas along town roads that don't fall into the Village District.
- Forest District: This district provides for traditional long term forest management, while allowing for the development of seasonal dwellings. There is a minimum of 5 acres. Single family dwellings are conditionally approved.

These zoning districts continue to meet the needs of Granby's current land use.

Earth extraction:

The Town would rely on Act 250 review of such activities and direct the Natural Resources board to consider such commercial-scale activity in a way that minimizes adverse impacts to adjoining residential uses. Gravel should be stored and sited in a manner that does not impair wetlands and water resources. Truck traffic should not degrade our roads and daily truck traffic should not exceed the town's ability to service such roads. Transport of earth materials should be done in a manner that minimizes dust.

GOAL: Maintain the forested landscape and healthy waterways while supporting appropriately scaled development in the established village cluster of Granby.

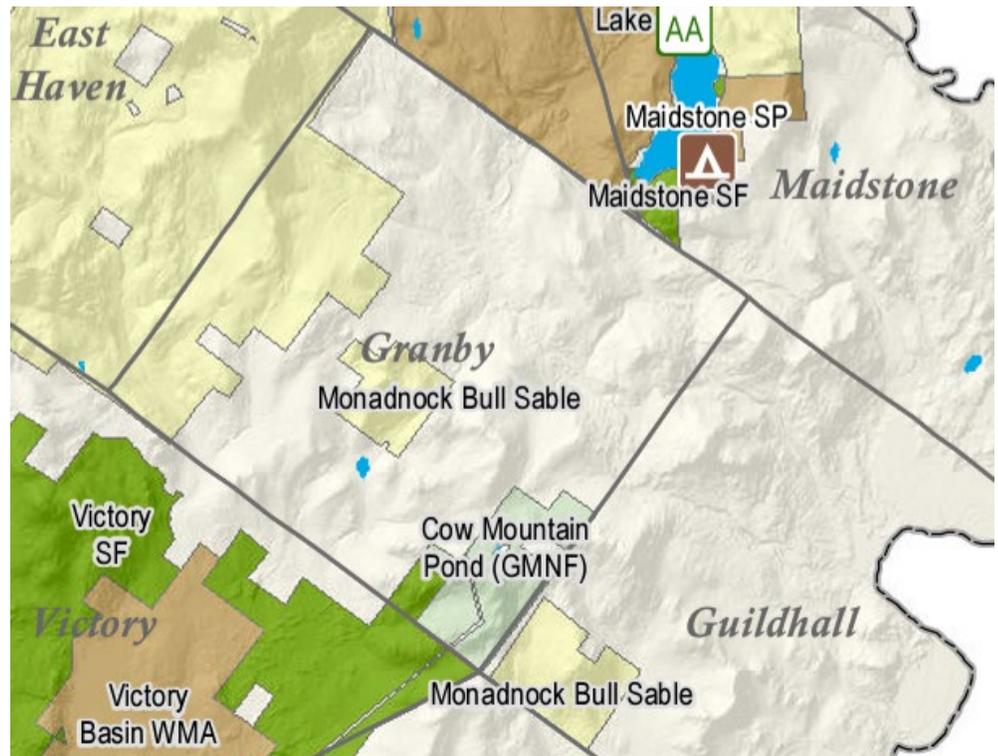
- Continually update the zoning bylaws to meet State Statute requirements and to meet the needs of the Town.
- Encourage the conservation of land and the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas.
- Encourage the continued use of conservation easements and the Current Use Program to help maintain the forested landscape.
- Explore the benefits of Village Center Designation to see if Granby's village cluster is eligible and could benefit from the program. If a benefit is identified, seek Designation to support the buildings and spaces in the village.

2. Recreation

Granby is rich in natural resources, which provides excellent outdoor recreation opportunities, including hiking, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, bird watching, wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing.

Cow Mountain is historically significant as the first property to be conserved through the federal Forest Legacy Program (FLP). The program was spearheaded by Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy in the early 1990's. The FLP works with other federal and state agencies and conservation organizations to "identify and help conserve environmentally important, privately -owned forests from being converted to non-forest uses." Owned by the US Forest Service as the first property conserved through the federal Forest Legacy Program and managed by the Town of Granby as a community forest, the Cow Mountain Pond Forest offers quiet recreation in a wild and remote setting with a network of trails and wooded roads. A foot trail is available for hiking and snowshoeing, traversing 4.4 miles to an elevation of 2,348' on Cow Mountain. To access the trail, there is a slight widening of the roadway and hikers park to the side of the road. In 2023, new signage and a kiosk were installed to provide clear identification of the parking area and guide hikers to the trailhead.

Victory State Forest is primarily located in the Town of Victory to the west of Granby with one small protrusion of the State Forest dipping into Granby. Victory State Forest is managed by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation. The state forest is open to dispersed recreation such as hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, snowmobiling, hiking, snowshoeing, and horseback riding. Portions of the forest are open for primitive camping. VAST trails run through the property and the Vermont



Horse Council assists in the management of a multi-use trail open to horseback riding. Gravel roads within the forest are open for horseback riding as well as bicycling (<https://fpr.vermont.gov/victory-state-forest>).

The map above shows the boundaries of conserved, or lands held for forestry. Victory State Forest is located within the boundaries of the Town of Granby. Cow Mountain Pond is part of the Green Mountain National Forest. The light yellow indicates Agency of Natural Resource non-fee interest lands. These are lands that are privately owned but conserved for forestry. To the north of Granby, the Town of Ferdinand, West Mountain

Wildlife Management Area appears in brown.

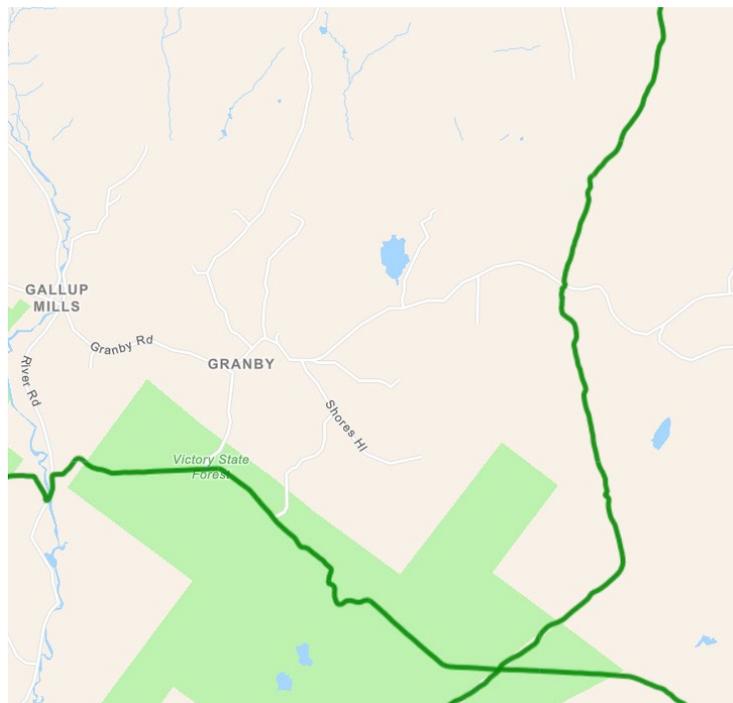
https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/State_Lands_Administration/Land_Records/Library/ANR%20Lands.pdf

There are three ponds in Granby: Cow Mountain Pond, Mud Pond, and Little Cow Pond. Passumpsic Valley Land Trust holds a parcel of land along Mud Pond. The land was acquired in 2000 and comprises 55 acres. The parcel is a remote and pristine area, has statewide significance, and is a harrier nesting area.

