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July 16, 2025
File No. 15.0167378.00

Mike Walsh, Town Manager
Town of Granby
15 North Granby Road
Granby, CT 06035

Re: Granby Recreation Facilities Analysis
Summary Memorandum
Granby Parks and Recreation Department

Dear Mr. Walsh,

In accordance with GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. ("GZA")'s December 19, 2024 Proposal for Professional Services, we are pleased to provide the Town of Granby ("Town; Client") this summary memorandum describing GZA's efforts in producing the attached Master Plans for Salmon Brook Park and Ahrens Park, hereinafter referred to collectively as the Project. GZA's efforts included a site analysis of existing conditions at the two Town-owned parks, a public engagement process, and development of the two conceptual Master Plans.

This summary memorandum is subject to the limitations included in **Attachment A**. Copies of the Master Plans, public meeting presentations, and online survey results are included as attachments to this letter, respectively.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Town of Granby, Connecticut is fortunate to have two generously sized public parks located near the center of town: Salmon Brook Park and Ahrens Park. Salmon Brook Park is a well-used, 116-acre park which offers a wide range of recreational programming and facilities. Ahren's Park offers additional open space with less formal programming and is 45 acres in size.

Salmon Brook Park has served as a public open space since the early 20th century and became formalized as a public park in the early 21st century with many of its existing recreational facilities developed within the past two decades. Ahrens Park was owned by the Ahrens family until 2003 when the town acquired it as a protected open space.

Recreational facilities at Salmon Brook Park currently include softball and baseball fields, soccer and lacrosse fields, tennis and pickleball courts, playgrounds, a dog park, a horse ring, a swimming pond and bath house, a band shell, picnic pavilions, memorial gardens, the Park House building (with offices and public meeting room), a restroom building, walking paths, and access to hiking trails.



Ahren's Park is less programmed. Its formal recreational facilities are limited to a collection of multi-purpose sports fields, a restroom and pavilion building, a bocce court, and the Town's community gardens.

In 2022, to better understand the community's needs, the Town conducted a public survey to learn about park usage, asking what additional elements and programs town residents would like the two parks to have. Possible park improvements that ranked highly included: ice skating area, splash pad, walking paths, additional seating, skate park, and pickleball courts. Over the following two years, the Town began to implement some of these improvements, including new walking paths throughout Salmon Brook Park and the conversion of Salmon Brook Park's tennis court to multi-purpose tennis and pickleball courts.

As these new elements began to be added to the park, and due to fact that park features have varying lifespans requiring updates or replacement, the Town recognized the need for developing a master plan to guide future development and management of the two parks to ensure future improvements are well-coordinated, reflect the community's goals, and make effective use of available resources. To meet this need, the Town engaged GZA to perform the Recreation Facilities Analysis, or "Study", of the two parks. GZA's Study included an inventory of existing conditions, public engagement, and development of master plans for the two parks. The results of the Study are summarized in the following sections of this memorandum.

EXISTING CONDITIONS INVENTORY

REVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS: SALMON BROOK PARK

GZA reviewed existing site conditions through site visits, GIS mapping, and review of available site plans and documents. GZA found that most of the Town-managed park facilities at Salmon Brook Park are well-maintained and in good condition. Site features that were in need of repair or showing their age included the large playground located at the southern end of the park. Additionally, the informal gravel path connecting the Route 20 parking lot to the soccer fields has experienced erosion likely due to its steepness and lack of proper drainage measures.

Based on conversations with Town staff, GZA learned that sanitary sewer, electrical, and water utilities serve the southern end of the park. Water in the park is sourced from a well located within the park. Irrigation extends throughout the whole developed portion of the park, as far north as the soccer fields.

As its name implies, Salmon Brook Park is located alongside Salmon Brook, and occupies the low-lying, flat topography typically associated with a riparian floodplain. The FEMA Flood Hazard survey for Salmon Brook does not extend into the Project site; however, from conversations with Granby Town staff and park stakeholders, GZA heard that Field 2 and the adjacent playground area flood during heavy rain events, into portions of Field 1. Based on review of publicly-available LIDAR contour data of the site's topography, GZA has estimated the extent of the flood-prone area that had been described, for master planning purposes. Town staff also described to GZA that the edge of Field 3 (third base to home plate) floods periodically, as does the adjacent dog park; though somewhat less frequently and extensively than the playground/ Field 2 area.



REVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS: AHRENS PARK

Ahrens Park is located north of Granby Center on Hungary Road. The developed portion of the park is situated on a flat plateau, while the wooded portions of the site occupy lower-lying riparian areas adjacent to the east branch of Salmon Brook. The site contains football and lacrosse fields, as well as a baseball field in a neglected condition which is not routinely used by the Town's sports leagues. There is also a pavilion and restroom building on the site, a parking lot, and a bocce court. At the north end of the site is the Town's community gardens, which are separated from the rest of the site by a wooded area and have their own driveway entrance.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

GZA conducted phone interviews with representatives from sports leagues and community organizations ("stakeholders") who regularly use the park and/or maintain their own dedicated facilities within the park. This list of suggested stakeholders was provided by the Town and included:

- Granby Youth Lacrosse: Clay Morad
- Granby/East Granby Little League: Greg Dion
- Granby Rovers Soccer: Austin Busbey
- Granby Youth Football: Dave Collins and Mike Gero
- Granby Horse Council: Joan Davis
- D.O.G.G.S. (Dog Park): Martha Delaney
- Granby Community Gardens: Deborah Roe
- Children's Memorial: Jane Johnson
- Veterans Memorial Wall: Betty Hart
- Live Nativity: Rev. Clark Pfaff
- Town of Granby Summer Camps: Daphne Shinder

Each interview consisted of a 15-30 minute conversation. GZA asked stakeholders about their use of the park and its facilities. Conversations touched upon how each group uses the park, which facilities they maintain, if there are any unmet needs or challenges they face, and if there is a need for coordination with other groups. The input from these conversations helped GZA to develop a holistic understanding of the two parks and how their various facilities and user groups interact, and was used in identifying areas for further public input in the online survey and public meetings (described in the following sections).

From the interviews, GZA learned that Ahrens Park's fields are almost never in use all at once, and therefore there is an opportunity to utilize some of this space for other uses (including potentially locating new facilities here or relocating features from Salmon Brook Park to Ahrens Park if additional space at Salmon Brook Park was needed). Overall, the stakeholder interviews revealed that there is generally good coordination among sports leagues and other uses of the park, resulting in a minimum of congestion and conflict during peak use times. Representatives



from Little League and Rovers Soccer indicated a desire to add lights to some or all of the sports fields, to extend the length of use during the season and usable hours for practices and games.

GZA also had discussions with Town of Granby staff about the parks. In discussions with Town staff, the Salmon Brook Park pickleball courts were identified as a key point of focus for the master plan. The existing tennis courts, which are adjacent to a residential complex, were recently updated to double as pickleball courts. These new pickleball courts have quickly become very popular and are highly used, and the resulting noise of pickleball games has resulted in frequent complaints to the Town from the adjacent residential neighbors. The Town identified a need to identify suitable locations for potentially relocating the pickleball courts.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: ONLINE SURVEY

GZA developed an online public survey consisting of thirteen questions about people's use of the two parks and desires for future improvements. The survey was distributed and advertised by the Town, on the town of Granby website and Town Facebook page, as well as on the Facebook pages of individual Town departments. The survey had a total of 619 respondents. Full survey results are included in **Attachment G**. Results from the survey showed that:

- People tend not to visit Ahrens Park, mainly because of a lack of things to do there.
- Interest in potential new recreational features at Salmon Brook Park included, in order:
 - Water spray deck / splash pad
 - Ice skating area
 - Updated playground
 - Adult fitness equipment
 - Pump track (course for bikes)
 - Skate park
- Interest in potential new recreational features at Salmon Brook Park included, in order:
 - Walking paths
 - Pickleball court
 - Playground
 - Pump track (course for bikes)
 - Water spray deck / splash pad
- There was interest in relocating the pickleball courts from Salmon Brook Park to Ahrens Park.
- There was support for adding lights to sports fields at the parks.
- Park visitors want additional restroom access at Salmon Brook Park.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Town of Granby held the first of two public meetings for the Project on April 1, 2025. GZA presented a slideshow presentation on the project background and site analysis and facilitated a group discussion to gather public input on future improvements to the parks. Public input heard at the meeting included:

- Ahrens Park is underutilized and has great potential.
- With its horse ring and connection to extensive woodland trails, Salmon Brook Park is a unique and important destination for equestrians in the region. There is a need for a few horse trailer parking spaces somewhere in the park.
- Improvements to the Route 20 parking lot path at Salmon Brook Park should be compatible with equestrian use.
- The existing larger playground at Salmon Brook Park is located adjacent to the brook, which adds a valuable aspect of nature and water access to the play environment.
- Salmon Brook Park needs an additional public restroom.
- Dedicated pickleball courts would be preferable over existing shared tennis/pickleball.
- The three-way intersection at Salmon Brook Park Road can be dangerous and would benefit from stop signs.

