

CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES

Chapter Goal

OVERVIEW

Granby's current infrastructure reflects its traditionally rural character, and its recent suburban growth. Over the next twenty years, as the town strives to meet its vision of becoming a more sustainable community, it is important to carefully consider how public infrastructure systems, such as water, sewer, and municipal buildings, will influence future growth scenarios in the community. In addition, public services, such as the fire, police, and highway departments, not only need to continue to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Granby citizens, but also function in a manner that is efficient and sustainable. In recent years, the Town has taken significant steps to reevaluate its infrastructure needs not only to address the current issues but also to plan for the future.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Water Supply

The drinking water that town residents receive from individual wells or town systems comes from ground water, streams, rivers, springs or lakes in a watershed. Although some water requires treatment before use, this is a significant share of safe and potable drinking water used by the public. Protecting drinking water sources usually requires the combined efforts of many partners such as public water management authority, town officials and the community members.

Since the town of Granby does not have its own public water supply system, over 90 percent of the population utilizes individual on-site wells. Private community water systems serve 6 percent of the population, while two percent is served by a private water company, Bachelor Knolls, Inc. South Hadley Fire District #1 and #2 provide water to the remaining two percent of Granby's population.

The South Hadley Fire District #1, which draws water from the Quabbin Reservoir, provides some water to the southeastern section of the town. A water main flows along New Ludlow Road on the easterly side of Morgan Street. This supply provides water to about 250 residents in this area, which is near the Granby landfill.

South Hadley Fire District #2 provides water, as well as EMT services to a small section of the town abutting South Hadley. The framework for this collaboration was established through State Legislation. In recent years, this partnership became the center of a so-far unresolved dispute between the two communities. Residents in the area served by South Hadley District #2 brought up grievances that they were getting taxed by both towns for the services provided. Following public hearings and meetings among the officials, Granby town officials decided to bring the matter to the Town Meeting in order to get a mandate to reach out to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and request that the relationship with District #2 be dissolved. The town of Granby will be able to service all affected areas for both their fire and EMT needs.

In the community survey, respondents strongly supported the town to take steps in protection of the water supply by increasing public education on Best Management Practices (BMPs) and random testing of residential wells. Examples of Best Management Practices for residential properties include proper disposal of household hazardous waste (such as car oil), proper pet waste disposal and reduction of fertilizers and pesticides on residential lawns. The town could also offer a program to test residential wells for coliform bacteria and high levels of nitrates and lead.

The town should consider taking advantage of funds offered through the Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program at Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. This program awards grants to municipalities and public water systems to purchase land near water sources and establish conservation restrictions to protect drinking water supplies.

The Fire Department stressed the need to carefully evaluate public water expansion in Granby, particularly around the business-zoned corridor on Rt. 202 from Five Corners to the town center. This would have two primary objectives: providing sustainable water sources in the business areas and allowing for cost effective fire protection in business facilities. The lack of easy access to public water could affect the installation of sprinkler systems and might reflect on town residents' home insurance premiums.

Sewer Service

The existing sewer system that connects to the South Hadley sewer system is located in the Five Corners commercial area on the west side of Town. It was constructed in the late 1990's and consists of approximately 21,000 linear feet (l.f.)

of 8" PVC sanitary sewer, approximately 1,000 l.f. of 6" force main, 635 l.f. of 4" force main, approximately 100 manholes and approximately 500 l.f. of low pressure sewer.

There are also two pumping stations in Granby. The West State Street (Rt. 202) pumping station located at Stony Brook has a pumping rate of approximately 250 gallons per minute (GPM). The Pleasant Street pumping station has a pumping rate of approximately 80 GPM. Both stations have two centrifugal submersible pumps with a lift-out rail system, junction box and electrical panel. The West State Street pumping station also has a permanent generator on-site. All of the flow from the system is collected at the West State Street pumping station where it is then transmitted via a 6" PVC force main to an existing manhole in South Hadley.

In addition to the sewer system connected to South Hadley, there are also two community systems in Town which serve approximately 48. One is a community septic system in the northwest corner of Town was built for the properties along Smith Avenue and Leo Drive. The other is a community septic system that serves the Oak Drive area, including the Granby Heights Condominium Complex.

The two community systems, collection system, low pressure system and pumping stations are operated and maintained by the Granby Department of Public Works. The Town has a contract with the wastewater treatment plant staff from Belchertown Department of Public Works to inspect the pumping stations periodically.

The Town has been considering whether to install sewers in the New Ludlow Road area. This area is densely populated with small lot sizes, poor soils, and a high groundwater table making it difficult to maintain septic systems that meet Title V regulations. The on-site septic systems are predominately old installations and many have failed over the years, leading to environmental and pollution problems.