<https://pvlt.org/properties/mud-pond-property/>

NEK Gravel Rides encourages and helps plan people's riding of Vermont's best dirt roads. The website, (<https://www.nekgravel.org/routes>), shows all the dirt roads within an area for people to ride on. As outdoor recreation continues to grow, supporting an organization like NEK Gravel to continue marketing and advertising dirt roads and bike routes, could support the wellbeing of Granby, t oo.

VAST Snowmobiling is a popular winter activity. Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) manages the statewide network of trails for snowmobiling. Within Granby, there is one main trail line which is managed and maintained by the Lunenburg Polar Bears Snowmobile Club. The Polar Bears Snowmobile Club helps coordinate with various stakeholders, obtain permission from landowners, and maintain and groom the trail network. The club also maintains a winter parking area for camp owners in the Mt Tug and Old Pond Hill Road area. The map shows where the corridor trail is in Granby and how it connects to the rest of the network, primarily in the Victory State Forest to the south.



VAST Snowmobile Trail Map

Snowmobiling (VAST) Green=Corridor Trails

<https://vtvast.org/trails.html>

GOAL: Maintain collaborative partnerships with the recreation agencies and organizations that support well balanced outdoor recreation in and around the Town.

- Maintain and expand the quality of the Cow Mountain Pond area (trails, boat launch, boating equipment) as a place of recreational, scenic, and natural resources.
- Stay informed of recreational partners plans for development and land stewardship (VAST, NEK Gravel Rides, Kingdom Trails, and Passumpsic Valley Land Trust)

3. Flood Resilience and Hazard Mitigation

As of July 1, 2014, all duly adopted municipal plans must contain a flood resilience plan that identifies flood and fluvial erosion hazard areas and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and property; and recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas.

There are many small brooks and streams in the Town of Granby. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources advises that there be a 50' river corridor buffer along each brook to provide the brook with enough space to change its course overtime. Maps of the river corridors along each brook can be found here:

<https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5/> <http://anrmaps.vermont.gov> As a general rule, and as a way to protect personal property, it is recommended that future development not be situated within the 50' buffer. This protects any persons and development from an encroaching brook channel as it shifts over time and protects water quality.

There are minimal flood hazard areas in the town of Granby (See Appendix III for the map). The two locations identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency are along the Moose River and in the Granby Bog area. In 2012, the Town of Granby adopted flood hazard regulations and joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Enrollment in the NFIP enables residents to purchase flood insurance (whether or not they are located in the mapped flood hazard areas), and it enables the town to access numerous benefits, which are identified in the Flood Resilience element of this plan.

There are no Special Flood Hazards Areas indicated on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map for the Town from 1974. New FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps should be in place within the next few years. Updated maps should provide more accurate and up-to-date information about flood hazard areas.

In 2018, the Town of Granby began to develop the Town of Granby's Local All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. In realization that eligibility to receive federal hazard mitigation grants and optimize state -level reimburse or "match" dollars during a federally declared disaster is dependent on a federally approved plan, the town remains committed to sustaining its mitigation efforts and by developing this plan, will have a guide for action that will foster enhanced emphasis on mitigation in the years to come. The town realizes the importance of mitigation inherent to its own resilience as well as means to establish strong partnerships with regional support agencies and associations, state government and FEMA. According to the LHMP, the most significant hazards for Granby are severe winter/Ice storm, high winds, extreme cold, and flooding. (LHMP, 2019). The 2019 LHMP outlines actions the municipality can take to reduce risk from the identified hazards.

It is important to note that the LHMP was written before COVID -19. Given the impacts that an infectious disease has on the world, updates to the LHMP should account for this hazard and provide the municipality with strategies to reduce the risk from this hazard as well as outline tools and resources to keep the community connected and functioning during a major disruption such as COVID -19.

Any hazard could have impacts on energy availability, transportation networks, and public health and safety. Efforts to mitigate negative impacts should be taken, both by individuals within the town and by the Town itself.

GOAL: Protect people and property from flooding and other natural hazards.

- Maintain the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and update as needed.
- Plan for hazard disruptions and prepare the required materials to continue essential services to the community (ie. investing in technology to provide remote meeting options during an infectious disease event).
- Evaluate existing flood hazard regulations and amend if necessary to remain enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program as new FEMA maps are released.

Community Infrastructure:

4. Utilities, Facilities, and Services

Community facilities and services are provided by the municipality for the health, benefit, safety and enjoyment of the general public. They include town owned buildings, the road networks, and general town administrative services.

Local Government - Town Administrative Offices are located at 9005 Granby Road. The municipality has one staff person who takes on the roles of Town Clerk, treasurer, and tax collector on staff. The municipality has a three member Selectboard, three listers, three auditors, a conservation commission, a planning commission, a zoning administrator and a zoning board of authority. There are also several appointed positions that support the town's governance. The Town Office is accessible for people with disabilities. Most town meetings are held in -person.

The Selectboard oversees the contracted maintenance and care of the 10.76 miles of roads in the municipality. The Town takes care of the class 2 and class 3 roadways. All class 4 roads have transitioned to Legal Trails and are unmaintained by the municipal ity. The Town Garage is located behind the Town Clerk's office on Granby Road.

The post office in Granby closed its doors in June of 2020. The building is in the process of being purchased by the municipality. The municipality is planning to utilize the Post Office building for additional storage for Town documents.

Public Safety - Emergency services are coordinated by the Selectboard. Fire protection is provided by the East Burke Volunteer Fire Department. In 2007, a dry hydrant was installed just over the town line in Victory.

There are two first responder services. CalEx Ambulance responds to calls within the village and east of the village. Lyndon Rescue responds to calls in the vicinity of Lund Lane and Moccasin Mills Road. The average response time for first responders is about 30 minutes.

Law enforcement has been adequately provided by the Town constable. Any required police presence is provided by the Essex County Sheriff's Department or the State Police.