At the public meeting, GZA provided a “dot sticker” board activity, where participants could vote for potential new recreational facilities at both parks by placing stickers on the elements they were most interested in. The results of this activity were generally consistent with the online survey. This board is shown in **Attachment E**.

A second in-person public meeting was held in the Park House at Salmon Brook Park during the Parks Commission meeting on June 3, 2025. At this meeting, GZA shared draft master plans for the parks (Master Plans are described in the following section). Public input on the draft plans was limited and included discussion on whether the park’s existing parking lots would be able to support additional visitorship resulting from the proposed new recreational facilities depicted in the plans. In response to the discussions at this meeting, GZA revised the plans to include an expanded parking area. The final Master Plans for proposed conditions at Salmon Brook Park and Ahrens Park are described in the next section.

SALMON BROOK PARK AND AHRENS PARK MASTER PLAN

DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLANS

The proposed Conceptual Master Plans for both parks (**Attachments B and C**) depict a future condition in which the highest priority new program elements identified during this Study are arranged in response to the landscape constraints, usage conflicts, and program redundancies identified between both parks, resolving those elements in the process. Implementation of the proposed condition would occur in multiple phases over several years. The two sites’ plans are intrinsically tied to each other, because the added program



elements proposed at Salmon Brook Park are accommodated by relocating two of the smaller youth lacrosse fields to Ahrens Park, whose fields are not currently fully utilized.

In developing the master plans, GZA and the Town of Granby reviewed public meeting input and identified which elements made sense for inclusion in the recommendations for both parks, based on the effective use of Town resources, available space, and coordination with other recreational facilities in the region. Most of the elements that were repeatedly identified during the public engagement process are included in the master plan recommendations, with the notable exception of an ice skating area. Because there is an existing skating facility nearby in Simsbury (the International Ice Skating Center of Connecticut), the Town determined that developing one in Granby may not be worth the significant investment required.

The proposed design for Salmon Brook Park is built around the following major organizing schemes:

- **A corridor of new recreational facilities** is established between the Park House and the central parking lot, along the northeast edge of the swimming pond. This corridor is connected by new accessible paved pedestrian paths, and includes:
 - New **skatepark**
 - New **splash pad**
 - New **playground** (replaces existing playground currently in flood-prone southern area)
 - New dedicated **pickleball courts** adjacent to the central parking lot (these are relocated from the tennis courts, which revert to being dedicated tennis courts)

Space for this corridor is made available by relocating two smaller lacrosse fields to Ahrens Park, and relocating Field 3 (softball) to the north. The western edge of this corridor is converted to a vegetated floodplain shrub-meadow landscape, to help mitigate periodic flooding.

- **Reconfigured ballfields:** Ballfield 1 is rotated, and ballfields 3 and 5 are re-positioned and rotated, so that Fields 1 and 2 and Fields 3 and 5 have their backstops adjacent to one another for consolidated spectator and player access, and Fields 1 and 5 no longer are oriented with the batter facing south (batter facing south is less preferable because of the risk of being blinded by the sun). Ballfield lighting is added to these redeveloped fields, along with upgraded and accessible spectator seating. This reconfiguration of ballfields makes space for the recreation facilities corridor described above, while providing opportunity for improvements to the ballfields themselves as well as pedestrian circulation throughout the park.

Additional proposed improvements to Salmon Brook Park are described in the following section on project phasing.



PHASING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The sequence and phasing of the proposed work is based on both identified priority and spatial coordination. The proposed work should begin with the initial phases outlined below in Table 1. Phases may be combined based on availability of funding. Numbers in the “Plan Legend Number” column correspond to the numbered items on the Master Plan for each park, **Attachments B and C**.

Approximate ranges of costs are indicated for each proposed Park improvement, based on GZA’s experience with recent similar projects in the region. Please note that GZA’s assignment did not include any detailed design beyond the conceptual master planning level. As such, the ranges of potential costs should be considered “order of magnitude” and used for budgeting and comparison purposes only. Costs are assumed to be inclusive of “soft costs” such as survey, permitting, design/engineering, contingency, and publicly-bid construction. Costs are in 2025 dollars.