In 2009, the town began initial phase of a project to determine whether to install additional sewer in the New Ludlow Road area. This proposed sewer extension project would have enabled landowners in this area to connect to a sewer system and avoid some of the aforementioned Title V and environmental issues. With this type of infrastructure improvement, this area could be more suitable for mixed use development. This project was voted down at the 2010 Town Meeting.

Wastewater

In 2009, Granby selected AECOM, an engineering consultant, to prepare a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP). The CWMP is currently being prepared in accordance with Massachusetts DEP guidelines and will update the previous plan revised in 1981. The CWMP will provide data and analysis on existing conditions, and provide recommendations for future wastewater management needs. The final plan was presented to the Selectboard in late 2012.

The Town currently provides sanitary sewer access to 336 commercial and residential users that connect to the South Hadley sewer system. Granby is served almost entirely by on-site septic systems, generally consisting of a septic tank with a leaching field, serving an individual property and constructed entirely within the boundary of a house lot.

Current Title V Health Code requirements for sizing of subsurface disposal systems dictate that each new home have a minimum 1,500 gallon septic tank for settling out heavy solids and a leaching field sized to provide an effective area based on a flow of 110 gallons of wastewater per bedroom. In addition, 100% reserve areas are required to be located on-site and there are further requirements for distances from water supply wells and boundaries.

Septage is a term used to describe solids that accumulate in septic tanks that are part of an overall on-site system servicing a specific property. Periodically the septage stored in the septic tank is pumped out and trucked off site for disposal usually to a wastewater treatment plant.

The Board of Health manages the on-site systems and their subsequent septage for the Town of Granby. Since the new Title 5 regulations have been in effect (March 31, 1995), septage haulers are required to supply the Granby Board of Health with a record of all septage pumped from septic systems in Granby. This data is permanently filed with the Granby Board of Health.

Granby currently has two executed inter-municipal agreements (IMA) in place. The IMA with South Hadley indicates South Hadley will receive, transport, and treat wastewater flow from the sewered portion of Granby. Under this agreement, South Hadley will provide capacity in its wastewater system for 85,000 gpd of average daily flow and 300,000 gpd of peak wastewater flow. The average daily flow from Granby is currently approximately 28,000 gpd. South

Hadley periodically monitors Granby wastewater for compliance with flows and wastewater strengths. The IMA began in July, 1990 and has a duration of 30 years.

The Town of Granby also has an IMA with Chicopee. In the agreement, Chicopee will receive, transport and treat wastewater flow from the proposed New Ludlow Road sewer area. The IMA was executed in October, 2007 and has a duration of 30 years.

Broadband Infrastructure

In 2008, Governor Deval Patrick created the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) as part of the Broadband Act. The mission of the MBI is to extend affordable high-speed Internet access to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices, and other public places across the state. The Act gives the MBI the authority to invest up to \$40 million of state bond funds in broadband infrastructure.

One of the first steps of the MBI was to map broadband access in all communities across the state. According to MBI, Granby has access to two broadband providers, or what MBI refers to as a “duopoly”. These providers are Granby Telephone & Telegraph (currently operated by OTT Communications) and Comcast. In comparison to other communities in Western Massachusetts, Granby has a higher level of broadband services than most municipalities, which are considered to be “underserved” or “unserved”. In comparison to all communities in Massachusetts, Granby has the same availability to providers as most of the communities in eastern and central Massachusetts, with exception to the greater Boston area, which has access to three providers.

The MBI and WesternMA Connect, the regional non-profit organization committed to increasing broadband infrastructure in Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, and Berkshire Counties, are currently applying for federal stimulus awards for broadband. In addition, the Governor announced in 2009 that \$4.3 million in state bonds would be used to layout 55-miles of fiber-optic network along the Interstate 91 corridor in western Massachusetts.

Since Granby has a higher level of broadband services than most communities in western Massachusetts, federal dollars are not likely to be directed to Granby at this time. However, as these programs move forward, town officials in Granby should be in contact with Western MA Connect to ensure that the town is included in any future broadband infrastructure investments.

Road and Sidewalk Conditions

U.S. Route 202 is an interstate road system that runs from Delaware to Maine, with a section in the town of Granby. Built in 1971, Route 202 is north-south highway in Massachusetts and considered to be in average condition by Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). As a state highway, any future consideration to road widening or other road construction must be approved by MassDOT.

A computerized pavement management system is used to maintain the town's roadway assets. The pavement management system indicates that the town's expenditure on maintenance is not sufficient to keep up with the amount of roadwork required. Consequently, Granby's roads are deteriorating at an alarming rate.