Water and Wastewater - Granby is a rural community. Water supply and sewage disposal is primarily the responsibility of private landowners throughout much of the Town. Potable water is obtained using drilled or dug wells or springs. Sewage disposal is accomplished through on-site septic systems with drainage fields including mound and pressure systems. In 2007, the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources assumed the responsibility of permitting and overseeing all septic systems. Permits may be require d for the construction, modification, repair or replacement of a wastewater system or potable water supply system.

Solid Waste - Granby's solid waste is managed by Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District, based out of Lyndonville, VT. Until the summer of 2015, free refuse disposal was provided at no charge to the residents of Granby as long as they recycled. In accordance with Act 148 which was passed in 2012 and amended in 2020, residents are mandated to recycle and compost food scraps in the state of Vermont. Each residential household receives 52 free tags a year, and each nonresidential household receives 20 a year. If those run out before the end of the year, additional tags can be purchased from the Town Clerk.

Education & Child Care - *"Education has never been taken lightly here. The character and qualities of its teachers down through the years has been first priority to our school board. The aim of the parents was to educate the children to read with ease and propriety, to write with plain and legible hand, and to have them acquainted with the rules of arithmetic as far as shall be necessary to carry on the most common and necessary occupation of life and happiness."*

From Thru the woods...Down the river...Over the hill...Granby, Vermont

Granby has always placed a priority on the education of its youth. Since 2006, when the Granby Schoolhouse closed its doors, Granby students now have school choice for all grades.

The nearest opportunities for postsecondary learning can be found at Vermont State University in Lyndon, VT and Community College of Vermont in Newport, VT. Online opportunities for students are highly available as long as there is a good internet connection. The nearest facilities of lifelong learning are the Cobleigh Library in Lyndonville and through online resources.

There are no known childcare providers within the Town. Childcare, as all education, is provided in neighboring communities of higher population and service concentration.

Utilities - Electricity is provided by Green Mountain Power (GMP), the largest electric utility in the State. Fuel providers are centered in neighboring communities such as Lyndon, St. Johnsbury, and Lancaster, NH. The Internet is supplied by Consolidated Communication and satellite internet providers such as HughesNet and Viasat. Cell phone coverage is provided by Verizon Wireless, AT&T, T-Mobile and other providers. NEK Broadband is a Communications Union District for the entire Northeast Kingdom. The work of NEK Broadband is to build the public infrastructure needed to "help ensure that every address that has existing electric utility service will have access to affordable, reliable, and high-speed broadband internet" (www.nekbroadband.org). This project is expected to be complete in 2024.

Health and Social Services - All healthcare and social service provisions are supplied outside of the Town. The nearest healthcare facility is Northern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH) Corner Medical in Lyndon, VT. Northern Express Care provides urgent care services with the closest location in St. Johnsbury. Northern Vermont Regional Hospital is also in St. Johnsbury and is the closest hospital providing a wide range of healthcare services.

GOAL: Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet current and future community needs.

- Continue to provide basic local government services and expand access to public meetings by offering a remote access option.
- Continue to partner with NEK Broadband to ensure all residents of Granby have access to affordable, reliable, and high-speed broadband internet.
- Develop a plan for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of all town owned buildings.
- Maintain contracts and agreements for public safety services including fire, police, and ambulance services.



Granby Road in front of Granby-Victory Congregational Church

Photo by Terri Williams

5. Housing

Granby recognizes its dwindling population as a concern for the future wellbeing of its community. Housing may be the key to increasing population within the Town. High quality, energy efficient, and affordable housing is needed throughout the state. If Granby were to provide additional affordable housing units, they would be filling a need in the community, in the state, and could boost their local population.

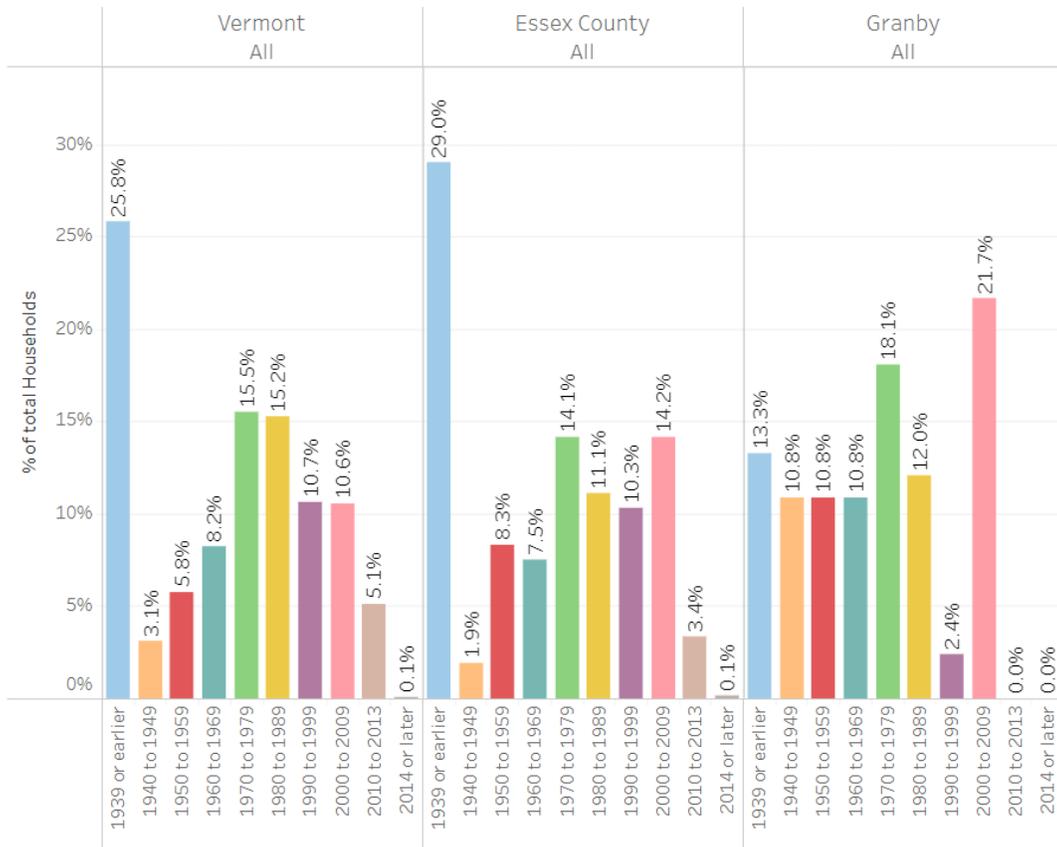
Housing Stock:

As of the 2020 Census, there are 73 housing units in Granby (2020 Decennial Census). 46 are occupied units and 27 are vacant units. The vacant units most likely consist of seasonal, recreational, or occasional (SRO) use dwellings. While 27 units does not seem like a large number of SRO units, it accounts for nearly 37% of the housing stock. Essex County has the highest rate of seasonal homes as a percentage of its stock in the state (housingdata.org). Given the immense natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities in the Town, it makes sense that it is a sought-after location for a second home.