SALMON BROOK PARK: PROPOSED PARK IMPROVEMENTS, PHASES 1-5

TABLE 1: Salmon Brook Park, Proposed Park Improvements, Phases 1 - 5				
Phase	Recommendation	Description	Plan Legend Number	Potential Cost Range
1A	Route 20 Path to Soccer Fields, Improvements for Pedestrian and Equestrian Use	Upgrade the existing path to the Route 20 parking lot, by adding paved surfacing as well as stairs at the steepest sections. Develop an unpaved equestrian trail parallel to this. Expand ADA accessibility from the central parking lot to the soccer fields, connecting to the improved Route 20 path. This is listed as part of Phase 1 because the Town has already received a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant from the State of Connecticut to implement this project.	19	\$600,000-\$700,000
1B	Salmon Brook Park Pickleball Courts and Relocation of Lacrosse Fields	Relocate the two smaller lacrosse fields from Salmon Brook Park to Ahren’s park (the two small lacrosse fields that are currently closest to the swimming pond and central parking lot). Build a new pickleball court in Salmon Brook Park off the southern end of the central parking lot (four dedicated pickleball courts, with fencing and lighting). Revert existing court to dedicated tennis.	2, 14	\$400,000-\$500,000



TABLE 1: Salmon Brook Park, Proposed Park Improvements, Phases 1 - 5				
Phase	Recommendation	Description	Plan Legend Number	Potential Cost Range
2	Salmon Brook Park Ballfields 3 and 5	Relocate ballfield 3 and re-orient ballfield 5 into configuration shown on Master Plan. Add upgraded and accessible seating, lights, and scoreboards to redeveloped ballfields.	16, 17	\$500,000-\$600,000
3	Playground (Ages 5-12)	Develop a new playground for ages 5-12 in the location shown on Master Plan.	13	\$400,000-\$600,000
4A	Utilities: Electrical, Water, and Sanitary Expansion	Install utilities for the proposed restroom building and splash pad. This should include a study of available water supply which may result in the installation of an additional well to support the proposed features, or alternatively, may result in design recommendations for restroom and spray features with lower water usage.	12, 15	\$200,000-\$300,000
4B	Restroom	Develop a new restroom building between Fields 3 and 5 and relocated pickleball court, by central parking lot. Assumes utilities are in place from Phase 4A.	15	\$500,000-\$1,000,000
4C	Splash Pad	Develop a new splash pad or misting area in the location shown on the Master Plan. Assumes utilities are in place from Phase 4A.	12	\$250,000-\$350,000



SALMON BROOK PARK: ADDITIONAL PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The following improvements listed in Table 2 are less dependent on sequencing of other project phases and could be implemented as stand alone projects at the Town's discretion.

TABLE 2: Salmon Brook Park, Additional Park Improvements			
Recommendation	Description	Plan Legend Number	Potential Cost Range
3-Way Stop Intersection	Reconfigure the Salmon Brook Park Road 3-way intersection to a 3-way stop intersection (4-way stop including DPW parking lot drive) and reconfigure the parking lot by the smaller playground for safety and improved usage of space.	4	\$150,000-\$200,000
Skate Park	Develop a 10,000 SF skate park in the location shown in the Master Plan.	11	\$800,000-\$1,000,000
Nature Play	Develop a nature-play area and gathering space in the flood-prone southern area (where larger playground is proposed to be relocated from), which can be utilized by summer camp programs as well as for general nature-play, including brook access.	9	\$300,000-\$500,000
New Accessible Parking Lot	Expand the central parking area into the space adjacent to the horse ring and soccer field, to create a new accessible parking lot (and associated stormwater management).	18	\$250,000-\$350,000
Multiple Exercise Stations Along Path	Develop 5 adult fitness equipment stations at intervals along the park walking path; each station includes safety surfacing and shade trees.	6	\$200,000-\$400,000
Seating Along Path	Install 5 additional seating areas along walking trails, including shade and memorial benches.	—	\$20,000-\$50,000
Accessible Walkways	Expand paved accessible walkways to more of the park features, including pavilions, and install ADA upgrades to the band shell.	8, 10	\$100,000-\$200,000



