Town of Granby

FY12 Community Development Strategy (CDS)

Introduction

This Community Development Strategy summarizes the Town of Granby's recent strategic planning efforts, provides highlights of the town's relevant planning documents and identifies the town's most significant development goals. These goals will shape the town's future community development efforts including the investment of public funds. The Town of Granby has identified its needs and goals, including projects for funding through the CDBG program, through a thorough review of its existing planning documents, reports and studies. These have all involved significant local input and are reflective of the desires of the community.

E.O 418 Community Development Plan (2004)

Granby has completed its Community Development Plan under E.O. 418 in consultation with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. The Plan is intended as a guide to the community's future development, with a focus on four key areas: housing, economic development, open space and resource protection, and transportation. The efforts of this planning process were overseen by the Granby Community Development Plan Committee. Specific economic development goals identified includes the adoptions of a phased growth, mixed use development, and site plan approval bylaws, and also to promote affordable housing on town owned land.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (2001, revised in 2004)

In August 2004, the town updated a comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan, which spells out an extensive list of goals and policies over a range of focus areas including historic preservation, growth management, water resources, fisheries and wildlife, forest and vegetation, agriculture, soils, scenic qualities, recreational activities, and general environmental protection. The plan provides specific action steps to achieve each of these goals and an action agenda to move the process forward.

Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Plan (2003)

The Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Plan evolved from a Regional Housing Plan that was developed in 1994 for the entire 43 municipality Pioneer Valley Region. In the summer of 2000 in response to E.O. 418, the subregional towns began to compile new data about their affordable housing needs and their efforts at unit production and rehabilitation. This Plan provides an updated "snapshot" of regional demographics and housing indicators, a description of housing needs, and recommendations for addressing those needs.

Granby Master Plan (Draft-2010)

The Town of Granby is currently in the process of finalizing its Master Plan as a result of intense work by Granby's Master Plan Committee, residents, Town officials, staff, volunteers and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. The Plan provides specific strategies and actions steps in the elements of Housing, Economic Development, Open Space and Recreation, Land Use and Development, Cultural and Historical Resources, Mobility, Public Infrastructure, Energy, Education and Community Building.

Future Community Development Efforts

In the immediate future, the Town will address the goals defined in these efforts through a variety of community development activities and through a combination of local, state, and federal funding:

Housing

- Create policies and bylaws that support an adequate range of housing options to meet existing and projected needs for residents of different age and income levels such as a Phased Growth bylaws and Affordable Housing Zoning bylaws.
- Rehabilitate existing housing to preserve neighborhoods, historic structure and affordability.

Economic Development

- Create an economic development board, committee, or staff position whose responsibilities would be to encourage business and job growth in Granby targeted at designated mixed use commercial/residential areas.

- Encourage infrastructure development (e.g. broadband technology, sewer, water, drainage, roadway, parking, and transit) and physical improvements where the community wants development to occur – New Ludlow Road, Five Corners, or the Old Seminary property.
- Support mixed use commercial/residential infill development at the West Street School when it is no longer used as a school.

Open Space and Recreation

- Maintain lands currently owned by the Town of Granby to provide accessibility and utilization by residents.
- Develop a plan to acquire additional land in order to preserve open areas of natural beauty and environmental importance.
- Ensure that future development is situated so that while affordable housing is provided for all Granby residents, minimal adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts occur and the rural character of Granby is maintained.

Land Use

- Adopt green-building codes, including requiring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification (or certification eligibility) for all new construction, and for significant renovations, including residential (or using Energy Start depending on research) and possibly by starting with a phased approach focusing on workforce housing.
- Develop a Forest Management plan for the town forest located behind Dufresne Park.
- Continue Town efforts to extend sewer infrastructure along New Ludlow Road.
- Update zoning to encourage mixed use development in both residential and commercial zones.
- Selectively invest in infrastructure improvements to direct new residential units to areas the community has identified for growth.

Historic and Cultural Resources

- Promote use of the town center common for community cultural activities.
- List historic resources on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Fix and maintain historic buildings in town.
- Promote Granby's existing historic and cultural institutions.

Circulation and Transportation

- Continue use of the local pavement management system to identify and prioritize roadway maintenance projects.
- Support alternative travel options by adding bike lanes and sidewalks linking residential areas to schools.
- Plan for the impact of future growth along the Route 202 corridor by developing an access management plan in cooperation with MassHighway District 2, the Granby Highway Department, local emergency responders, and other appropriate local agencies.
- Work with MassHighway District 2 to discuss the feasibility of incorporating Sidewalks and Shoulders into proposed resurfacing work along the Route 202 corridor.