Most of the occupied housing units in Granby are 2–3-bedroom single detached dwellings (87% 2022 ACS 5year estimates). Approximately 3% of occupied housing units are even larger with 4-5 bedrooms. And, about 10% of housing units are 1 bedroom or studio units.

Granby is fortunate to have a wide range in the age of its housing stock. Unlike other parts of Essex County or the Northeast Kingdom, only 13.3% of the housing units in the Town were built pre -1940. Homes built before 1940 often suffer from inadequate insulation and air sealing and are often large in layout and design making them much harder to heat efficiently. Homes built in the 1940 -1980's that could also use weatherization and energy efficiency improvements, but often have more efficiency than pre -1940 dwellings.

Estimated housing units by year structure built



Source:

U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Table B25034, B25036), 2014-2018

Estimated Housing Units by Year Built

www.housingdata.org

Housing Challenges:

With such a large percentage of homes being owned in Granby, this plan will examine the median house value rather than median gross rent. Homes in Granby range in estimated value, with a pretty even split between home values of \$100k-\$199k (28%), \$200-\$299k (12%), \$300-\$499 (16%), and over \$500k at 4%.

Median housing price for non-vacation homes in Granby was \$85,000 in 2019 which jumped to over \$230,000 in 2023. There has been an increase in the price of housing throughout Vermont since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, with median home sale price hitting \$315,000 in 2023. Home prices have soared as many out of state residents sought and are seeking space outside of cities and suburbs. There are also individuals moving to Vermont to be in a more climate tolerable place, where extreme heat, seasonal wildfires, and other natural disasters are less of a threat to personal property and safety. The Northeast Kingdom's high quality outdoor recreation opportunities combined with the ability for some professionals to work remotely, have been other factors contributing to in-migration to our region.

Short-term rentals (STRs) are popping up with greater frequency and density throughout the Northeast Kingdom. There is currently one listing on VRBO for short-term rental in Granby. One STR shouldn't negatively impact the

community too much. However, the conversion of 4-5 more dwelling units into STRs could. The community should explore how it would like to address short-term rentals given the community's particular concerns. The Granicus Guide to Effectively Regulating Short Term Rentals provides great guidance to the topic of regulating STRs (www.granicus.com/pdfs/Whitepaper). Granby is welcoming to STRs as long as they do not negatively impact the housing stock or quality of life for residents. Therefore, Granby wishes to amend its zoning bylaws to provide for STRs as long as they are on a resident-occupied property.

Housing Opportunities:

The State of Vermont recognizes the need to improve the amount, availability, and affordability of housing to meet the needs of Vermont's low- and moderate-income households. For a town such as Granby, quite distant from many services and amenities, and with a primary goal of preserving the forested landscape of the town, large scale housing development isn't feasible in the municipality. However, as remote work continues to be a viable work arrangement for many professionals, people seeking housing are placing priority on the quality and price of housing and access to recreational and cultural amenities rather than living close to major employment hubs. Granby should continue to focus on encouraging landowners to reinvest in the existing housing stock to improve the building's energy efficiency and overall quality as well as encourage small scale residential development where possible.

There are two mechanisms that Granby can use to support the creation of high quality, affordable housing on a small scale befitting the community: supporting Accessory Dwelling Units and permitting the conversion of a Single-Household Dwelling into a Two -Household Dwelling.

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is typically a smaller, independent dwelling unit that is located on the same lot as an existing single-household dwelling. Vermont's law (24 VSA 4412) on equal treatment of housing and town bylaws requires municipalities to allow homeowners to add one ADU to their house as a permitted use as long as certain conditions are met (one being that the primary dwelling on the site is owner occupied). There is a new program in the State, through the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP), which provides a low-barrier way for Vermont homeowners to positively impact the housing shortage, one unit at a time. This program offers grants of up to \$50,000 that can be used for expenses related to creating an accessory dwelling unit (www.accd.vermont.gov/vhip). ADUs have the benefit of providing rental housing for small households and providing supplemental income for the homeowner.

Additionally, through House Bill S.100, a single-household dwelling on its own water and wastewater system can be reconfigured to become a two-household dwelling as a permitted use throughout the state. The water and wastewater system on the parcel will be required to have the capacity to serve the additional spaces created. Anyone seeking to modify a building to become two housing units must ensure that their water and wastewater systems can meet the demands or be modified to meet the new usage. Granby's zoning bylaws should be updated to reflect S.100 which is an attempt to create more housing within or on the same parcel as an existing single-household dwelling.

Future Housing Needs:

There will continue to be a need for housing that is within the reach of the population of Granby, especially with the increase of immigration due to COVID -19 and climate migration. Granby's declining population should not be seen as a reason not to prepare for new housing and population growth.

Coupled with a decrease in household size, an aging population, and lagging income and wages will put greater need for high quality, affordable housing options for low - and moderate-income residents. There will always be the presence of seasonal, recreational, and occasional (SRO) use dwellings in Granby. It will be important to make sure that the creation of long -term housing keeps pace with the development and conversion of use of dwellings to SRO use.

GOAL: Strengthen the quality, availability, efficiency, and affordability of local housing working to ensure the housing needs of low and moderate-income households are met by public and private actions while maintaining the Town's "traditional rustic charm".

- Policy: Encourage housing (re)development across a broad spectrum of types and sizes, including but not limited to accessory dwelling units, two-unit buildings, smaller sized units for smaller sized households, and clustered housing that can support all income levels, including individuals of low- and moderate incomes, and the aging population.
- Update the zoning bylaws to accommodate for the permitted use of Accessory Dwelling Units and the conversion of a single-household dwelling into a two-household dwelling, as outlined in S. 100.
- Promote existing resources for homeowners, building owners, and mobile home owners about funding opportunities that improve energy efficiency in homes (Efficiency Vermont, Heat Squad, NETO), update and bring rental units back on the market (Vermont Housing Improvement Program), support the replacement of poor quality mobile homes with high quality modular homes (Efficiency Vermont- Mobile Home Replacement Program).

www.vrbo.com
Short-term rental listing on VRBO



6. Transportation

The primary mode of transportation for Granby residents is private vehicles with no public transportation access and long distances for active transportation options. Many rural landscapes rely on well-maintained roadways to get people to the places they need to go. Granby residents travel, on average, over 14,000 vehicle miles each year. This is higher than urban or suburban dwellers, mostly due to the nature of the rural landscape that requires driving to get to essential goods and services.