An evaluation of the pavement management system provides the following findings: average overlays will last 10 to 12 years depending on traffic and soil conditions. Assuming a 15 year interval (stretching beyond the average 12 years), and dividing the total road miles in Granby (58 miles) by 15 the resulting number of road miles that should be overlaid or reconstructed each year is 3.8. The cost for an overlay in 2010 was slightly lower than the reconstruction cost of \$200,000 per mile. Using only the simple overlay cost of \$150,000 per mile, Granby's annual roadway maintenance budget should be a minimum of 3.8 times this amount, or \$537,000 per year. The town currently receives from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts approximately \$210,000 per year in chapter 90 money to perform this work. The bottom line is that unless the roadway maintenance budgets are more than doubled Granby's pavements will continue to deteriorate.

As mentioned in the Mobility chapter of this master plan, Granby possesses very few roads with sidewalks and there are few existing pedestrian connections in the town. The sidewalk inventory that was conducted for this master plan found that Granby has only six small regions with existing sidewalks. While lack of sidewalks may be consistent with the character of a rural town, results of the community survey found that Granby residents are in favor of increased sidewalk network. Fifty-eight percent of community survey respondents believed that the town does not provide adequate sidewalks in their neighborhood, and 32 percent support building more sidewalks. In recent years, the Granby Planning Board has attempted to increase the sidewalk network in town by requiring all new subdivision developments to include sidewalks.

Throughout the public engagement process of the master plan, several areas in the community were identified as priorities for sidewalk creation. There is a need to connect Five Corners to Crescent Street, on the northside of the highway and the new Library to Maximillian Drive. This would provide residents of Phins Hill access to goods and services at Five Corners while connecting certain residential areas to the local schools. In 2011, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation has conducted extensive surveys along Route 202 to determine the need for and feasibility of sidewalks. A decision or a project timeline has not yet been announced as of the end of 2012.

Public Safety

In 2010, construction of a new Public Safety Facility, combining police, fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was completed. The complex was built on the property know as the Aldrich Field in the center of Town. The building is approximately 18,000 square feet. Prior to the construction of the Safety Complex, Police and Fire Departments were operating in outdated and physically insufficient structures. The Police Department occupied the former Dinosaur Museum on West State Street while the Fire Department used the offices in the basement of Kellogg Hall and the garages behind the same building.

The new facility allows interoperability between public safety agencies. The building features advanced technology and incorporates office space. A state-of-the-art centralized dispatch room serves all departments and allows monitoring at all three public schools; a booking area.

The Police Department offers storage for evidence and other materials; a conference room that is also made available for meetings of various town committees; locker rooms and showers; as well as a firearms licensing room which is secure from the remainder of the station.

On the Fire Department wing, the design includes an administrative area used for day-to-day functions such as inspections, records, and fire prevention services and code enforcement. Additionally, there is a multi-function room which is used for professional training; another for internet training and media functions; a room dedicated to medical records; kitchen facilities; and an area for volunteers to assemble. There are two bunk rooms allowing for overnight stays during storm coverage and to expand volunteer availability. Member have access

to lockers and showers. The apparatus garage area offers approximately 8000-square-feet where all vehicles can be parked. Also available in this area is the support function to refill air tanks and wash firefighting gear as well as dedicated storage for EMS supplies, and a general tool and work room. All firefighter gear will be in air dry lockers extending the life of this investment. Lastly, the apparatus floor will allow room for all units to be stored indoors with room to work around and maintain units.

In 2011, Granby's Police Department had a total of 41 officers, including dispatchers, auxiliary officers, one K-9 officer to service the community at large and a resource officer who is primarily located at the Granby Jr./Sr. High School and serving the school district. In addition to providing general policing, the department is also involved in community programs. The department works closely with the Granby School Department to offer RADkids, DARE, and summer programs. The department also offers crime prevention information, safety materials, and a Citizen Dispute Resolution Program to hear and try to resolve issues between residents in a peaceful way.

The Granby Fire Department responds to over 550 ambulance calls and approximately 150 fire calls annually, on average. The Granby Fire Department consists of ten pieces of fire apparatus ranging from engines, search and rescue vehicles, and ambulance. The Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services had a total of 37 members of 3 of whom work in both departments. The departments provide full time service during the day and scheduled on call service in the evenings.

Highway Department

The Highway Department office and storage facility is located at 15 Crescent Street. It consists of an eleven thousand square foot metal building. The Department has six full time employees.

Highway Department is responsible for maintenance of 58 miles of roadways, 42,596 feet of storm-drain pipes and culverts, over 470 catch basins. In addition, the department mows all the lawns at the town parks and schools which adds up to approximately 120 acres per week.

The Department is also responsible for roadside mowing, tree trimming and removal. The staff maintains the sewer system in town, including the servicing of sewer pump stations and generators, as well as annually cleaning approximately

1/3 of the catch basins and providing outfall inspections as required under the NPDES stormwater discharge permit.