TABLE 2: Salmon Brook Park, Additional Park Improvements			
Recommendation	Description	Plan Legend Number	Potential Cost Range
Landscaped Entrance, Memorials	Install landscape improvements to Veterans Memorial Wall and Children's Garden, including accessible pathways carefully designed to compliment the spaces, topsoil and planting improvements to the gardens.	1	\$20,000-\$50,000
Upgraded Ballfields 1 and 2	Reconfigure and upgrade ballfields 1 and 2 (including lights) as shown on Master Plan	7	\$400,000-\$600,000
Expand Rt 20 Parking Lot	Expand the Route 20 parking lot to accommodate horse trailer parking and some additional car parking, and add a new second curb cut onto Route 20 for pull-through access.	20	\$250,000-\$350,000
DPW Parking Lot	Expand and reconfigure the parking lot by the DPW garage to better utilize the space while providing pedestrian access to Field 4 spectator areas.	3	\$150,000-\$250,000

AHRENS PARK: PROPOSED PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed design for Ahrens Park includes the elements listed below, in Table 3. These improvements can be somewhat flexible in terms of their phasing and sequencing:

TABLE 3: Ahrens Park, Proposed Park Improvements			
Recommendation	Description	Plan Legend Number	Potential Cost Range
Paved Walking Paths	Install paved, accessible walking paths around the field perimeters, connected to the parking lot.	6	\$200,000-\$300,000
Playground	Develop a playground (ages 2-5 and ages 5-12) adjacent to the existing pavilion/ restroom building	2	\$400,000-\$600,000



TABLE 3: Ahrens Park, Proposed Park Improvements			
Recommendation	Description	Plan Legend Number	Potential Cost Range
Football Field Lighting	Upgrade football field and install field lighting	5	\$300,000-\$400,000
Lacrosse Fields	Adjust layout of lacrosse fields to accommodate two small lacrosse fields relocated from Salmon Brook Park	7, 8, 9	\$5,000-\$10,000
Pump Track	Remove neglected baseball field and develop a pump track for bicycles in its location	4	\$600,000-\$1,000,000
Expanded Parking Lot	Develop a new parking area (and associated stormwater management) parallel to Park driveway entrance, with pull-through vehicular circulation, to expand parking capacity by about 50%.	1	\$250,000-\$350,000
Hiking Trails	Develop hiking trails in the wooded portion of the site, using the existing abandoned road/path down the hillside	10	\$50,000-\$100,000
Additional Pickleball Courts	Potentially develop additional new pickleball courts in the location shown on Ahrens Park Master Plan. Pickleball courts at this location would be in addition to the relocated courts proposed for Salmon Brook Park, not in place of them, since removing pickleball from Salmon Brook Park may result in informal use of the tennis courts for pickleball.	3	\$400,000-\$500,000

SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED PERMITS

Potential permits for the proposed park improvements may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

For any of the proposed improvements that occur within a wetland/watercourse, or within 100 feet measured horizontally from the boundary of any wetland, or within 200 feet of any vernal pool or watercourse, a permit would be required from the Town of Granby Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission. Work directly in a wetland or watercourse would also require a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



A new curb cut and driveway at the Route 20 parking lot would require an Encroachment Permit from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and a Town of Granby Driveway Permit.

Any proposed work impacting more than one acre of land will require a Construction General Permit (CGP) under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), which includes preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Installation of a new well would require a permit from the Farmington Valley Health District.

A Building Permit from the Town of Granby would be required for the construction of new buildings, outbuildings, or any improvement that requires the installation or movement of mechanical, electrical, heating or plumbing equipment or components.

CLOSING

We appreciate the opportunity to assist the Town of Granby on this project and look forward to discussing this with you further. Please contact us at (413) 726-2100 if you have any questions concerning this summary memorandum.

Very truly yours,
GZA GEOENVIRONMENTAL, INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Shaw'.

Daniel Shaw, PLA
Landscape Architect

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anja Ryan Duffy'.

Anja Duffy, PLA
Consultant / Reviewer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Lecco'.

Stephen Lecco,
For Nathaniel L. Russell, P.E.
Principal-in-Charge

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Limitations
- Attachment B – Salmon Brook Park Master Plan
- Attachment C – Ahrens Park Master Plan
- Attachment D – Public Meeting Presentation #1
- Attachment E – Public Meeting Dot Sticker Voting Boards
- Attachment F – Public Meeting Presentation #2
- Attachment G – Online Survey Results