Because driving is a required part of daily life for nearly all residents of Granby, it is important for the municipality to continually maintain and update the roads to meet current standards (for public safety and for environmental impact). The roads leading into the community are just as important as the roads within the town limits. The Granby Road connects to Victory to the west, leading into East Burke and on to Lyndonville. To the east is Guildhall, which has a small village and provides access to Lancaster, NH which is a larger regional center across the Connecticut River. River Road runs south through Victory and provides connections to Concord, St. Johnsbury and Lunenburg. Resident's travel is equally divided between the directions of East Burke/Lyndonville to the west, Concord/St. Johnsbury to the south, and Guildhall/Lancaster to the east.

Roads:

Granby has an all gravel road system that is maintained by the Town. It is composed of Class 2 roads (5.27 miles), Class 3 roads (5.49 miles) and 12.79 miles of legal trails. As of the 2020 Town Highway map published by VTrans, all class 4 roads in the Town are now identified as legal trails. The Town Garage is located behind the Town Clerk's office on Granby Road. All road maintenance is currently overseen by the selectboard and contracted out for grading services and snow removal. Snow removal is provided on the Class 2 road and all Class 3 roads that connect to the main road. Please see Appendix V for the VTrans Road Map for the Town.

The Municipal General Roads Permit, Act 64, requires municipalities to develop and implement a customized, multi-year plan to stabilize their road drainage system, bring road drainage systems up to basic maintenance standards, and implement additional corrective measures to reduce erosion. Towns can apply for funding through the Better Back Roads Program. Technical assistance is available through the County Conservation District, VTrans Maintenance District, Vermont Local Roads, and NVDA.

Bridges & Culverts:

State funds are available for repairs and replacement of bridges and culverts on town highways (class 13). If the municipality adopts the current VTrans Road and Bridge standards the Town share for project costs decreases from 20% to 10%. The Town must also conduct a highway infrastructure study not less than three years old, which identifies all town culverts, bridges, and any road problems. The inventory should include the location, size, deficiency or condition, and estimated cost to repair the infrastructure.

VTrans inspects all bridges longer than 20 feet in span. There is one bridge that meets this criteria, Bridge #3 crossing Granby Brook/Pond Brook. This bridge was replaced in 2015. As of the most recent inspection in

September of 2022, the bridge is classified as Very Good Condition. The inspections occur every two years and reports of the inspections are sent to the Town. Bridges of less than 20 feet are the responsibility of the Town. There are two concrete slab bridges and two pipe arch bridges. The majority of the culverts are metal. The system as a whole is adequate in condition.

Electric Vehicles:

Vermont Energy Dashboard reports that there are currently no all -electric vehicles registered or public charging stations available in the Town of Granby. The closest public EV charging stations are in St. Johnsbury and at the Concord Health Center, located at 201 E. Main Street Concord, VT. Most owners of electric vehicles do their charging at home and work. Green Mountain Power provides a rebate to EV owners and a free home electric vehicle charging system to new electric vehicle owners. The Town recognizes that electric vehicles are part of the transportation future and wishes to explore a funding source to provide a public EV charging station near the Town Office building.

Rail, Air, and Public Transportation:

Given the rural nature of Granby and surrounding towns, there are no rail, air and public transportation options available. Residents must use other population centers to access rail, air, and public transportation resources.

ATVs and Snowmobiles,

Granby has residents and visitors that travel by ATVs and snowmobiles. ATVs and snowmobiles ride on the public roadways and legal trails, on designated trail networks and on private lands. It is expected that ATVs and snowmobiles follow the rules of the roads and trailways.

Walking & Bicycling:

Granby residents may walk and bicycle for recreation purposes. Given the long distances to goods and services and the topography of the region, people rarely travel by these means. The town continues to improve and expand the hiking trails at Cow Mountain Pond to provide recreational walking and hiking for residents and visitors. Given the low volume of traffic, anyone wishing to walk or bicycle on the dirt roads can do so safely.

GOAL: Provide a safe, well maintained, and passable road system for Granby residents and visitors.

- Continually update the roads, culverts, and bridges in Town to meet new standards and maintain compliance with the Municipal Roads General Permit Program.
- Pursue available grants to help offset the cost of repairing the road system.
- Maintain contracted services for road grading and snow removal, keeping the roads clear for vehicular traffic.
- Continue to collaborate with neighboring communities to order road supplies and maintain the roadways.
- Provide information to Granby residents about the many rebates and incentives available for electric vehicle ownership and electrical vehicle charging equipment.
- Explore funding mechanisms and long-term financial viability of a public EV charging port near the Town Offices.

7. Energy

Energy is a critical element in any community. This includes transportation, thermal and electric energy. In this section, energy consumption and burden, generation, distribution, and energy efficiency and conservation will be discussed. As the LAST community in the state to be connected to the electrical network in 1963, Granby could be a pioneer in a community-sustained renewable energy system.

Energy Consumption:

- **Transportation:** Given the rural nature of Granby, with the need to use outside resources for grocery, healthcare, and much of the employment, transportation is a large component of overall energy use. It is estimated that the number of vehicle miles traveled annually is around 14,000. Using calculations from 2017, there were 40 registered vehicles in the municipality. Overall, this accounts for 560,000 vehicle miles traveled each year, 23,164 gallons of fuel consumed, and 3,003 MMBTUs (the measurement unit for the amount of energy used by those vehicles) expended.
- **Thermal:** Our homes require heating to be livable in the winter months. And, with ever increasingly warm summers in Vermont, cooling is becoming less of a luxury and more of a necessity. The amount of energy to heat and cool our homes is considered thermal energy. Many factors influence the amount of thermal energy needed. The age of a home, the size of a home, the quality of insulation and weatherization, and the efficiency of the heating and cooling systems will contribute to thermal energy load.

The data suggests that many households (over 65%) in Granby use wood to heat their homes. Local knowledge suggests that this figure is skewed and that currently far fewer use wood. Wood is a renewable source of energy for heating. Other renewable heating sources that can be considered by households in Granby that are seeking to improve their carbon footprint include wood pellet stoves and high efficiency heat pumps. Most electric utilities and Efficiency Vermont offer incentives and rebates to households wishing to switch to a renewable heating system.

- **Electrical:** Electricity is supplied by Green Mountain Power, the largest power utility in the state of Vermont. Green Mountain power shares that its energy portfolio is 100% carbon neutral and over 75% renewable. These numbers do take into account purchased “renewable energy credits” called RECs. This means that GMP may be producing or buying energy via a fossil fuel source, but they are able to offset that production by selling other renewable energy credits or purchasing credits to cover the non-renewable energy.