Services and Facilities

- Assure construction of new school complex and expanded library, while maintaining the existing historic library structure and re-using it for a Town purpose. Assure public involvement in the decision about the library's re-use.
- Explore options to renovate and modernize town buildings and infrastructure such as the Town Hall and the Housing Authority property.
- Explore options to move the Council on Aging to the old West Street School or to a new facility as Aldrich hall is in terrible condition.

Natural Resources

- Monitor water quality at sample stations located at Forge Pond and Batchelor Brook.
- Consider revising Aquifer Protection zoning bylaw to assure protection of water supply.
- Establish reduced salt areas on a greater network of roads prioritizing areas with sensitive habitats.
- Randomly test residential wells.
- Invest in a public outreach campaign about water quality, protection areas, and supply.

Consistency with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles

1. Concentrate Development and Mix Uses – Much of Granby's planning efforts are directed to redeveloping existing infrastructure, utilities and buildings. As noted, the Town intends to maintain the historic buildings throughout the town and reuse buildings such as the West Street School and the existing historic library structure. The Town continues to recognize the importance of revitalizing the Town Center in order to encourage a pedestrian friendly densely populated open space by promoting mixed use.

2. Advance Equity – Many of the Town's strategic and community planning efforts have involved exhaustive community support. This is especially evident by the public outcry and support to update the Open Space and Recreation Plan intended to preserve the rural character and unique beauty that is much a part of Granby's history and significance.

3. Make Efficient Decisions – Although the Town desires to maintain a small town character, it realizes the importance of growth and development and has not imposed onerous and unnecessary development or permitting requirements.

4. Protect Land and Ecosystem – The Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan supports overall preservation and conservation practices that promotes acquisition of land with an intent to restore environmentally sensitive areas and also with an intent to increase the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open spaces and recreational areas.

5. Use Natural Resources Wisely – The Town continually works with regional, state and federal agencies to protect sensitive and important land and natural resources within the community. As noted, planning efforts by the Town identify strategies that both use and monitor natural resources wisely.

6. Expand Housing Opportunities – The Town has addressed the potential for expanding its housing opportunities through various proposed bylaw changes which will allow flexible residential development and similar options as noted in the draft Master Plan and the Community Development Plan. The Town is also pursuing funding for housing rehabilitation which will result in the preservation of existing affordable housing stock.

7. Provide Transportation Choice – There is no town-wide public transit service in the Town of Granby. However, the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) provides two different fixed bus routes that operate during the average school year. In addition to the fixed route bus service, PVTA provides ParaTransit Van Service for seniors and disabled residents in the Town of Granby.

8. Increase Job and Business Opportunities – The Town continues to promote and encourage economic development in the community. The Town's planning documents, more specifically the draft Master Plan, demonstrates an effort to support growth of local businesses and encourage, promote, and support agricultural businesses.

9. Promote Clean Energy – The Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan and the Draft Master Plan supports overall preservation and conservation practices, which is consistent with the promotion of clean energy and renewable resources.

10. Plan Regionally – The Town has been an active participant in numerous regional or subregional efforts including the Western Pioneer Valley Subregional Housing Plan and membership with a regional planning district.

Community Development Target Area

The Town of Granby will concentrate its community development activities along a portion of the Route 202 corridor, including the Town's center. The target area builds off of the 2000 Census Demographic Profile (CDF) and continues south between Morgan Street and South Street ending at the Town Line. The target area falls in the US Census tract 8209 (block groups 2 and 9). This area contains the majority of the Town's low and moderate income population and substandard housing units as well as most of the Town's local businesses.

Prioritization of Projects

We believe that based on the content of this comprehensive document, the following represents the areas of need and projects which are a priority of the Town of Granby.

1. Housing
   - Support and seek funding as necessary for the provision of various housing assistance across a broad range of incomes, age groups and demographics including but not limited to housing rehabilitation, and the construction or conversion of units as "affordable" for low and moderate income persons.
   - Amend zoning to address various housing issues. The Town is considering adopting a few housing related zoning amendments (Accessory Apartments and Congregate Care and Assisted Living Facilities).

2. Infrastructure and Building Improvements
   - Assure construction of sidewalks when roads are built and/or maintained in prioritized locations as identified in the sidewalk inventory survey.
   - Review and modify, as needed, the Town of Granby's zoning regulations to require all new development to include a detailed assessment of the effect of the new development on Granby's public health, land use, traffic, community character, public need, and water quality without placing an undue burden on developers thereby discouraging them from building in Granby.

3. Recreational Opportunities and Open Space
   - Continue protection of existing water resources including wetlands, aquifers and their recharge areas, streams, ponds and floodplains.
   - Continue to promote the Town's scenic, cultural and historic resources.
   - Protect important natural features.
   - Maintain and preserve the Town's agricultural landscape in all town policies, regulations, and incentives program.

Discussed and approved on October 17, 2011 by the Granby Board of Selectmen.

By:

Mark L. Bail, Chair

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