

CHAPTER 8: CULTURAL, HISTORICAL & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Chapter Goal

Granby celebrates its historical and cultural identity with its residents and visitors by enhancing the visibility of its landmark institutions and improving accessibility to historical documents. The town provides cultural as well as passive and active recreational opportunities to all of its residents in order to promote activities that are commonly shared by the community.

OVERVIEW

Studying a town's cultural, historical, and recreational resources can provide a window to the past, and provide guidance on how the community can evolve in the future. In Granby, these resources are rich and varied, and can be seen through the town's architecture, landscapes, and recreational opportunities.

Settled around 1727, the town is bordered in the north by Mount Holyoke Range. Settlers developed farms and some limited industries, which made up the town's economic foundation. They grew grains, turnips, pumpkins and hops, and small distilleries were open by 1812 using the surplus grain produced. Dairy farming, making buttons and palm leaf hats followed these in economic importance in the 19th century.

The Town of Granby has managed to maintain its New England character during the 240 years since its incorporation. In the historic town center Granby has retained architecturally significant municipal buildings and private homes, as well as the town common, which is currently owned by the United Church of Christ. In 2010, Capital Planning Committee has concluded that the municipal buildings (Town Hall, Aldrich Hall, and the Town Library) are in need of maintenance, repair or expansion—and are not adequate for the current needs of the Town.

The town contains additional historic and cultural resources including houses of various historical architectural styles. The largest concentration of pre 20th century historic homes occurs on West Street, Amherst Road, Pleasant Street/East Street, and Carver Street. In total, 14% of Granby housing units were built before 1940 according to the 2000 Census.

The Granby Historical Association strives to promote Granby's history through exhibits and informative meetings. The Association has 3 buildings in town. They are the Town House and The White-Quirk Homestead; the latter consists of a house and a barn. The Town House has on display items related to Granby's political, civic, economic, and social history. The White-Quirk House exhibits items related to daily life such as furniture, clothing, quilts, china and glassware.

The Barn houses a collection of agricultural tools and machinery. The buildings are open to the public by appointment. In the past, the Association tried to make the exhibits available to the public during specific weekends in late summer or early fall. However, such arrangements are only sporadic due to a shortage of volunteers.

Granby is also home to Nash's Dinosaur Museum, a privately owned dinosaur track quarry that has been in business since 1945. The influence of this museum on the town's cultural and historical character is reflected in Granby's town seal, where a three toed dinosaur footprint is part of the background of the seal. The Gingras family also greatly contributed to the efforts to research the history of dinosaurs in Granby and to establishing the tracks as one of the main attractions in town.

Additionally, Granby offers many recreational opportunities unparalleled in many nearby towns, such as mountain biking on the Mt. Holyoke Range; hiking on the Range and in Dufresne Park; fishing in Aldrich Lake, Batchelor Brook, and Forge Ponds; horse riding and training in the rolling hills behind the farmlands; and baseball, soccer and basketball for the growing youth in the community.

Finally, the abundant presence of working agricultural land is a strong link that culturally ties Granby's past with its future. The farm stands, farm houses, barns and agricultural fields are a strong part of the community's character. Loss of these working lands would not only have an economic effect on the community, but would also modify the cultural and historical mosaic of the town of Granby.

As Granby moves forward, there are many issues facing the town. Although not at the scale experienced in some neighboring communities, the pressures of development have increased markedly, especially in the last few years. More significantly, land parcels sold for residential development have gradually increased since 1990 until the late 2000s, when the housing market slowed down dramatically due to the economic downturn. Granby residents and officials worry that, if the future development is not well planned, the traditional New England character of Granby may be threatened, and that the unique elements in town that are so much a part of Granby's history would disappear without strategic planning toward preservation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Defining Features: Access & Usage

Granby's scenic elements and historic resources are among attributes that define it as a community. One of the most dramatic physical and natural features in Granby is the Mount Holyoke Range. Aldrich Lake and the associated Aldrich Mill are prized for their scenic beauty and importance to town history. Also, numerous brooks and streams can be found flowing throughout Granby. Community survey respondents identified the preservation of recreational access points and viewsheds of the Mount Holyoke

Range, Aldrich Lake, and Batchelor Brook as a priority. Dufresne Park, with the variety of open and wooded areas, also offers sizeable recreational land at the heart of town. Granby contains several recreational sites with limited parking and access, which prevents wider use of such resources. Additionally, some trails at the aforementioned sites, such as Dufresne Park, are no longer clearly identifiable and, on occasion, obstructed by debris and other natural growth. Those trails should be monitored and maintained in order to allow outdoorsmen safe and easy passage. The town should consider mapping all public recreational spaces and noting their points of entry. This information should ideally be hosted at the town's website where it would be easily obtainable by everyone, residents and visitors alike.