Energy Burden:

Efficiency Vermont calculated the energy burden for each town in their 2019 report. The dollar amount that a household spends on energy (thermal, transportation and electrical) compared to the household income is called Energy Burden. From the data, Granby was considered one of the highest energy burdened municipalities with households spending over 17.4% of their income on energy. “Transportation costs, for which there are few

assistance programs, constituted the largest portion of energy spending, especially in rural areas. Because transportation efficiency measures are not covered in the state’s energy efficiency programs, Vermonters have little assistance in reducing their transportation energy costs” (Efficiency Vermont, 2019). Despite the costs associated with transportation in a very rural part of the state, the biggest influence on energy burden is not the amount of energy consumed, but income levels that remain low which requires a higher percentage of income to cover basic energy expenses. There are things that households and the municipality can do to reduce energy use, which in turn reduces the expense for energy including weatherization and fuel switching.

Energy Generations: Solar, Wind, and Hydro

Vermont Energy Dashboard notes 0 private wind, or hydro facilities (small or large) within the Town

(www.vtenergydashboard.org). However,

there are residents in town that utilize solar technology for renewable energy generation. The adoption of renewable energy generation technology may be lower due to the mountainous landscape, extended periods of cloud cover in the area, and overall cost of installation.

Energy Conservation:

- **Transportation:** In planning for an uncertain future and one which will most likely call for increased efficiency in the transportation sector, encouraging fuel efficient vehicles and fuel switching can help decrease the amount of energy used in transportation. Two programs that can support purchases in more fuel efficient or electric vehicles are Mileage Smart and Drive Electric VT. Both resources provide quality information about efficient car choices.

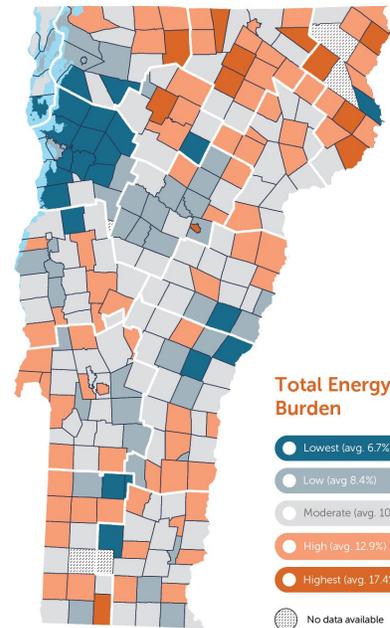
Remote working or hybrid working has significant impacts on transportation energy. If there is access to high-quality, reliable and affordable broadband, some industries may be able to accommodate remote working. With fewer vehicle miles traveled, this can have significant impacts on a household's transportation energy expenditure. Small changes in travel patterns can also have big impacts on the amount of transportation energy used. Using active transportation modes (walking and bicycling), carpooling, or trip chaining can help reduce vehicle miles traveled, saving energy and money.

- **Thermal:** The number one way to improve thermal energy efficiency is to weatherize. There are many incentives through Efficiency Vermont that can support the weatherization of houses, including older homes that tend to be drafty, leaky and poorly insulated. Updating the heating and cooling systems to

2019
Energy Burden Report



Efficiency Vermont



energy efficient models and renewable energy sources, in a well weatherized home, can also help to cut thermal energy load.

- **Electrical:** Many electrical efficiency improvements stem from conservation. This includes air drying clothing, switching out incandescent light bulbs for LED light bulbs, and upgrading to energy efficient models for appliances. There are many rebates available at www.encyvermont.com that can help make those electric efficiency improvements more economical.

Energy Opportunities:

Granby is currently engaged in the **Municipal Energy Resilience Program** (MERP) that provides free energy audits of municipally owned buildings and the opportunity to apply for implementation funding to support energy efficiency upgrades to the eligible buildings. Granby is undergoing energy audits for the Town Hall, Granby Schoolhouse, former post office, and Town Garage. Once the audits are complete, Granby will seek grant funding to support the required work. For all energy efficiency in historic buildings, Granby should consult with a historic preservation specialist to make sure that the energy efficiency improvements are designed for the historic structure.

Given Granby's small population size, Granby could be an ideal candidate for investing in **community solar**. A community solar array can offset energy expenses in municipal buildings, transferring savings to the whole town. Individual homeowners and renters can also invest in a community solar array and have their electric bills reduced depending on the energy generation of the array. Finally, there are federal tax credits for investment in renewable energy, which all members of the solar co-op could benefit from.

The Town of Peacham, VT installed a community solar array in the summer of 2023. Learning from Peacham would be an advised first step in understanding what it takes to put in a community solar array. Peacham was careful in their site selection and worked hard to get the community to buy into the project. A solar project will have to navigate the process of obtaining approvals from various agencies, including the local utility and state approval agencies. NVDA can support site selection, ensuring that the site does not disrupt prime agricultural lands or wildlife habitats, and has minimal visual impact on the community. The project should ensure that it is aligning with regional and local energy plans, as well. Community solar “not only brings clean energy to the town, but also represents a shift toward local control and democratization of electricity generation” (Ford, 2023, RenewablesNews.net). As one of the last communities connected to the electrical grid in 1963, Granby could be one of the first communities to generate all its own electricity from a renewable source, community solar.

GOAL: Improve energy efficiency, promote energy conservation, and pursue renewable energy sources for transportation, thermal and electrical energies.

- Support the community group in charge of the Municipal Energy Resilience Program energy audits and in seeking implementation funding for the recommended energy efficiency improvements in Granby municipally owned buildings.

- Provide information to community members about Heat Squad and Efficiency Vermont, DriveElectric Vermont and Mileage Smart programs to support improvements in weatherization and fuel switching for thermal, electrical, and transportation energy efficiency.
- Conduct a feasibility study to identify a preferred location for a community solar array, conduct a cost-benefit analysis of a community solar array and battery storage system, and engage with community members about the project to deepen community investment and commitment.
- Continue to promote reduce, reuse, and recycle practices within the community.

The Granby Community:

8. The Economy

In review of Vermont Labor Statistics, Granby's labor force is composed of 35 individuals, with 34 employed and 1 unemployed (as of December 2023). Since December 2022, one year previous, the number of individuals in the workforce has stayed the same, with one person finding employment in the past year (33 employed, 2 unemployed in December 2022). The overall unemployment rate in Granby is 2.9% which is higher than the State unemployment rate of 2.2%. (Local Area Unemployment Statistics, December 2023, Department of Labor). It is important to note that the low population numbers and the high percentage of individuals no longer in the workforce make the unemployment rate highly variable. The increase of just one more individual being unemployed increases the unemployment rate from 2.9% to 5.7%.

Covered Employment:

The Vermont Department of Labor reports that there are three establishments in Granby providing "covered" employment. Collectively they employ 3 people. "Covered" employers include private for-profit businesses with one or more employees and federal, state and local government. Because of the small numbers, most data is suppressed.