Because there is no Park Department all miscellaneous duties such as emptying trash cans weekly at the town parks, preparation of baseball fields in the spring, and maintenance on the irrigation system at Brown Ellison Park is performed by Highway Department personnel.

Winter snow removal and de-icing operations are performed solely by town employees. No outside contractors are used. A few part time seasonal employees are used to supplement the workforce because there are only six employees in the department and it requires a minimum of eight to ten employees to effectively accomplish snow removal operations.

An examination of 2011 data published by the Department of Revenue reveals that the per capita spending on public works in Granby is one of the lowest in the state with \$75.01 per capita. Only 24 communities spend less, which places Granby in the bottom 6% of all communities in the state.

Comparing highway spending to surrounding towns also results in a similar picture. As spending per capita can yield unreliable results when comparing large communities with high population densities (the per capita spending appears very low), highway spending per mile may be a more reliable indicator. Granby's highway spending per mile is lower than most all of the surrounding communities. In fact, some of the neighboring cities and towns annually spend 50% more per mile of roadway than Granby.

As such, Highway Department is operating with a minimal staff and budget. Any budget reductions in the future would lead to significant reductions in services provided. In order to address services such as improved maintenance at parks, increased lawn mowing or improved roadside tree trimming, it is necessary to consider funding the department to enable this work.

Municipal Buildings

Town Hall (Kellogg Hall)

Built in 1872, Kellogg Hall, also known as Granby Town Hall, was once used as a school building and was also the sight of the Town's first library. . Following a heating system failure in 2010, the historic building was vacated and town offices

were moved from Kellogg Hall to Aldrich Hall. In 2009, several offices in Town Hall, including the Town Clerk's office, had already moved to the building that previously housed the Granby Telephone Company. This location provides an efficient workspace and comfortable environment for these town offices. In 2010, the Annual Town Meeting voted to postpone any plans to fix Kellogg Hall until a more detailed strategy has been put together. An Office Space Ad Hoc Committee recommended against using town funds to renovate Kellogg Hall but emphasized that Kellogg Hall should be saved, preferably by a private party. This recommendation is consistent with the feedback received from the town residents during the initial master plan public sessions which reflected the concern for the state of the Town Hall. At that time, about half of survey respondents supported the idea of renovating the existing building.

Aldrich Hall

Aldrich Hall was used as a Town building and hosted the senior center as well as Granby's public access television station for many years. It also provided a much needed meeting space for various town committees and boards. As mentioned above, it also served as an interim Town Hall from 2010 to December 2012. The aforementioned Office Space Committee concluded that Aldrich Hall should be demolished as soon as it is vacated. Aside from the insufficient space, issues with the structural integrity, heating, cooling, water and mold were also cited as reasons supporting that recommendation. The funding for that demolition work will be discussed and voted upon at a Special Town Meeting in 2013.

All town offices that were located at Aldrich Hall moved to the available space at the Granby Senior Center in December 2012 until a permanent space is identified.

Granby Public Library

The Granby Free Public Library celebrated its 90th anniversary in December 2007 and is run by a dedicated staff and volunteer Board. It is extensively used by the community but is inadequate in its capacity. The library built a three-season pavilion in 2008 as a temporary measure to address over-crowding and lack of space for community activities. The building is in average condition but the library has outgrown the current structure's capacity.

A new community library was planned as part of the proposed school complex in 2008,. The Library Building Committee had secured a \$1 million grant to upgrade the facility; however the project never materialized when the school project was rejected by the Town Meeting. Almost immediately following the

vote, Library Trustees charged ahead with a new initiative to build a stand-alone structure to meet the challenges presented by the inadequate space for books and activities as well as lacking technological infrastructure at the original Andrew Carnegie building. In July 2011, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners awarded the library project a provisional grant of \$2.6 million. A generous land donation by Alice Stewart and a \$200 thousand contribution by Thomas Bombardier, followed by a flurry of very successful fundraising activities reached a total of about 70 percent of the project cost. In 2012, Town Meeting approved a motion to fund the remainder of the project. The new library building is slated to open by mid-2013.

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The town has learned valuable lessons through its experience with its municipal buildings. Structures tend to age and complete their useful lives. Regular maintenance is of utmost importance to prolong their lives.

With a series of successful projects now behind or in progress, the town needs to concentrate on addressing the issue regarding a new town hall and its school buildings.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1:

Strategy 1: Work with Mass Highway & PVPC to assure construction of Sidewalks where roads are built

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Select Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time, consultants

Target Date for Completion: 2014

Strategy 2: Consider expansion of water and sewer systems

Action Steps

Responsible Party: Select Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time, consultant

Target Date for Completion: 2015