Horses & Farms

The concentration of horses and provisions for horse-related activities is a unique feature of Granby. The town boasts one of the highest ratios of horses to people in the Commonwealth. It is documented that over 330 horses are kept in the town, 205 of which are boarded on Taylor Street. In addition to an Agricultural Commission, Granby has a private Horse Council to address equine related matters.

Dufresne Park contains facilities, such as trails and an exercise ring that cater to equestrian uses. Throughout the master planning process residents have expressed interest in initiating formal discussions about dedicating Old Crank Road for a multi-use trail—a trail which would connect horse stables along Taylor Street to Dufresne Park.

Mountain Biking & Cross-country Skiing

The Mount Holyoke Range is home to the most challenging and technical mountain biking terrain in the Pioneer Valley region. The Range offers over 30 miles of marked trails specifically for mountain biking. From Granby, riders can access the south side of the ridge and the well-known "Batchelor Street" trails, a network of extremely challenging trails with names such as "Serpentine", "Twister" and "Roller Coaster". Several local mountain biking advocates and the New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA) build and maintain the trails on the Range, with assistance from the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

In addition to a variety of hiking and mountain biking trails, Granby also hosts a network of cross country skiing trails. The majority of these trails are located in Dufresne Park.

National Register of Historic Places

Granby has a local historic district at the town common, but not a National Register Historic District. There is a difference between these two designations. Local historic districts are established by local ordinance and usually, as in the case of Granby, include a set of design requirements to prevent inappropriate changes to existing buildings and guide the design of new buildings. Listing a district on the National Register of Historic

Places signifies that the area is important to the history of the community, state, or nation. Listing on the National Register also allows owners of income producing properties in that district to receive certain federal tax incentives for rehabilitation projects. Granby is one of only a handful of communities in Massachusetts that do not currently have any listings on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2005 , the Granby Historic Commission conducted a basic historic resource survey in cooperation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission to begin identifying properties for future nominations to the Register. The corresponding Historic Properties Survey Plan cited that there are many resources in Granby that could be eligible for inclusion on the National Register. In addition, it identified four potential National Register Historic Districts: Town Common, Aldrich Mill area, Carver Street, and West Street. Listing these areas of town as well as other individual properties on the National Register would be an inexpensive way to build community and promote recognition of Granby's history.

Town Common

The master planning process has identified the need to increase the visibility of the town common as a community focal point and as a center for community activity. The town common is currently owned and maintained by the United Church of Christ. Presently, the common hosts several community events such as the Arts & Crafts Festival, and the summer concert series recently initiated by the Council on Aging. Residents have indicated that they would like to see more publicly or privately sponsored activities occur on the common such as a farmers' market. In addition, the town should work with the MA Department of Transportation to obtain paved cross-walks across Route 202 to the town common to allow pedestrians to cross to the area safely.

Town Hall

Built in 1889, the exterior façade of the Town Hall marks it as a local icon. Once a schoolhouse and library, Granby elementary students used to take an annual tour of the building and bell tower. However, the overall historic integrity of the Town Hall is questionable. The Massachusetts Historical Commission's Historic Properties Survey Plan listed the town hall as a "Priority 3" resource. Criteria for prioritization included historical significance, age, integrity of the historic resource, threats to the historic resource and whether historic documentation existed.

Despite the historical significance of the building to the town, residents have mixed feeling on whether this building should be renovated and remain as the main location as the town hall or whether a new building to house this municipal use should be considered. Fifty-four percent said they would like to see the town hall renovated while 46% said they would like to see Granby with a new town hall. Further documentation should be put together to support any action to this historic resource.

Granby Free Public Library

Before there was a public library, private libraries existed in Granby - the Sunday School Library of the Congregational Church and another maintained by the Granby Social Library Association. In 1891, Granby established a free public library and voted to elect a Board of Library Trustees to oversee the library's operation. It was housed in the first floor room in the northwest corner of Kellogg Hall.

By 1915 the room in Kellogg Hall was too small to house the library's book collection, and the trustees requested a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to build a library building. The Corporation awarded Granby a \$5000 grant, and the Library was built on land donated by Dexter Taylor, a descendant of Granby's first settlers.

The Carnegie Library Building has remained fundamentally the same since 1917. Originally the upper level housed the adult and children's materials, with the lower level used as a meeting room for library and community events.

The only changes to the original building have occurred with the modernization of the heating plant in 1940 and the move of the Children's Room from the upper level to the lower in 1948. Recently, a closed circuit monitoring system, computers, and a pavilion for outdoor activities were added. Most recent changes, mandated by legislation, have included handicap accessible entrances to the upper and lower levels, and a handicap accessible bathroom on the lower level.