Table 10.3 Covered Employment in Granby

NAICS	Description	Establishments
1133	Logging	1
541	Business and Technical Services	1
921	Executive, legislative and general government	1

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information Office, in cooperation with the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

Industry, Occupation & Destination of Granby Workers:

There are some jobs within Granby, but most people are leaving Granby to work elsewhere [OnTheMap \(census.gov\)](#). 31 workers of the 35-person workforce leave the town for their employment. 28% travel to St. Johnsbury for work, and the rest are scattered to places in Vermont, New Hampshire, and beyond. The top industries of employment outside of Granby include:

- Education Services 16%
- Health Care and Social Assistance 16%
- Retail Trade 16%
- Construction, Manufacturing, Finance & Insurance, and Public Administration with 8% each

Income and Wages:

It is challenging to find accurate income and wage data given the small population size of Granby and even smaller sized workforce (35 individuals). Looking at the whole county can give some insights into Granby's income and wages. The median household income in Essex County is \$55,247 (2022 ACS 5-year estimates). This is lower than the state median household income of \$74,014. The poverty level in Essex County is 13.2% higher than the 10.4% poverty rate for the state.

With a high rate of retired adults and a small workforce, many residents of Granby are likely living on fixed incomes. As prices for housing, utilities, food, and transportation increase, decisions made by the municipality should consider the economic impacts on the community.

Economic Development Trends:

Granby is part of the Northern Vermont Economic Development District. This District shares economic interests including a rural working landscape, a stable manufacturing sector, and a robust tourism trade (nvedd.com) Across the district, there are encouraging new trends to support economic growth. These activities are rooted in the district's natural resources, agriculture, local culture and historical traditions. (CEDS 2021 -2025) including outdoor recreation, agricultural, and creative sectors.

Since 2020 and the COVID-19 Pandemic, there have been shifts in work for some industries toward remote working. The data on commuting patterns because of remote work are not easy to find at this time, however it is expected that industries that were able to shift to remote working will maintain some percentage of remote work moving forward. Remote work can significantly decrease vehicle miles traveled and commuting time. It often requires reliable internet service at home. To ensure that the workforce in Granby can take advantage of remote work opportunities, the municipality can advocate for affordable, reliable, and quality internet connectivity for all its residents.

GOAL: Maintain the working landscape and provide the labor force with new economic opportunities.

- Continue to support economic development related to outdoor recreation and the working landscape.
- Support the use of Accessory Dwelling Units as a provision of local housing options but also as an income generating activity for local residents.
- Work with NEK Broadband to provide affordable, reliable and high-speed broadband internet access to all electric utility accounts to support remote work opportunities and home occupations.

9. Cultural, Historic & Scenic Resources

The cultural, historical, and scenic resources are a foundational element in connecting the community of Granby. These resources also play into Granby's sense of place and understanding of its past. Preserving the historical elements in town, augmenting the cultural resources, and shifting perspective on the uses of historic and cultural spaces can be the impetus for sustained preservation of these resources.

Cultural Resources:

Starting in 1959, Granby began hosting a vibrant and robust community event called *Holiday in the Hills*. The event was the Town's initiative to bring attention to the lack of electrical infrastructure in the community. With Victory by its side, Granby invited politicians and the press to this annual festival in order to try and put pressure on the power companies. In 1963, the lights went on in Granby and Victory! Granby continued hosting Holiday in the Hills well into the 1980's.

In the 90's, the event was reinvented as the [Victory Granby Holiday in the Hills Historic Preservation Group](#) hosting small gatherings. A new iteration of this community event started up in 2021 called **Salute Granby** with over 250 people in attendance. The community event celebrates the history of the Town. The Schoolhouse, Town Hall and Granby-Victory Congregational Church were open and hosted historic information panels, activities, food, and music. A cookout was hosted at the Rogers Rangers pavilion. Tours of Cow Mountain Pond trail were provided.

Historical Resources:

The **Granby Town Hall** was built in 1891. The main level of the building provides community meeting space. The basement level houses the Town Clerk's office and vault space, an ADA accessible bathroom, and a small area for meetings.

The **Granby-Victory Congregational Church** was built in 1845. The church is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the building and church cemetery and gravesites. In 2007, the roof was replaced, and the building was freshly painted. When it came time to repaint the Granby -Victory Congregational Church, residents came out to give a helping hand. Ongoing projects include stone cleanings. The church is in need of a new coat of paint.

The **Granby Schoolhouse** was built in 1885 and closed its doors to elementary students in 2006. The Town is still exploring a new use for this building. In the survey that circulated as part of this Town Plan community engagement efforts, ideas for the schoolhouse include a museum with historical displays, a general store, a coffee shop, a library, a community meeting space where events, workshops, concerts and dances can happen, host a food shelf, offer the space as a local pub or thrift shop, provide a space where there is good internet so people can work or study or connect to the world, and use it as an AirBnB or VRBO. There are many possibilities. As the Town invests in repairs and updates for the building and site, it may be advantageous to "pop-up" the space as some of these ideas to see how the community responds to them. For a few months the building could be set up as an artist's studio and offer classes and workshops, transform for a few months into a library with a small cafe, and transform again into a small general store or thrift shop.

There are several privately owned and maintained historical resources. The Town is grateful for the continued maintenance of these resources by private residents and organizations.

- The site of the **Number 1 Schoolhouse** has been preserved. All that remains of the site is the cellar hole that formed the foundation for this 1825 building.
- The **Roger's Rangers Gravesite** is privately owned with the Town keeping the property mowed.
- The **Wilkie Baby Stone**, the archeological remains of the **Train Turntable** which once served the Granby Branch railroad (image below), and other unmarked graves and historical resources are of historical importance to the community.

The Town values their past and would like to provide a space for locals to bring their historic photographs and artifacts to be on display. The Granby Schoolhouse has been identified as a potential location for historical displays. Having someone to attend to the historic resources and curate the displays would be needed to ensure tidy and well interpreted displays.

Scenic Resources

The scenic resources within Granby are its natural landscape and the placement of its built infrastructure within that landscape. The community wishes to maintain the scenic qualities of the town by continuing to instill the value of the natural landscape in its community members and encouraging new development to concentrate around existing development areas.

Mentioned in the Land Use section of this plan, Cow Mountain Pond provides some of the most important scenic resources in the municipality. The view toward the White Mountains of New Hampshire from this mountain is spectacular. The Town loves this resource and wishes to maintain this scenic, natural and recreational resource for the community and visitors.

GOAL: Maintain and improve the Town's historic, cultural and scenic resources.

- Communicate with the community about upcoming events through multiple means, including a Town news board outside of the Town Offices or at Mailboxes, and on Front Porch Forum.
- Investigate and explore options for the adaptive reuse of the Granby Schoolhouse to keep it a vital part of the community.
- Support other groups in their efforts to maintain and rehabilitate historic resources and reinvigorate cultural resources, including *Salute Granby*
- Seek a historic resource coordinator in Town to help curate local historical photographs and artifacts.
- Maintain and expand the quality of the Cow Mountain Pond area (trails, boat launch, boating equipment) as a place of recreational, scenic, and natural resources.
- Encourage landowners to maintain and preserve the high quality of the natural landscape that contributes to the scenic resources in the community.



Roundtable Archaeological Remains
Photo from 2016 Town Plan



Holiday gift bags at the Granby mailboxes as a way to unite community members
Photo by Terri Williams

10. Regional Context

This plan recognizes that Granby does not exist in isolation from the region and will affect and be affected by what happens in the surrounding municipalities. The relationship between this plan and the development trends and plans for the surrounding area and the Northeast Vermont Regional Plan has been considered. For purposes of this Plan, the surrounding area includes the Towns of Ferdinand, Maidstone, East Haven, Victory, and Guildhall Vermont. Surrounding communities promote low -density land development and continuation of resource -based uses (primarily forestry) in outlying areas and higher density and commercial uses in existing small village areas. Sensitive areas (such as flood plains, wetlands, and critical habitat areas) are also identified and targeted for conservation, as they are in Granby.

Guildhall: The Town Plan for Guildhall is out of date, having expired in 2021. Assuming there have been no significant changes in the municipality, Guildhall’s goals align with those of Granby. Guildhall aims to “remain rural in character, provide for orderly, fiscally tolerable growth, encourage agriculture and forestry as the prime economic base, maintain affordable and high-quality municipal facilities and amenities, and preserve and protect the natural, historic and scenic resources in the Town”. Guildhall is a vital neighbor to Granby, with one of two road systems that leads into the Town. Guildhall takes good care of its roads. Guildhall closed its local school in 2016, and students are now tuitioned out to neighboring schools. The loss of the school community was emotional for many but the cost to keep the school operating was not feasible. In speaking with the Zoning Administrator for Guildhall, new residential development is initiating needed updates to their zoning bylaws to ensure that new housing is supporting the wellbeing of the community and its residents. Guildhall plans to pursue a new Town Plan in 2024.

Victory: With one of the smallest populations in the state of Vermont, Victory’s 70 residents are closely connected to the land. The Town consists mostly of large private parcels and Victory State Forest that compose large forest and habitat blocks. A part of the Victory State Forest protrudes into the Town of Granby. Maintaining the wellbeing of the forest and roadways seems to be of utmost importance to Victory and is also true for Granby.

East Haven: Located to the Northwest of Granby, these two towns connect via conserved land, referred to as Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) nonfee interest lands. This means the ANR no longer acquires tracts of forest land solely or primarily for the purpose of timber production. The Agency “recognizes that well-maintained, privately owned forests will continue to prove most of the state’s timber resources through the stewardship of individual landowners. The Agency believes that acquiring conservation easements on certain working forest tracts can protect the parcel from development, ensure public access, and provide for sustainable forest management in the future” (ANR Lands Conservation Plan, 1999). This small community does not have a town plan, but obviously strives to maintain the superior forested landscape that is within its town boundaries.

Ferdinand: As part of the Unified Towns and Gores, Ferdinand's goals are inextricably linked to that of much of the region. Ferdinand hosts large parcels of conserved land owned and managed by Vermont Fish and Wildlife, Wenlock and West Mountain Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), a portion of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and other conserved parcels. The amount of conserved land in Ferdinand ensures that the interior forest blocks and wildlife corridors that exist in this part of the state are maintained.

Maidstone: The Town is currently working on a new plan with the hopes of having the plan approved by the region in 2024. Maidstone is similar to its surrounding communities, including Granby, in that it is primarily forested, strives to maintain its pristine waterways, has low population density, and relies on the resources of other communities to support its residents and visitors.

GOAL: Maintain positive relationships and partnerships with the surrounding communities in order to work together and share resources.

Appendix I: Strategies for Implementation

Granby has identified goals, objectives and policies throughout this document that will help guide the Town into the future. The Town has also identified the following three goals as being the most important for the municipality to work on over the next 5 years:

Improve Energy Efficiency and Resiliency:

- Support the community group in charge of the Municipal Energy Resilience Program energy audits and in seeking implementation funding for the recommended energy efficiency improvements in Granby municipally owned buildings.
- Conduct a feasibility study to identify a preferred location for a community solar array, conduct a cost-benefit analysis of a community solar array and battery storage system, and engage with community members about the project to deepen community investment and commitment.

Responsibility:	Selectboard, MERP community group
Resources:	MERP Implementation funding, Department of Public Service- Clean Energy Development Fund NVDA for map and siting technical assistance
Timeline:	Year 1-3

Update Zoning Bylaws:

- Continually update the zoning bylaws to meet State Statute requirements and to meet the needs of the Town.
- Update the zoning bylaws to accommodate for the permitted use of Accessory Dwelling Units and the conversion of a single-household dwelling into a two -household dwelling, as outlined in S. 100.

Responsibility:	Granby Planning Commission
Resources:	Volunteer time, Municipal Planning Grant
Timeline:	Year 1 and ongoing

Plan for and implement strategies that support the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of recreational, scenic, natural, and historic resources:

- Explore the benefits of Village Center Designation to see if Granby’s village cluster is eligible and could benefit from the program. If a benefit is identified, seek Village Center Designation to support the buildings and spaces in the village.
- Investigate and explore options for the adaptive reuse of the Granby Schoolhouse to keep it a vital part of the community.
- Support other groups in their efforts to maintain and rehabilitate historic resources and reinvigorate cultural resources, including *Salute Granby*
- Seek a historic resource coordinator in Town to help curate local historical photographs and artifacts.
- Maintain and expand the quality of the Cow Mountain Pond area (trails, boat launch, boating equipment) as a place of recreational, scenic, and natural resources.
- Stay informed of recreational partners plans for development and land stewardship (VAST, NEK Gravel Rides, Kingdom Trails, and Passumpsic Valley Land Trust)
- Encourage landowners to maintain and preserve the high quality of the natural landscape that contributes to the scenic resources in the community.

Responsibility:	Granby Planning Commission, Cow Mountain Pond working group,
Resources:	Volunteer time, Vermont Division of Historic Preservation (VDHP) Preservation Trust of Vermont (PTV) Forest Parks and Recreation- Recreational Trails Program (FPR- RTP) Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD)
Timeline:	Year 1 and ongoing

Appendix II:
Future Land Use Map

Appendix III:
FEMA Flood Map

Appendix III:
Utilities & Facilities Map

Appendix IV:
Transportation Map

Appendix V:
Energy Resource Map

Appendix VI:
Survey Feedback