ADD INFO ON THE NEW LIBRARY

Aldrich Mill and St. Hyacinth's Seminary

Property that includes the former St. Hyacinth's Seminary remains one of the largest and relatively undeveloped sites in Granby. A new private school, MacDuffie School was inaugurated in 2011 on a 23 acre portion of the property, which includes the buildings previously used by the Seminary and the Holyoke Catholic High School.

Table 8.1: Culture & Recreation Spending	
Community	Per Capita Municipal Expenditures
Longmeadow	\$70
Palmer	\$65

Amherst	\$68
Springfield	\$82
Monson	\$55
Wilbraham	\$62
South Hadley	\$56
Chicopee	\$53
Pioneer Valley	\$47
Northampton	\$54
East Longmeadow	\$51
West Springfield	\$47

Belchertown	\$47
Holyoke	\$30
Agawam	\$40
Ware	\$36
Easthampton	\$30
Hadley	\$31
Pelham	\$28
Ludlow	\$28
Granby	\$19
Southampton	\$19
Hampden	\$29

Throughout the master planning process, residents have expressed a strong interest in preserving as much open space at the site as possible, particularly on land fronting Route 202, and establishing trail connections at the rear of the property to the Holyoke Range and Forge pond area. In 2012, the Town purchased 143 acres of property at Forge Pond for passive recreation and conservation purposes.

Survey respondents and stakeholder interview participants are very interested in what happens to the Seminary site and Aldrich Lake area. They are important cultural resources to Granby residents for their scenic, historic, and recreational value.

Culture and Recreation Spending

The degree of support a local government is able to garner for cultural and recreational activities will directly affect quality of life for community residents who take advantage of these opportunities. Municipal spending for culture and recreation was \$18.96 per capita in 2011 (see Table 8.1). This amount is much lower than the Pioneer Valley average of \$45.50.

Residents throughout the master planning process have expressed concerns about the lack of community activities and maintenance at existing parks. In some cases, community activities and events exist but awareness of these events remains limited. A town website would help to increase awareness about community events. In addition, the town should consider increasing the amount of funding allocated to its Recreation Committee as well as explore alternative methods of generating revenue and support for additional cultural activities. The town had a paid recreation coordinator for a time and this should be reinstated.

Local Cultural Council

At this time, Granby has a Local Cultural Council, but it is unclear how visible the council is in the community. A Local Cultural Council (LCC) is a volunteer board that reviews applications from individuals, schools, and organizations for arts, humanities, and interpretive science projects that provide a local public benefit. Individuals, schools, and cultural organizations are eligible to apply for project support from their local council.

Funding for town cultural activities is available to the LCC through the Local Cultural Council Program, a funding program administered by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency that promotes the arts. Local Cultural Council Program allocations are made to all of Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns to support community

cultural activities. In FY09, the Granby Cultural Council received and spent \$4,400 on cultural activities in the community. Funding was used to promote the visual arts, music, history and theater. Funded activities included a free summer concert series, the North Cemetery Restoration Project, and a theatre performance at Granby High School. In FY2012, \$4,000 is available for cultural activities through this program.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council offers a variety of other grants to support the arts in communities. The LCC should research these additional grant programs to determine if there are other cultural activities in Granby that can be supported.

Recreational Spaces

Granby contains two major parks: Dufresne Park (206 acres) and Brown-Ellison Park (12.16 acres). The majority of respondents in the community survey (74%) were satisfied with the existing level of services offered by Dufresne Park. Some residents indicated that they would like to see the park hosting more organized activities and events such as concerts. Seventy-five percent of respondents would like to see more emphasis placed on the maintenance and preservation of Dufresne Park. Residents would like to see the trails system expanded, re-blazed and maintained. Other responses included the need for improved road and parking lot conditions, trash management, bathroom facilities, and picnic pavilion. Residents would also like to see the addition of sports facilities, such as a tennis court or basketball courts.

Granby residents utilize the playgrounds and fields at its three public schools and at the Partyka Field (on the grounds that include the former St. Hyacinths Seminary). Additionally, the new international school that will open in 2011 promotes various sports as part of its curriculum. The town of Granby may want to consider collaborating with the new school to broaden its athletic offering and range of fields.

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act is a law passed in September 2000 that enables Massachusetts communities to establish a local Community Preservation Fund, through a ballot referendum, dedicated to open space protection, provision of low and moderate income housing, and historic preservation. Revenue for the fund is generated by a local property tax surcharge from 1-3% and a state match of about \$25 million annually divided among participating communities.

Revenue generated from the adoption of the Community Preservation Act could help the town meet new recreation and open space goals, such as acquiring additional recreational sites to supplement the future loss of playing field space. It can also be used for historic preservation efforts. Other communities have used CPA funds for historic preservation projects such as renovations, inventories, signage, acquisition of properties and preservation restrictions. Fifty-three percent of survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to support the adoption of the Community Preservation Act.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Granby's location and access to the Holyoke Range, as well as the presence of town-owned parks such as Dufresne Park, provide Granby residents and visitors an abundance of passive and active recreational opportunities. Miles of trails systems for hikers, bikers, horse back riders, and cross-country skiers provide an untapped economic development opportunity for the town. Businesses that provide services to these recreational groups should be promoted and encouraged by town officials and the community. Visitors to these resources can be increased through promotional materials on the web, town offices, and local businesses. Materials could include trail maps which highlight parking areas and access points.

There is also an opportunity to engage residents and help them rediscover the history of the town through community events. In addition, the town can take an active role to help residents learn about the existing cultural resources in the community, such as artists and crafts people, as well as promote new cultural activities.

The challenge is finding the funding to support these efforts, but thankfully there are several state programs in place that can assist the town. Adoption of the Community Preservation Act will help the town restore and maintain the existing historical and recreational resources in the community. Depending on the percentage of surcharge decided by Granby voters, revenue from this fund could provide the community with state and local funds for protection of historic resources, recreational resources, open space, and affordable housing development.

Finally, there needs to be additional commitment from the town residents to volunteer to work on these activities. Without a town official who is responsible for the promotion and maintenance of the historical, recreational, and cultural activities in the community, it is up to citizen volunteers to make this happen.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Identify and preserve historically significant properties in Granby for present and future generations

Strategy 1: Establish a Design Review Board that would review modifications and renovations to historic structures in Granby, as identified in the historic inventory.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Selectboard

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 2: Apply to list historic resources on the National Register of Historic Places, as identified by the Historic Commission.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Historic Commission (CONFIRM NAME)

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 3: Adopt the Community Preservation Act and utilize these funds to restore and renovate historic properties in Granby.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Resources Needed: Selectboard and Town Administrator

Target Date for Completion:

Goal 2: Educate and engage town residents on the history of Granby

Strategy 1: Support a “living history” project that allows the community to capture oral histories before they disappear.

Coordinate this effort with Granby Community Access and broadcast the interviews to town residents.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Historic Commission

Resources Needed:
Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 2: Hold field trips to historic sites, buildings, and locations.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Historic Commission
Resources Needed:
Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 3: Extend the hours of the Historic Museum (CONFIRM NAME)

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Granby Historical Association
Resources Needed:
Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 4: Add events to Charter Day that celebrate the history of Granby.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Charter Days Committee and Granby
Historical Association
Resources Needed:
Target Date for Completion:

Goal 3: Maintain and improve existing passive and active recreational resources and facilities in Granby.

Strategy 1: Map and promote all passive and active recreational resources in Granby to both town residents and visitors.

Provide a copy of the map on the town website, town hall, library, and local businesses.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Parks and Recreation Committee (To be established)
Resources Needed:
Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 2: Work with the appropriate local boards / committees / groups / citizens to maintain all hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and cross country skiing trails.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Parks and Recreation Committee (To be established)

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 3: Add sports facilities, such as tennis courts and a basketball court, at Dufresne Park.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Selectboard and Parks & Recreation Committee (To be established)

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 4: Expand, re-blaze, and maintain the trail system at Dufresne Park.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Parks and Recreation Committee (To be established)

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 5: Upgrade the road and parking lot conditions, trash management, bathroom facilities, and picnic pavilion at Dufresne Park.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Parks and Recreation Committee (To be established) and Highway Department

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 6: Map existing trail networks and determine gaps in the trail system. Work with local landowners to obtain easements in order to create a connected trail network system within the community.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Parks and Recreation Committee (To be established)

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 7: Adopt the Community Preservation Act and utilize these funds to acquire and renovate recreational sites in Granby.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Community Preservation Committee (to be established)

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Goal 4: Increase awareness of the arts and other cultural activities in Granby

Strategy 1: Promote Granby's Local Cultural Council and make the activities of the council more visible to the public.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Granby Cultural Council

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 2: Apply for funds through the Massachusetts Cultural Council to support local cultural programs.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Granby Cultural Council

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion:

Strategy 3: Provide opportunities and sites for display of artwork by residents and students.

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Granby Cultural Council, Granby Public Library, Granby Public Schools and Selectboard

Resources Needed:

Target Date for Completion: