



Granite Falls

Initial Conditions Report



Initial Conditions Report

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Date: March 13, 2025
RE: City of Granite Falls Civic Campus

Executive Summary

Community Characteristics & Context

Granite Falls, located within the breathtaking landscapes of Washington’s Cascade Mountains, is a gateway to abundant natural attractions and a rich historical backdrop. Originally a hub for logging and milling, it has evolved into a vibrant community, boasting steady population growth and a commitment to sustainable economic and cultural development. This report analyzes the demographic trends, Granite Falls' economic activities, tourism attractions, and cultural events; assesses transportation and land use; explores open space and environmental sustainability; and reviews historic preservation efforts to enhance the city's infrastructure and community services, providing a comprehensive overview of the city’s initial conditions as it stands today.

Granite Falls has experienced an 8.57% population growth, rising from 4,537 in 2020 to 4,926 in 2024, and is projected to reach 5,312 by 2028. The demographics skew heavily toward working age adults (25-54) and are predominantly white (76%) with 22.9% holding an associate's degree or higher. This workforce is equipped with a range of specialized and technical skills, crucial for roles in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, retail, and education. Economically, the city displays a mixed-income distribution: 30% of its residents earn below \$50K, 50% earn between \$50K and \$100K, and 20% earn above \$100K (Granite Falls, Washington Population 2024, 2024).

Economics, Tourism, and Culture

Tourism growth and downtown cultural festivities are important to the economic growth and culture of Granite Falls. In terms of Tourism, the Snohomish County Strategic Tourism Plan identified that Millennials accounted for 30% of all travel spending in 2007, surpassing spending

by Baby Boomers (Snohomish County, 2018). Granite Falls should leverage its proximity to outdoor recreation spaces, especially mountain biking trails as cycling is popular with this demographic. “Cycling is growing the fastest with young consumers – 4.36 million young adults (18-24) participated in cycling in 2012 versus 2.8 million in 2008” (Snohomish County, 2018). Collaboration between the city and nearby lodging operators should be considered to develop this market sector. Cultural activities also draw in thousands of tourists and locals alike. Municipal infrastructure will need to accommodate an influx of people for these events, such as Railroad Days (Oct, 2,400 people (COGF, 2024)), Show N’ Shine Car Show (Aug), and the Granite Falls Farmers Market (Jun-Aug). Per circulation diagrams (figures 16 - 19) for these events, we found that Cascade Avenue and S. Granite Avenue receives the most foot traffic. These streets will be central to the design of the downtown campus.

Land Use and Transportation

The existing built environment is conducive to the further development of Granite Falls’ civic campus; current zoning allows for the proposed uses, and the transportation network provides adequate capacity for vehicular and pedestrian access. However, we propose designating the campus as a Public/Institutional zone, creating dedicated cycling infrastructure, and creating a Parking Benefit District to better meet the city’s goals.

Granite Falls’ central business district is composed of 1 and 2-story buildings surrounded by a grid of single family homes. The civic campus comprises approximately 124,164 square feet of land located next to the commercial area and zoned as one of three designations: Public/Institutional, Public Park, or Central Business District. While each zone has a specific set of strengths, the most effective zoning application for the civic campus expansion is the Public/Institutional designation. This designation is aimed at providing public space and services and has the most flexible setback requirements to adapt to nearby properties and parcels.

Like most small towns in America, the car dominates how residents get around. Only 4% of residents walk or bike to work (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024), despite having well-maintained sidewalks, marked crosswalks, and curb cuts for ADA compliance in downtown. There is no dedicated cycling infrastructure in the area, and despite low speed limits (25 MPH or less), the only two traffic fatalities in Granite Falls in the past 10 years have been a cyclist and a motorcyclist. This speaks to a need to prioritize space for cyclists and to provide improved connections to the rest of the city. Public transit is minimal and underutilized in Granite Falls, with a single, hourly bus route (Community Transit 280) serviced from a 25-spot Park & Ride. No additional funding for public transit is included in the comprehensive plan. As a part of this project, we will consider moving the Park & Ride and repurposing the land and suggest the city reconsider funding public transit improvements.

There are approximately 260 free parking spaces surrounding the civic campus, concentrated along S Granite Ave and in surface lots on Galena Street. The city has identified increasing parking supply as a goal, especially for summer events such as for a car show – Show N’ Shine.

To more efficiently use available parking, we suggest considering the creation of a Parking Benefit District to manage parking volumes through fees which would then be reinvested into the community.

Open Space and the Environment

Open green spaces, and integrations with the non-built environment, are key to successfully activated city districts, contributing to the health and well-being of the community while reinforcing the city's connection to its natural surroundings. As such, it will be an integral part of our master plan for the city's municipal campus.

There are six developed parks within Granite Falls' park system, the centerpiece of which is Jim Holm Park, a 1.45 acres park offering a play area, skate park, covered gazebo, basketball facilities, and open grass for the community. The city also holds approximately 34 acres of undeveloped park land. The city currently uses a level of service standard that determines that community parks (10+ acres large) should have a ratio of 5-8 acres per 1,000 people and should be within $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the population that they are serving. Neighborhood parks (1-10 acres) should have a ratio of 2 acres per 1,000 people and be within $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 miles of the population they are serving (COGF, 2024). With a developed park acreage of 20 acres, Granite Falls satisfies this level of service standard with approximately 5 acres per 1,000 people and with most of the city's residential areas within a ten minute walk from a park.

With its well-maintained parks, commitment to environmental conservation, and strategic approach to open space development, Granite Falls continues to prioritize sustainability, accessibility, and community well-being through its open space planning efforts. The city sees these spaces as an opportunity for potential development into formal parks, hiking trails, or nature preserves, further strengthening Granite Falls' connection to its surrounding natural environment. As the city continues to grow and develop its downtown, Granite Falls will need to continue to develop new parks and opportunities to experience the region's natural beauty in order to maintain its current level of service, of which there are ample opportunities to do with Lots 2, 3, and 4.

Historic Preservation and Capital Projects

Granite Falls prioritizes historic preservation as a core element of its land use planning policy, recognizing the value of historic structures in enhancing community identity. Currently, Granite Falls does not have a landmark designation program. Instead, a 2015 inventory by the Snohomish County Historic Preservation Commission that identifies buildings over 50 years old is considered when reviewing building or demolition permits. There are two capital projects in scope for this effort: the adaptive reuse of the downtown fire house into a community center and the creation of a memorial to honor Granite Falls' veterans. Both projects were included in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan's budget (Veterans War Memorial Plaza - \$1.5 million, Community

Center - \$2.1 million). Other projects outside of the scope of this effort include a new Park & Ride with EV charging stations and the relocation of the Public Works building.

The firehouse, built in the early 1900s and renovated in 1995 and 2002, is currently owned and occupied by the fire department. The city is in negotiations to purchase the building and the adjacent parking lot and 0.5 acre Horseshoe Park by the end of 2025. The planned conversion includes opening up the existing bays to create a flexible event space. The major concerns for the fire house are its conformance with current seismic and building standards which is currently unknown past the 2002 renovation. This could present unexpected costs during conversion. As a community space, the building is appropriately zoned and well-suited to the use, with potential to generate ongoing revenue for the city.

The city's leadership has expressed a desire to locate a war memorial on a vacant parcel (Lot 1). While there is not currently design specifics for this memorial, the city suggested that a future memorial could be centrally located to align with the view of Mount Pilchuck in the distance. Plans for this memorial will be included in the overall development plans for the area.

Conclusion

Granite Falls is at a pivotal moment in its urban development trajectory. With careful planning and strategic investment in economic growth, transportation, open space, environmental sustainability, and historic preservation, the city can enhance its livability, strengthen its cultural identity, and improve long-term resilience. By fostering a balanced approach to development, Granite Falls can continue to be a thriving community that honors its past while embracing a sustainable and prosperous future.

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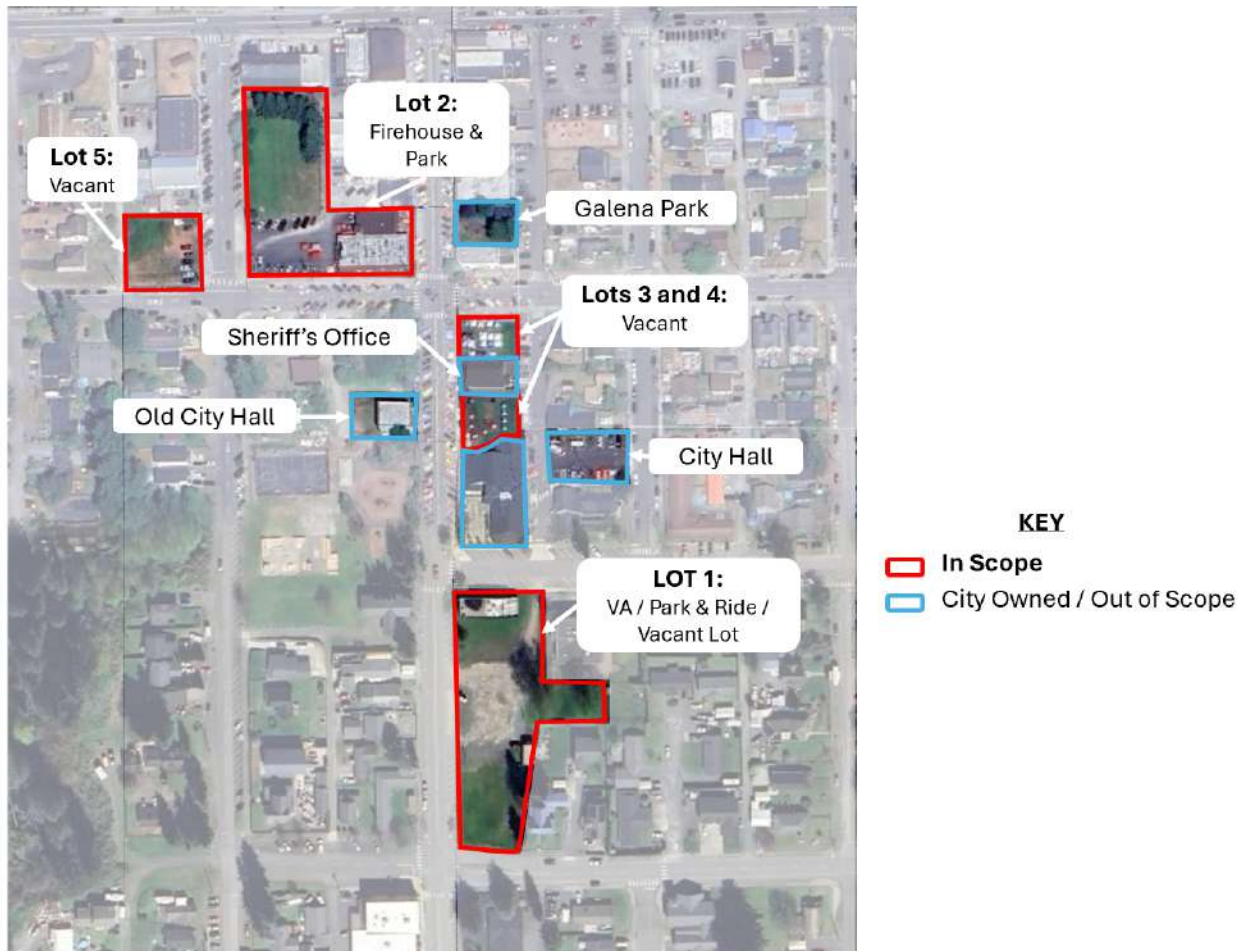


Figure 1: Civic Campus Study Area
Map Credit: Sarah Mills

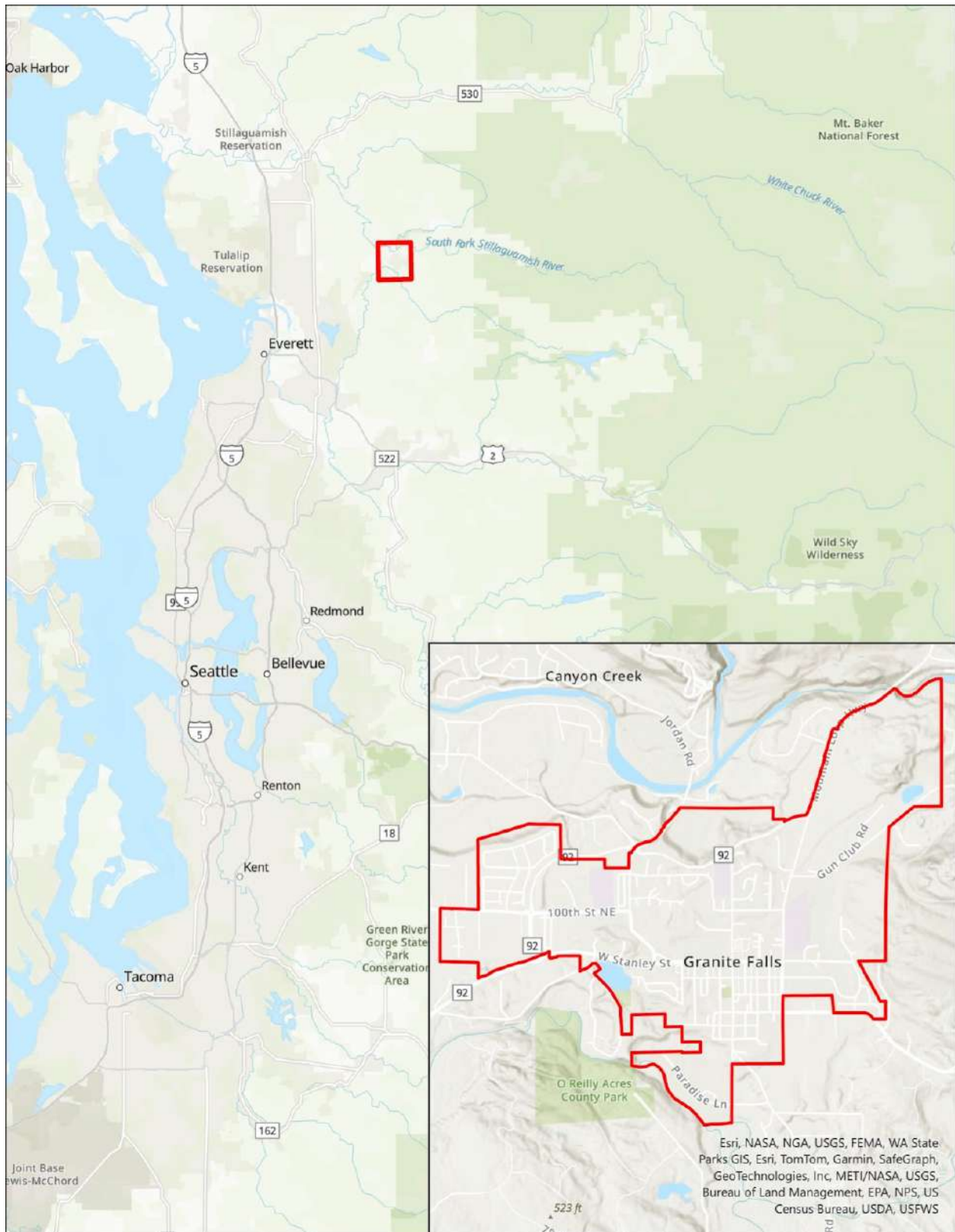


Figure 2: Granite Falls Location Map
Map Credit: Kai McGovern

Introduction

Historical Context

The city of Granite Falls, located in Snohomish County, is set on a narrow basin between Snohomish County's largest rivers. The area has been historically inhabited by Coast Salish people, who used the site as a portage between the two rivers. Granite Falls was settled by Europeans in 1883, and named for the waterfalls located north of town on the South Fork of the Stillaguamish. The discovery of gold and silver in the Cascades, particularly around the town of Monte Cristo (now a ghost town), was the impetus for the city's early economy with many miners and their families settling in the area (HistoryLink, 2008).

From establishing its first school in 1888 to the 1920s, Granite Falls experienced significant growth and development. The town built various infrastructures to support its growing population and industries, like electricity, sewers, sidewalks, and a power plant. Once the mines in the Cascades failed around 1912, the city would turn to logging and shingle making as its primary industries.

The Great Depression had a profound effect on the town. In 1928, Granite Falls's lumber company closed, and between 1925 and 1935 the population was cut in half, businesses shut down, and families moved away. As Granite Falls recovered, the mill company Miller Shingle would become the largest specialty mill in the nation, and the city became a bedroom community for people working in Everett (HistoryLink, 2008).



Figure 3: Early settlers of Granite Falls (Courtesy of Granite Falls Historical Museum)

Location Context

Granite Falls, located in Snohomish County, is situated in the foothills of the Cascades between two rivers: the Pilchuck and the South Fork Stillaguamish (HistoryLink, 2008) [See Figure 2]. It is 40 minutes away from Seattle and 30 minutes from Paine Field International Airport. Granite Falls is the gateway to the renowned Mountain Loop Highway, making it an ideal starting point for adventures in the Cascades.

Community Visions & Values

The City of Granite Falls outlines its visions in its 2024 - 2044 comprehensive plan. It envisions itself as the city of choice where people eagerly return after work or travel, serving as a hub of learning and skill development for all ages. It aims to be a vibrant social center where neighbors support each other and a thriving business hub that nurtures community growth, creativity, and well-being. The city aspires to operate with a supportive, transparent government that values integrity and respect, capitalizing on the diverse backgrounds, skills, and ideas of its citizens to shape a shared future (COGF, 2024).



Figure 4: Values of Granite Falls: Support, Integrity, Respect, and Loyalty to Our Community. (COGF, 2024).

Demographics

Population

The city of Granite Falls is currently experiencing steady population growth. As of 2024, it had approximately 4,926 residents, an 8.57% increase from the 4,537 recorded in 2020. This upward trend is projected to continue, with population estimates reaching around 5,312 by 2028 (Granite Falls, Washington Population 2024, 2024).

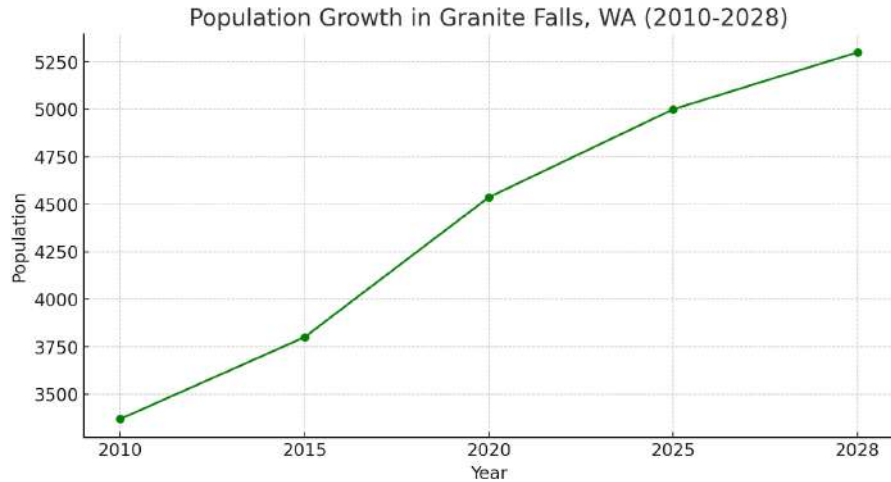


Figure 5: Historic and Projected Population Growth

The demographic structure of Granite Falls reveals significant portions of the population within the younger adult brackets (25-34 and 35-54), indicative of a vibrant working-age population. This age distribution suggests potential for economic development and workforce growth. Additionally, the balanced gender ratio across most age groups supports a diverse community, which is essential for comprehensive urban planning and community services (Granite Falls, Washington Population 2024, 2024).

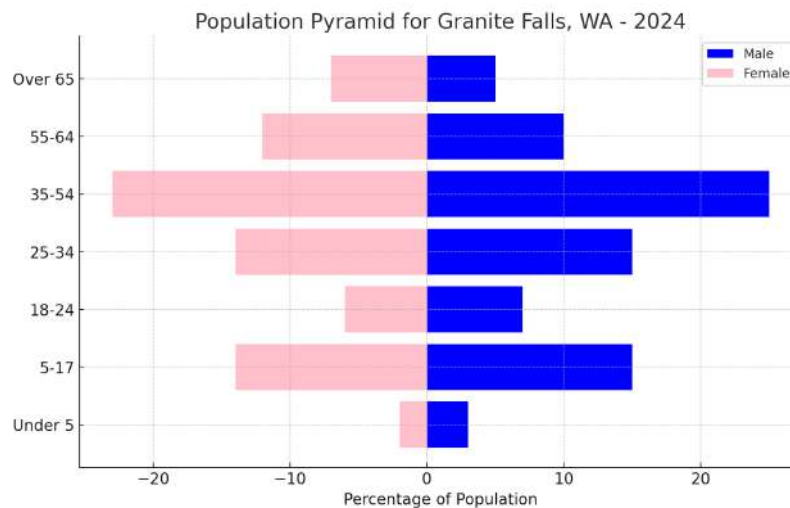


Figure 6: Population Pyramid for Granite Falls

Race

Granite Falls displays a predominantly white population, making up 76.0% of the community. The city also has a diverse mix of other racial groups: 12.5% of residents identify as two or more races and 8.6% are Asian. Smaller percentages include Native Americans at 1.5% and other races. This racial diversity contributes to the area's cultural richness and varied demographic landscape (Granite Falls, Washington Population 2024, 2024).

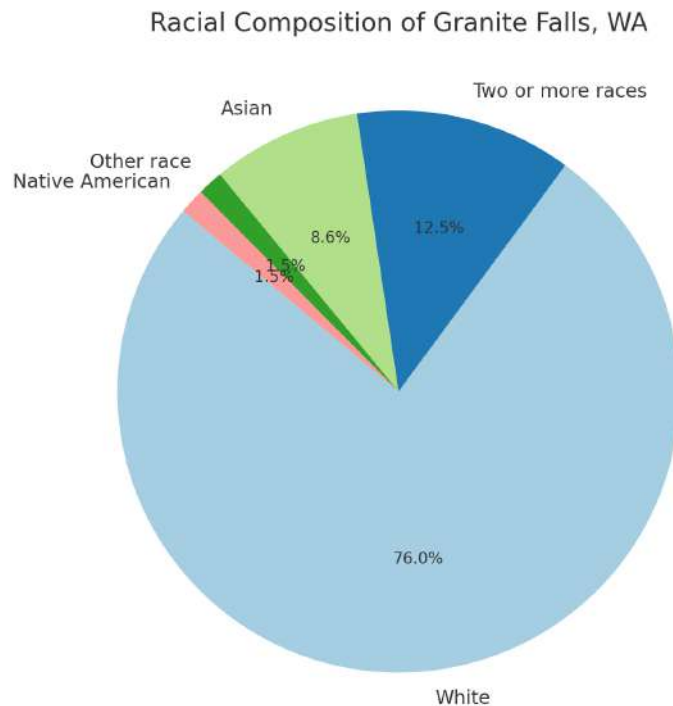


Figure 7: Racial Composition of Granite Falls

Education

Granite Falls showcases a wide range of educational achievements among its population over 25 years of age. The majority of adults have completed high school, with a significant portion advancing to some college education. Notably, a substantial number of residents have attained an associate's degree, while others have pursued higher education, achieving bachelor's and graduate degrees. This spectrum of educational levels reflects a community committed to varied educational pathways (Granite Falls, Washington Population 2024, 2024).

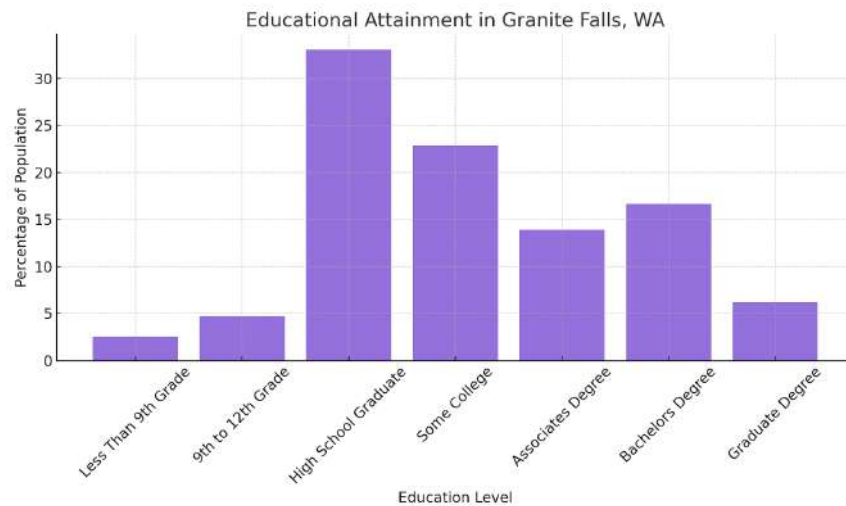


Figure 8: Educational Attainment in Granite Falls

The economic implications of educational attainment in Granite Falls are significant. As demonstrated in the local data, there is a clear upward trend in average earnings correlated with higher levels of education. Individuals with graduate degrees command the highest earnings, illustrating the premium placed on advanced education in the job market. Conversely, earnings are notably less for those with lower educational credentials, such as high school graduates, and those with some college experience but no degree (Granite Falls, Washington Population 2024, 2024).

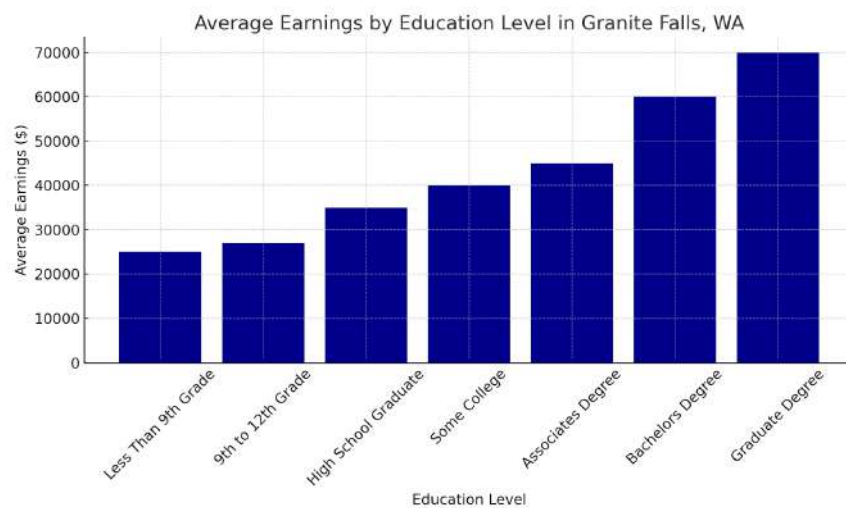


Figure 9: Average Earnings by Education Level in Granite Falls

Income

The income distribution in Granite Falls, WA, highlights the economic diversity within the community. Approximately 30% of the population earns under \$50K annually, representing a significant portion of the town's residents who may require targeted economic support and services. The largest segment, 50% of the population, earns between \$50K and \$100K, indicating a middle-income majority. Meanwhile, 20% of residents earn over \$100K, suggesting a smaller yet substantial upper-income bracket. This distribution helps in understanding the varying economic needs and potential consumer behaviors in Granite Falls (Granite Falls, Washington Population 2024, 2024).

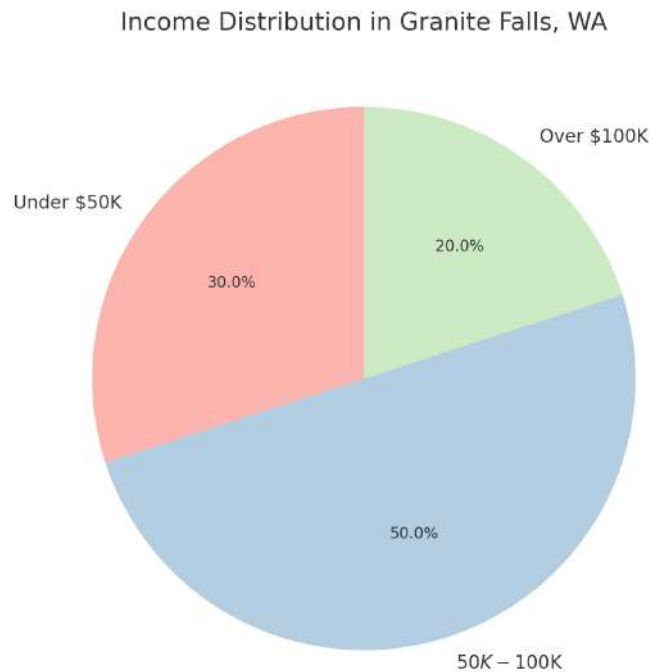


Figure 10: Income Distribution in Granite Falls



Granite Falls, Washington

Figure 11: Figure-ground map illustrating the built and non-built elements of downtown Granite Falls.
Map credit: Erik Byron.

Economics, Tourism, and Culture

Economics

Granite Falls, WA employs 2.07k people with the largest industries being Manufacturing (351 people), Construction (245 people), and Retail Trade (222 people). From 2021 to 2022, the employment rate grew by 5.24% from 1.96K to 2.07k employees (Jorgensen, 2022)

The City of Granite Falls had a total of \$28.69M in Budget Revenues and \$29.89M in Budget Expense as per fiscal year 2025. The largest source of income came from Sewer Capital Improvement (\$20.17M), however, it was also the largest budgetary expense (\$20.29M). Current expenses make up the second largest budget revenue (\$3.5M) and expense (\$4M), while Sewer Utility made up the third (revenue at \$2.16M and expense at \$2.19M). The 2025 Budget Ending Fund Balance was \$13.13 million (Municipal Research and Services Center, 2025).

Granite Falls's economy relies on both resource-based businesses and retail serving both tourists and residents. Two primary economic development goals Granite Falls has been to provide goods and services for the visitors and to attract industries that provide living wage jobs. The City of Granite Falls is part of the Mountain Loop Highway, which attracts approximately 55,000 tourists annually (Wikipedians, 2024) and as part of Snohomish county - the third largest tourism generating county in Washington State; brings in \$930 million in visitor spending with \$17.9 million local revenue (Snohomish County, 2025).

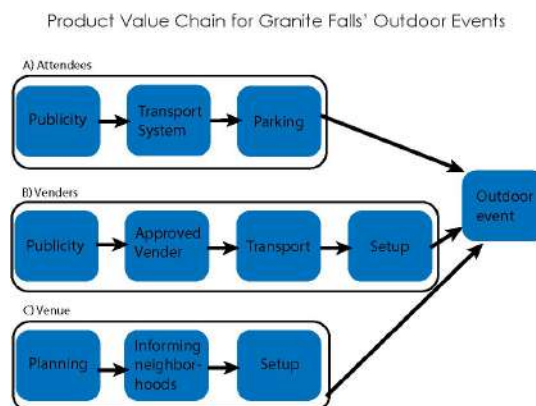


Figure 12: Product Value Chain for Granite Falls' Outdoor Events

Tourism is therefore an important part of Granite Fall's economy. The particular location of Granite Falls places the city in the middle of a regional recreation area; attractions such as hiking, fishing, boating, and bicycling bring people from miles away. Granite Falls also hosts outdoor events year-round that draw crowds in as well.

The local economy of Granite Falls comprises several varied businesses. The Granite Falls Chamber of Commerce (Granite Falls Chamber of Commerce, 2024) lists down 30 business entities as part of their member directory and are comprised of the following business types and number of establishments: Arts & Entertainment (2), Automotive Services (2), Beauty (2), Contracted Services (1), Dental (1), Education (1), Florist (1), Food, Beverages & Dining (4), Health & Wellness (2), Home/Construction Related (2), Lodging (1), Medical (1), Nonprofit (3), Other (4), Real Estate-related (2), Retail (2), and Utilities (1).

Among the many different tourism events promoted by the city are major outdoor events that bring in revenue for Granite Falls, namely: Railroad Days, Farmers Market, and Show N'Shine. In 2024, the Show N'Shine event raised \$5,293 to the Boys & Girls club demonstrating that the event brings in a great amount of money to the city and helps pay for facilities (The City of Granite Falls, 2024).

A product value chain is presented in Figure 12, to assess the economic impact of these major outdoor events as they relate to economic activities at Granite Falls. The product value chain figure is separated into three sections: Attendees, Venders, and Venue each separately adding different economic value to the production of the outdoor event.

For the Attendees section of the product value chain, we can see that the first step would be publicity. We need outside and inside attendees from the city, this means that there would be a cost that would go into being in a crowd. The use of social media would have a low cost and high impact, as for the transportation of the crowd, that is outside of our control of what kind of form they would take to get to the event. It is most likely that they would travel by car, as there is one bus that goes to Granite Falls. Lastly, the amount of parking is the supply that the city can take to charge for parking and the projected cars would be the demand for those parking by the number of attendees for the event.

For the Vendor's section of the product value chain, publicity is once again an important aspect of getting people to participate in the outdoor events, especially for the vendors who want to bring in customers. Transportation for vendors, truck ingress, and truck egress is a key factor in allowing the product to flow smoothly. Lastly, the setup has several factors that go into bringing in revenue for the event including equipment, water, and garbage. These services can be charged by the city for the vendors to have.

Lastly, in the venue section, the planning that goes into the outdoor events, the city can charge for the approved vendors that are coming, as well as setup fees. When it comes to informing the neighborhoods the city can do this by posting online or hosting a town meeting about blocking certain streets. Lastly, the setup in the venue section requires people to check with vendors who have paid the fees to set up their business at the door event.

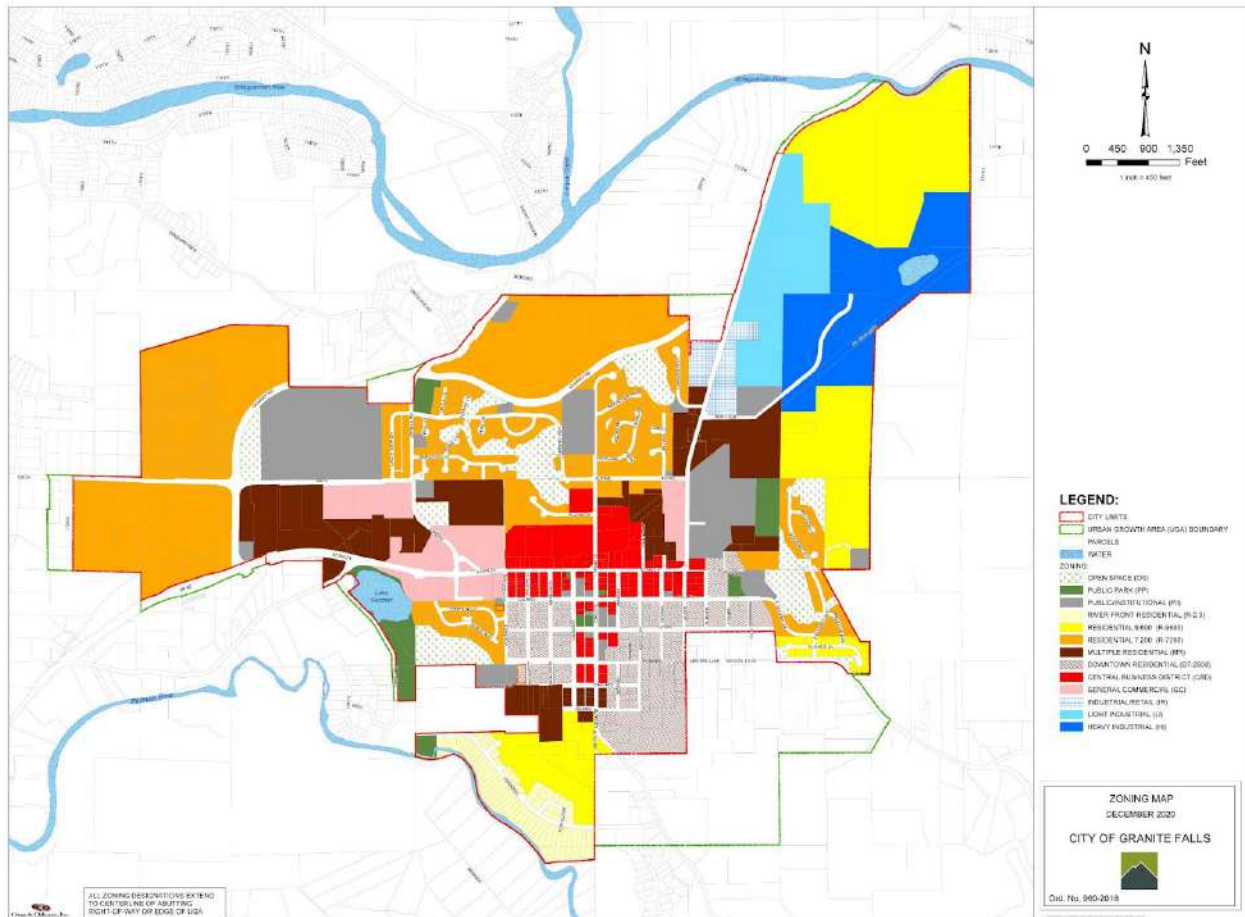


Figure 13: Granite Falls Zoning (COGF, 2024)

Tourism

The City of Granite Falls doesn't consider itself an accommodation destination but feels tourism is an important economic driver for annual growth. With its convenient location near the 55-mile Mountain Loop Highway, this area serves as the primary tourist attraction destination. After speaking with Gabriel Collins from the property management company Stayzgo, he estimated 149,000 tourists visit the area annually. This would mark an average Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) increase of 7.27% from 2010 which had an estimated 55,000 tourists

(Investopedia, 2024; Wikipedians, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2025). Many visitors complete the drive as a 50 minute day trip from Seattle to Granite Falls (Ruffini, 2023). The Mountain Loop Highway has three main attractions: the Big Four Mountain, its ice caves, and the old mining town of Monte Cristo. “During the summer months, more than 100 cars on average use this route each day with up to 200 cars traveling each day on the weekend” (Snohomish County, 2020). The Highway closes annually every year as early as November due to weather conditions and reopens in spring of the following year. At Barlow Pass, the 14-mile section of unpaved road is normally closed at this time; however, depending on the conditions, the entire Highway can be inaccessible.

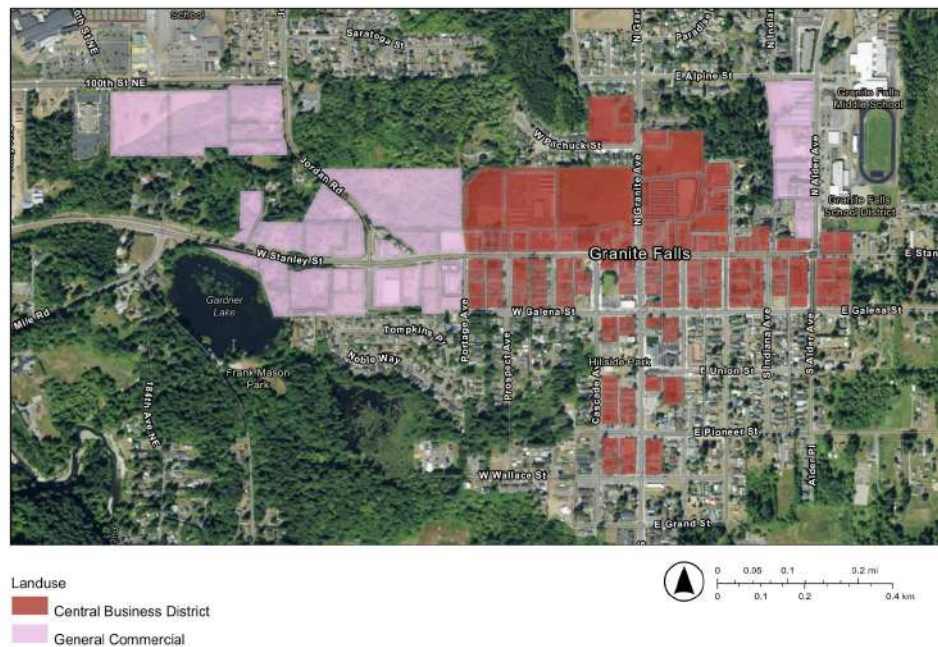


Figure 14: Granite Falls Land Use Map (COGF, 2024)
Data Source: COGF Maps and GIS data

In the town, there are a variety of service sector businesses. These primarily consist of restaurants, including chains like Subway, McDonald’s, Buzz Inn Steakhouse, as well as small coffee shops. There are a few independently owned retail stores, including Jackie’s Essential Remedies and Peg’s Rags Vintage & Thrift, where tourists can shop. Most of these businesses are located on South Granite Ave or along Stanley Street. The National Restaurant Association shows the majority of food service workers in the United States range in ages below 25 years (National Restaurant Association, 2024). However, Granite Falls has a large population of families with children ages between 5-17 years, with adults concentrated in the 35-54 age range as seen in the population pyramid Figure 6. This would imply a lack of potential younger workers between the ages of 18-24. (World Population Review, 2024) The city has outlined goals to encourage industries that can provide living-wage jobs. Service sector jobs can command

hourly wages above Washington State's minimum wage of \$16.66. In Snohomish County, the Clerks Association represents the closest related paid position with an average hourly rate of \$18.15 (Snohomish County, 2025). Service sector positions can fall below a livable income due to their seasonality.

Granite Falls is exploring options for lots 1-5 within the Civic Campus area, found in Figure 1. Given the lack of lodging options within the city, exploring adaptive reuse opportunities of existing structures is an avenue for developing a motel or hotel location. Reviewing the municipal code, section 19.03.090 of the central business district (CBD) and section 19.03.100 of the general commercial (GC) areas will allow for hotel and motel business establishments (COGF, 2024). These designated commercial land use areas can be seen in the Granite Falls' land use map in Figure 14.

The City of Granite Falls has the infrastructure to support short-term and seasonal travelers. Most of the restaurants, retail, and drinking establishments along East and West Stanley Street. These shops are within walking distance from the downtown area, fostering an active local business community that caters to day-trippers. With planned investments to establish an open space plaza and community center, marketing is not currently present in the 2025 Estimated General Fund Expenses in Figure 15 (COGF, 2024)

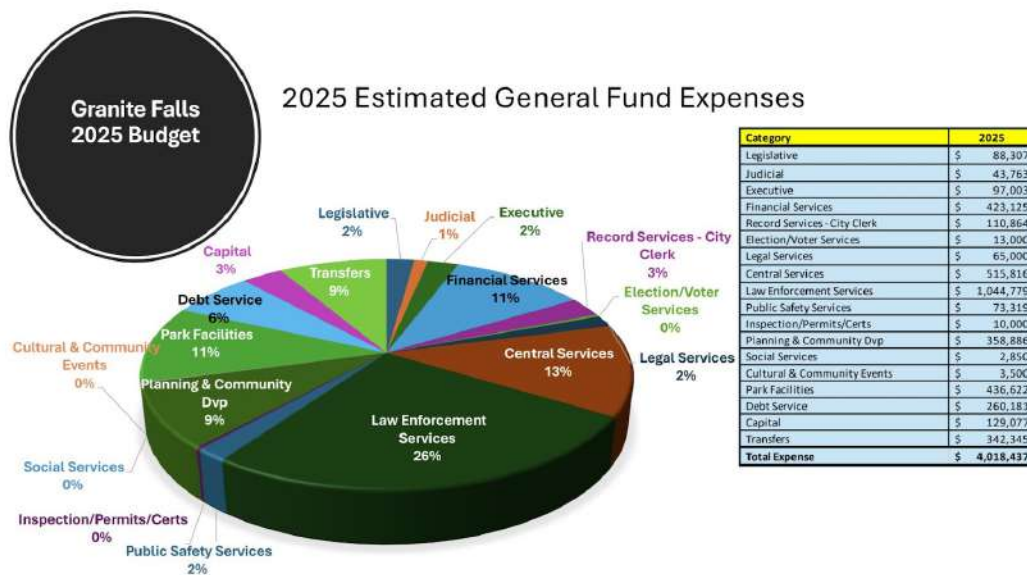


Figure 15: Granite Falls General Funds 2025 Estimates Pie Chart (COGF, 2024)
Data Source: COGF General Funds 2025 Estimates

Culture

Granite Falls has many cultural activities throughout the year that draw in locals and visitors alike. The most popular events are hosted by the Granite Falls Chamber of Commerce, whose aim is to serve the businesses and economic interests of the community (Granite Falls Chamber of Commerce, 2025). Below are some details about each community event, such as time of year, community partners, and location. The sub team did not find data on the number or type of visitors per event.

Granite Falls Farmers Market

Hosted every Sunday between mid-June and September, the Granite Falls farmers market is composed of 38+ vendors selling produce, flowers, and baked goods. The market takes place on Cascade Ave. in the downtown area, adjacent to Lyla's Coffee and Marcos Taqueria (Granite Falls Chamber of Commerce, 2024). Figures 16 & 17 show the farmers market on Cascade Ave.



Figures 16 & 17: Pedestrian Circulation during Granite Falls Farmers Market



Figure 18: Traffic Patterns for Railroad Days

Railroad Days

Currently scheduled for October 4, 2025, Railroad Days is one of the largest events held in downtown Granite Falls. The festival hosts over 90+ vendors, food trucks, two parades, live music, and line dancing. The event is held on S. Granite Ave and the road has been closed to vehicular traffic to accommodate attendees (Granite Falls Chamber of Commerce, 2024). Figure 18 shows the traffic pattern for the 2024 Railroad Days event.

Show N' Shine Car Show

The Show N' Shine Car Show hosts over 300 cars and thousands of visitors every year. The event takes place at the beginning of August on S. Granite Ave, and the road is closed to host the show. Vendors and food trucks have separate areas along the promenade near the city hall building (Granite Falls Chamber of Commerce, 2024). Figure 8 shows the traffic pattern for the 2024 Show N' Shine Car Show.

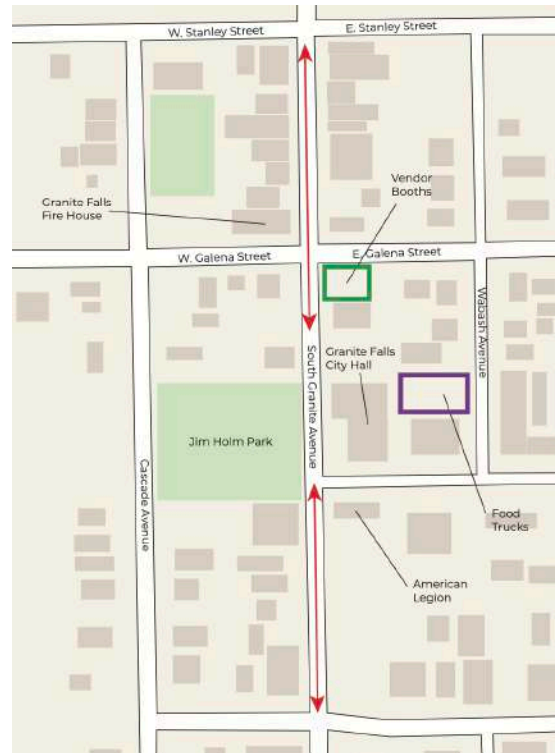


Figure 19: Pedestrian Circulation during Show N' Shine Car Show

Granite Falls hosts other events throughout the year through organizations other than the Chamber of Commerce. Frightening Falls is a Halloween festival with costumes, games, music, and a haunted house (Granite Falls Community Coalition, 2024). Also, Granite Falls is looking to host a motorcycle show in conjunction with Snohomish Sky Valley motorcycle show. This event is usually held at the end of May.

Art

Granite Falls has a few community art pieces on display downtown. Near City Hall, there is a maple wooden sculpture created by Hayden Wright — The Wright Carver. The piece is shown in Figure 20. The piece draws inspiration from Granite Falls' surrounding flora and fauna as well as its exciting cultural festivities — Railroad Days and Show N' Shine Car Show (Wright, 2024). Furthermore, the local restaurant, Omega Pizza and Pasta, has a mural painted by the famous actor, Chris Pratt, when he was a teenager (Holcomb, 2019). It is shown in Figure 22. There is also a war memorial being commissioned by Pacific Coast Memorials. This artist also designed the Granite Falls welcome sign as shown in Figure 21 (Pacific Coast Memorials, 2025). The final design is of granite construction that will match the shape of Mt. Pilchuck, the mountain that towers over the city. This will be included on the plot of land south of City Hall, where the old American Legion Post is now located. Other artists and studios in Granite Falls include Shanna Duncan Art (Duncan, n.d.)



Figure 20: Hayden Wright's Sculpture near City Hall

Art by Nature (Art by Nature, 2025), and Homestead Studio (Homestead Studio, 2025). These are possible contacts for future art commissions. Shanna focuses on drawings and paintings; Art by Nature designs outdoor landscapes; and Homestead Studio is a pottery design studio. The team will look into Coast Salish artists too such as Malynn Foster (Squaxin Island Tribe & Skokomish Tribe), Tamela Laclair (Skokomish Indian Tribe) & Kimberly Deriana (Mandan & Hidatsa Nation), as a way to incorporate indigenous art and culture into the project. While Granite Falls has a few local artists, surrounding towns in Snohomish County, such as Everett, Edmonds, and Snohomish, have additional art galleries. Edmonds Art Festival usually takes place in June and has over 160 artists (Edmonds Art Festival, 2025).



Figure 21: Pacific Coast Memorial Sign (Pacific Coast Memorials, 2025)



Figure 22: Chris Pratt's Mural in Omega Pizza (Holcomb, 2019)



Figure 23: Shanna Duncan's Lake Stevens Drawings (Duncan, n.d.)



Figure 24: Art by Nature's Landscaping (Art by Nature, 2025)

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Lower-priced land (Economics)
- Rapid response to permit application (Economics)
- Numerous community events throughout the year (Culture)
- Large community attendance at cultural events (Culture)
- A compact central business district where most retail shops and service sector businesses are within a 15-minute walking distance. (Tourism)
- All commercial zones lack provisions in the municipal code prohibiting the establishment or use of buildings as short-term rentals. (Tourism)

Weaknesses

- Existing businesses are small in terms of employment levels and requires more businesses to fill a given amount of space (Economics)
- Access to parking and transit for those attending events (Culture)
- Lack of event space for food trucks, car show, and shops (Culture)
- With no hotel or motel establishments in the city, long-term tourists must travel at least twenty minutes from Marysville to reach Granite Falls from their lodging rental. (Tourism)
- The older building establishments along South Granite Road lack updated exteriors and signage, detracting from a unified downtown business feel and appearance. (Tourism)
- There is a housing moratorium due to sewer issues which prevents the construction of new buildings. Completion is not expected until the end of 2025, which presents challenges in supporting a larger influx of visitors. (Tourism)

Opportunities

- Existing businesses in adjacent King County face rising land price and wage gap (Economics)
- Establish lodging options (Economics)
- Addition of new events, such as Motorcycle show in conjunction with city of Snohomish (Culture)
- Addition of bike lanes and bus transit to increase attendees (Culture)
- There are already several Airbnb and Vrbo locations within 10 minutes or less of Granite Falls. The city can partner with these short-term rental operators without the need to establish its own lodging options. (Tourism)
- Its convenient location near the Mountain Loop Highway's outdoor trails presents opportunities to attract the growing tourism market of local cyclists. (Tourism)

Threats

- Traffic corridors are becoming more congested (Economics)
- Travel times are increasing (Economics)
- Many other areas of Snohomish County have established outdoor trails for local cyclists, including the nearby Centennial Trail. (Tourism)

- There are clusters of vacation homes and cabins along the Mountain Loop Highway. Businesses looking to establish lodging rentals within the city may face challenges competing with these establishments for tourists. (Tourism)
- Traffic congestion and reliance on car travel (Culture)
- Access to bathrooms, electricity, covered areas, etc. (Culture)

Land Use & Transportation

Land Use & Zoning

Of the parcels included within the civic campus, only three zoning designations are utilized: Public/Institutional (gray), Public Park (green), and Central Business District (red), bordered by a mix of Central Business District and Downtown Residential (cross-hatched) zoned parcels (Figure 25).

The majority of parcels are already designated as Public/Institutional, which has been created with the intention of “[providing] and [protecting] properties devoted to public and semi-public uses and uses providing social and physical services to the Granite Falls community,” (Chapter 19.03 ZONING, June 17th, 2024). This zone allows for a multitude of publicly provided services, but most importantly, the principal uses include both civic centers and community centers, which could be particularly relevant to bolstering Granite Falls’ civic campus. A key parcel under this designation is the existing firehouse, which will be able to be converted to a community oriented building without zoning obstructions due to the allowances provided by the Public/Institutional zone.

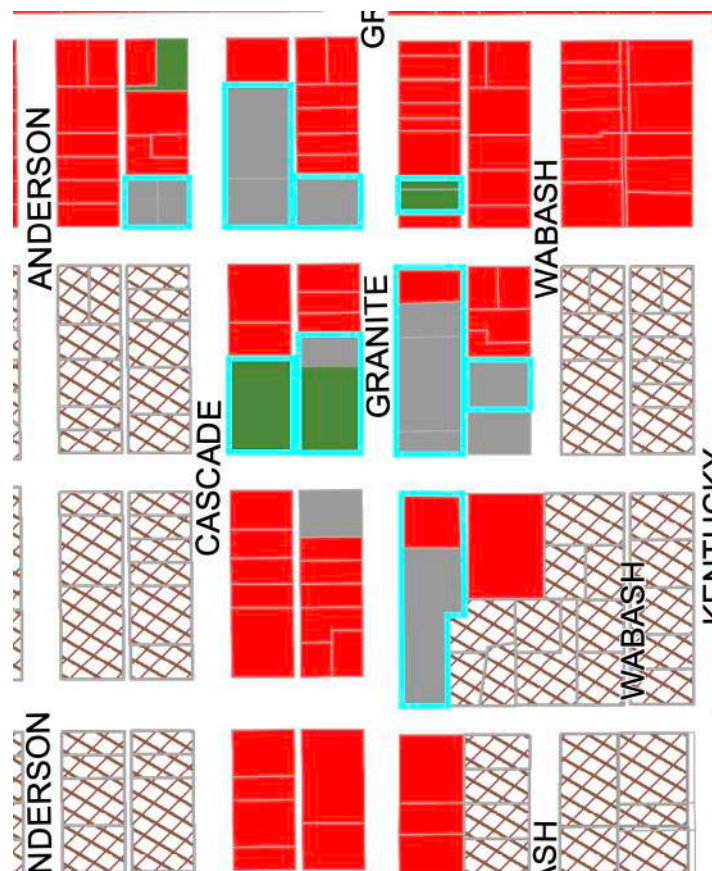


Figure 25: Zoning Map of Granite Falls with civic campus highlighted in cyan. (COGF, 2024)

The Public Park zoned parcels are outside of the scope of parcels to be altered; however, it is important to note that these parcels will be crucial to the success of the civic campus. Through the Public Park zones, public restrooms and guaranteed green space have been provided. The Public Park zone allows for key principal uses, including playfields and picnic/related outdoor activity areas, both of which may be desirable uses for newly acquired parcels.

The Central Business District zoned parcels are both largely being utilized for additional parking within the civic campus and are not currently housing retail businesses as targeted by the zoning designation. The Central Business District description states that parcels “[are] comprised mostly of retail, dining, entertainment and similar businesses, which are conducted primarily indoors,” (Chapter 19.03 ZONING, June 17th, 2024). Given that the civic campus is envisioned to be a largely outdoor venue without the permanent retail space, these particular parcels may be apt for rezoning, in which both Public Park and Public/Institutional zones would be appropriate substitutions, due to their principal uses being specialized for outdoor and community uses.

All three of the zoning designations used have similar building regulations, especially when most of these parcels will be occupied by the projected uses including open space and community venues. Specific regulations can be seen in the following table.

Regulation	Public/Institutional	Public Park	Central Business District
Minimum Lot Size (sf)	None	None	2,000
Maximum Lot Coverage (%)	90	70	None
Minimum Building Setbacks			
Front Yard (ft)	20/none ¹	20 (from street or public right of way)	None

Side Yard (ft)	20/none	5	None
Rear Yard (ft)	20/none	5	5
Maximum Height (ft)	33	N/A	50

1 - Public/Institutional Zone Setbacks are 20ft on all sides, unless adjacent to a commercial, industrial, or another public/institutional zone. In the case of the civic campus, the only use of this exception will come from adjacency to Central Business District zones, in which the set back will be reduced to zero or none.

Automobile Transportation and Parking

Granite Falls has the advantage of low amounts overall of traffic. With the opening of the State Route 92 bypass in 2011, traffic no longer has to use Stanley Ave in downtown; it can use Quarry Road and avoid the downtown streets. Moreover, the streets in downtown have a speed limit of 25 MPH, meaning the streets are fairly safe.

With that said, Granite Falls sees the highest level of delays on N/S Granite Avenue at E/W Stanley Street. This intersection feeds into S. Granite Avenue, which is the road leading into the civic center area. In 2023, the city completed a Level of Service Analysis at intersections in the city, which was later used in its Comprehensive Plan (Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc., 2023). Level of Service measures congestion based on a scale for A-F, A being free flowing while F being full congestion. N/S Granite Avenue at E/W Stanley Street was found to have a B level of service in the morning and a C level of service in the evening. This congestion could be further exacerbated by city events and future focus on growth within the civic campus area.

Intersections	Time Period	Existing Conditions		2044 Conditions	
		LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay
1. Mountain Loop Highway at SR-92 (Quarry Road)	PM	A	9.1 sec	B	10.6 sec
2. Jordan Road at 100 th Street NE (Burn Road)	PM	A	8.4 sec	A	9.6 sec
3. N Granite Avenue at E/W Alpine Street	PM	A	7.7 sec	A	8.4 sec
4. N Alder Avenue at E Alpine Street	PM	B	11.6 sec	B	14.4 sec
5. Jordan Road at W Stanley Street With Galena Extension & Timing	AM	C	28.0 sec	E	55.6 sec
	PM	D	37.7 sec	F	111.1 sec
	PM	---	---	D	42.8 sec
6. Cascade Avenue at W Stanley Street With Galena Extension	PM	C	15.6 sec	C	24.7 sec
	PM	---	---	C	17.8 sec
7. N/S Granite Avenue at E/W Stanley Street With Galena Extension	AM	B	13.2 sec	E	45.5 sec
	PM	C	17.7 sec	F	108.4 sec
	PM	---	---	D	32.5 sec
8. N/S Alder Avenue at E Stanley Street With Galena Extension	AM	A	9.9 sec	B	13.1 sec
	PM	A	8.7 sec	B	10.4 sec
	PM	---	---	A	9.1 sec
9. Portage Avenue at W Galena Street With Galena Extension	PM	A	7.3 sec	A	7.5 sec
	PM	---	---	A	8.8 sec
10. Cascade Avenue at W Galena Street With Galena Extension	PM	B	10.0 sec	B	10.6 sec
	PM	---	---	B	14.8 sec
11. S Granite Avenue at E/W Galena Street With Galena Extension	AM	B	10.4 sec	B	11.6 sec
	PM	B	11.7 sec	B	14.9 sec
	PM	---	---	C	22.8 sec
12. S Alder Avenue at E Galena Street With Galena Extension	PM	B	10.6 sec	B	12.0 sec
	PM	---	---	B	11.8 sec
13. S Granite Avenue at E/W Pioneer Street	PM	B	11.8 sec	B	14.5 sec
14. Portage Avenue at W Stanley Street NB RT out only restriction. 66 left turn trips rerouted	AM	C	19.7 sec	F	50.6 sec
	AM	---	---	C	23.1 sec

Figure 26: Congestion of intersections within Granite Falls (Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc., 2023)

According to Granite Falls' Comprehensive Plan, a central goal under the Transportation Goals and Policies is "Goal T-6: To provide an adequate supply of parking for both local and tourist needs" (COGF, 2024, T-6). Sub-goals include:

- "T-6.1: Consider on-street/off-street parking facilities to induce commercial activity" (COGF, 2024, T-6).
- "T-6.2: Where and when feasible, develop municipal off-street parking facilities to support and induce community economic, cultural and social activity in and around the city's commercial, recreational, and municipal core area" (COGF, 2024, T-6).

While adding more parking is mentioned as an explicit goal under the Comprehensive Plan, the plan does not identify specific sites for future parking development. Furthermore, mentions of parking management strategies, such as Parking Benefit Districts (see Appendix 3) (pricing

parking stalls), are not mentioned but could be potentially pursued. By pricing parking, Granite falls would be able to meet goal T-15.4 of their transportation element — “manage parking to improve consistency with transportation demand management objectives” (COGF, 2024, T-15).

Coinciding with the city’s goal to provide an adequate amount of parking, the city has raised concerns about providing an adequate amount of parking for events centered around the Civic Center, such as for their Car Show event in August - Show N’ Shine.



Figure 27: Overhead diagram of the Show N’ Shine parking situation (City of Granite Falls, n.d.)

Free parking is available across Granite Falls without time restrictions. Parking comes in the form of diagonal stalls, on-street parking, and open lots. Forms of on-street and diagonal stalls are especially concentrated around the Community Center and all along S. Granite Ave, while surface lots are concentrated north of Galena Street.



Figure 28: Distribution of parking spaces in the civic campus area (designated in pink but not all accounted for) (City of Granite Falls, n.d.)

Within walking distance of the proposed civic center there are approximately 260 spots available (not including the 25 spots in the Park & Ride). This includes the mix of surface lots, stalls, and on street parking. However, this is an estimation of all the specifically marked parking stalls within the area and an undercount of the real number. While a large portion of these stalls will be utilized for events, a large amount of parking exists outside of the area.



Figure 29: Parking along S Granite Ave. Left side is on-street parallel parking, while the right side are diagonal stalls (Google, 2025)

The most notable lot for parking in the area is behind the Firehouse, which currently has approximately 18 spots (including the spots behind Tiny Bubbles). However, this lot may be redeveloped for different uses given the desire to convert the Fire House into a community center. Our group believes the city is meeting its goal of providing enough parking; there is an adequate supply of parking spaces that could be better managed on non special-event days with the city having the ability to temporarily close streets for events on an as-needed basis.



Figure 30: An example of a parking lot north of Galena Street, behind the Firehouse (Google, 2025)

Multimodal Transportation

Granite Falls is a very auto-oriented community. 79% of residents drive alone to work, and only 4% of residents walk or bike (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). There were 0 residents in the American Community Survey who took the bus to work.

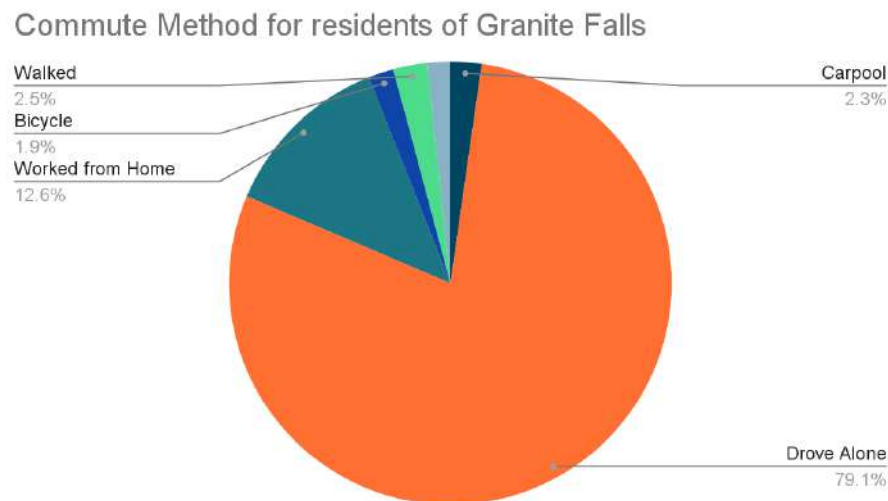


Figure 31: Commuting methods

Despite this, Granite Falls' pedestrian infrastructure is strong, nearly every street in downtown (and every street in our study area) not only has well-maintained sidewalks, but also marked crossings and curb cuts for full ADA accessibility.

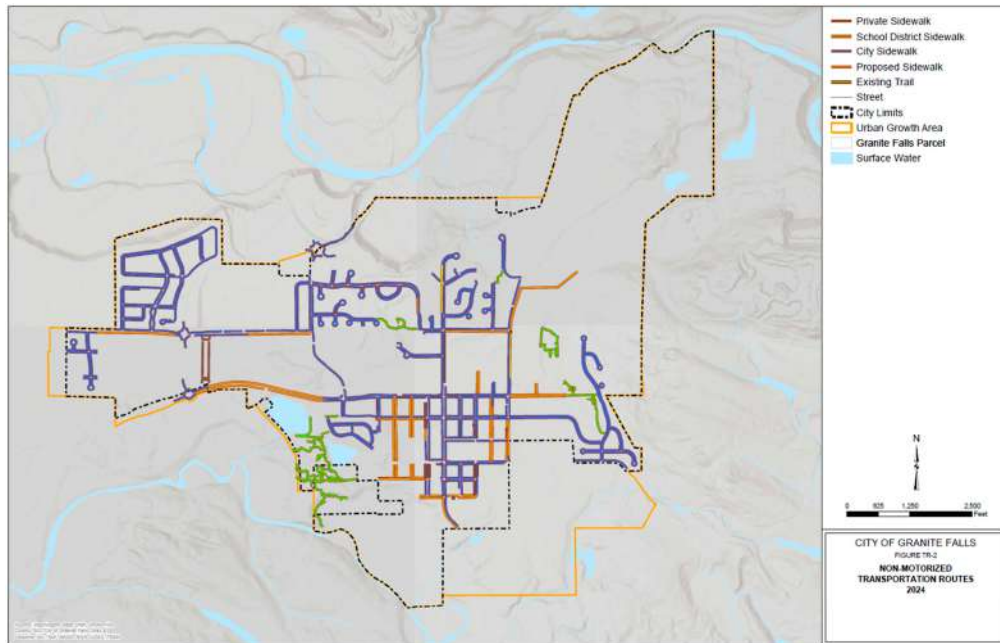


Figure 32: Granite Falls Pedestrian Network (City of Granite Falls (COGF), 2024, T-27)



Figure 33: Typical Intersection in Granite Falls showing ADA-compliant crossings (Google, 2023)

There are a few pedestrian trails in town (shown in green in the map above). Specifically, they connect downtown to Frank Mason Park. However, these trails do not show up on Google Maps, OpenStreetMap, nor is there any wayfinding.



Figure 34: Portal for a path to Frank Mason Park; Note lack of wayfinding (Google, 2023)

Although the downtown area is well connected from a pedestrian perspective, there is worse pedestrian connectivity outside the core of Granite Falls; specifically, SR 92 and W Stanley Ave west of downtown (the former SR 92 route) lack pedestrian connections and sidewalks, forming a substantial barrier for pedestrians. According to WSDOT's directness index, there are places where these barriers make it 10x as far to walk as compared to straight-line distance (WSDOT, 2025). Moreover, this means there is no trail or sidewalk infrastructure leading into town for people who want alternative means of getting to and from Granite Falls.

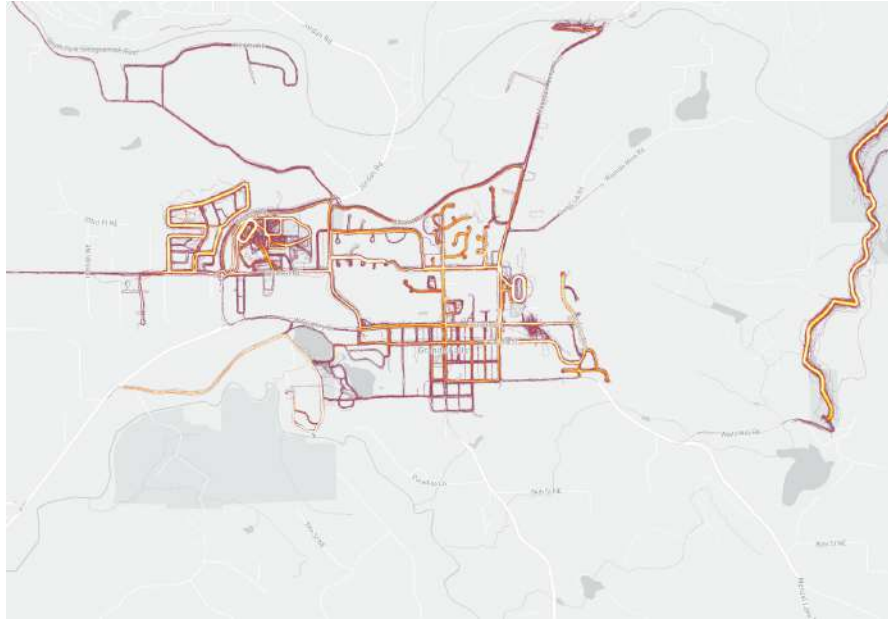


Figure 35: Pedestrian Activity in downtown Granite Falls (Strava, 2025)

There is no dedicated cycling infrastructure in Granite Falls. This means that riders are required to share the street or sidewalks with cars or pedestrians respectively. As there are no trails leading to Granite Falls, a cyclist who wishes to connect to neighboring communities has to ride on narrow two-lane roads with no shoulders or SR 92, both an exceedingly dangerous proposition. In fact, over the past decade, there have been only two traffic fatalities in Granite Falls: one was a cyclist who was struck and killed and the other a motorcycle rider (Washington Traffic Safety Commission, 2025).

The Comprehensive Plan mentions the importance of providing a multi-modal network, but there are no concrete plans by the city to improve cycling infrastructure. This is despite the fact that over \$6M in transportation funding will be spent in the next 5 years (although, pedestrian improvements are in plan). Most of the streets in downtown Granite Falls are very wide, with a curb-to-curb width varying from a minimum of 30 feet to 60+ feet. By constraining travel lanes to the recommended 10 feet wide for slow-speed streets and reconfiguring parking, the streets have enough space for cycling lanes without expensive re-builds of streets.

Longer term, Snohomish County has a number of planned cyclist approaches (called “proposed bikeways”) into the city. However, there is no funding to make these routes safe for cyclists at this time.

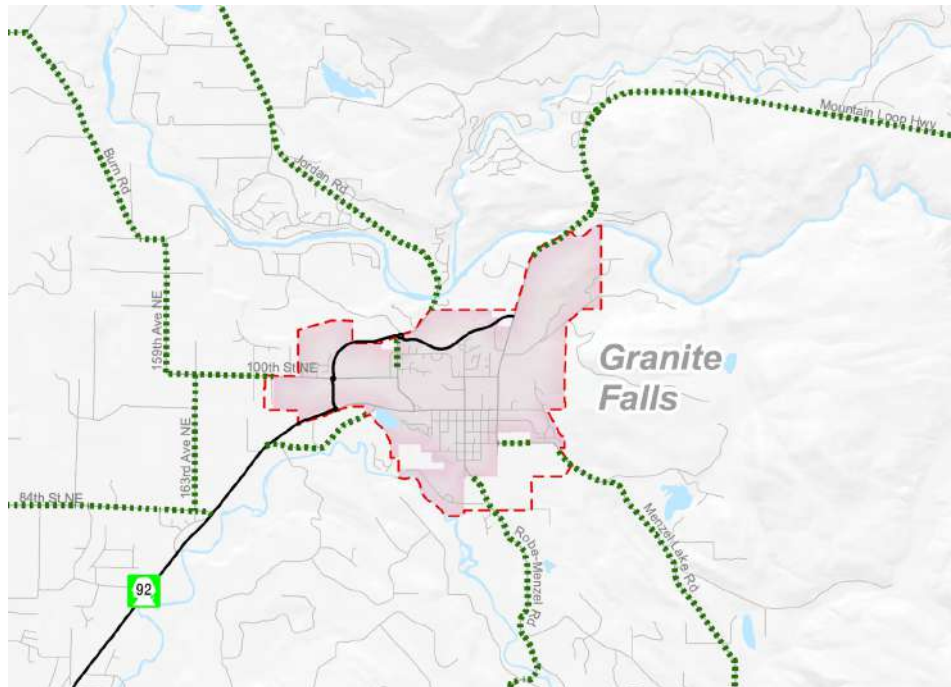


Figure 36: Snohomish County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (Snohomish County, 2024)

Despite the lack of infrastructure, there are a number of pathways commonly used by cyclists within the city. Moreover, there are plans for community-built mountain biking trails just to the west of downtown in Frank Mason Park.

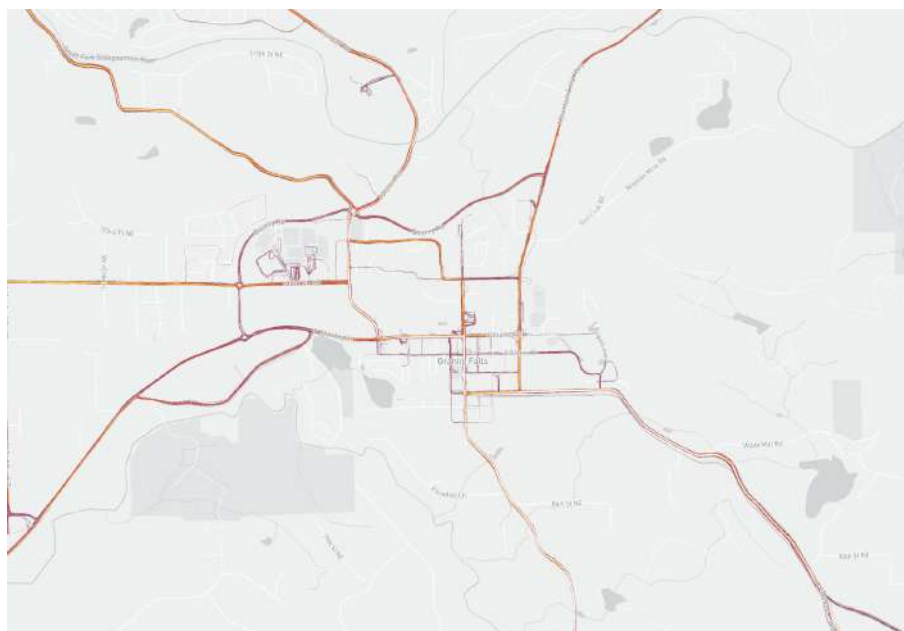


Figure 37: Cyclist Activity in downtown Granite Falls (Strava, 2025)

Public Transit in Granite Falls is provided by Community Transit. Today, this is a single bus route, the 280, which provides hourly service 7 days a week. This service does a good job of being within walking distance of almost everywhere in Granite Falls due to the town's compactness.

Direction	Name	Stop ID	Avg. Monthly Boardings	Avg. Monthly Alightings
Inbound	Quarry Rd & 100th St NE	3150	2.4	18.5
Inbound	100th St NE & Penny Ave	3151	3.4	41.4
Inbound	W Stanley St & Jordan Rd	3155	1.3	44.4
Inbound	W Stanley St & Portage Ave	543	4.9	148.4
Inbound	W Stanley St & Cascade Ave	544	2.1	129.9
Inbound	E Stanley St & S Indiana Ave	2622	2.5	95.0
Inbound	E Stanley St & S Alder Ave	1302	6.1	162.6
Inbound	E Pioneer St & S Alder Ave	1839	1.6	73.3
Inbound / Outbound	Granite Falls Park & Ride	890	494.1	427.5
Outbound	S Kentucky Ave & E Pioneer St	1932	24.4	1.5
Outbound	S Alder Ave & E Stanley St	1934	187.7	2.6
Outbound	E Stanley St & N Kentucky Ave	2628	143.5	3.5
Outbound	W Stanley St & Portage Ave	1904	236.8	8.7
Outbound	100th St NE & Jordan Rd	3152	26.7	1.1
Outbound	100th St NE & Eagle View Dr	3153	9.0	5.4
Outbound	100th St NE & Granite Falls High School	3154	40.9	5.7

Figure 38: Community Transit Route 280 Bus Stops in Granite Falls (Community Transit, 2025)

Granite Falls Park & Ride currently officially has 25 stalls, although it typically only has a few cars (there are less than 15 transit boardings per day there). The table above shows average monthly ridership from January 2014 to January 2025. There are not any plans to change Community Transit service at this time (either add or remove service). Vanpools are available to

the residents of Granite Falls if they were to set them up, but there have been no active vanpools since 2020. There is also DART paratransit for people with accessibility needs; this service must be reserved at least 1 day in advance and will provide door-to-door service if a rider is not able to ride the bus. There have been an average of 58 DART boardings per month since 2020.

Finally, there is only one institution that participates in the commute reduction program — the school district, as this is the only organization that has more than 100 employees.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Majority of the civic campus parcels fall in the Public/Institutional zones, allowing for flexibility when redeveloping, especially for the fire house
- During most times of time of the day, traffic within Granite Falls and the surrounding intersections of the civic campus are low
- Parking is available across the city and around the proposed civic campus
- Pedestrian infrastructure is strong with marked crossings and curb cuts with full ADA accessibility
- The singular bus route, the 280, is within walking distance of most of the city

Weaknesses

- Given high rates of driving, high levels of congestion may be seen during event days
- Parking is free and not time restricted which may exacerbate congestion during event days
- Lack of pedestrian access outside of the core of the city, specifically, SR 92 and W Stanley Ave west of downtown (the former SR 92 route)
- No dedicated cycling infrastructure
- Only one bus route that serves the city

Opportunities

- Pricing existing parking can mitigate congestion and manage demand
- Existing pedestrian infrastructure can be utilized for event access; possibly incorporating things like wayfinding
- Wide lanes and parking in the downtown area can be reconfigured to 10 feet for slower streets without expensive rebuilding
- Further studies to incorporate more bus options that bring people into the city
- Conversion of Central Business District zoned parcels to Public/Institutional

Threats

- Exploring paid parking options requires careful communication to address community needs
- Reconfiguring streets, adding cycling infrastructure, or expanding bus routes may require significant funding

Capital Facilities

Capital Facilities & Ongoing Projects

The Granite Falls Comprehensive Plan defines capital facilities as “a structure or equipment, which generally costs \$10,000 or more and has a useful life of ten years or more.” Capital facilities investments include major rehabilitation or maintenance projects on capital assets; construction of new buildings, streets and other facilities; acquisition of land for parks and other public purposes; and vehicle purchases” (COGF, 2024, CF-1). The City of Granite Falls owns the following capital facilities: city offices and support buildings; city public works shop and maintenance shop facilities; police facilities; parks and recreation facilities; water supply, distribution, and storage facilities; sanitary sewage collection/treatment facilities; stormwater management facilities; public streets and supporting transportation facilities. Of the aforementioned facilities, we will be focusing on the city support buildings; parks & recreation facilities; water distribution facilities, and public streets and transportation facilities categories. For the purposes of this Initial Conditions Report, we will be focusing on the five properties adjacent to the “Granite Falls Municipal Campus” in downtown for development in this project. These parcels are not contiguous and are expected to integrate smoothly with the existing built environment of the downtown corridor including existing parks & open space.

The City of Granite Falls has an agreement with Snohomish County Public Utility District #1 (PUD) for provision of water supply and storage, and therefore, the only future needs will be in the replacement of the aging distribution system (COGF, 2024). We do not anticipate impacting demand or capacity in any way, as such, water supply, distribution, and storage facilities are excluded from the ICR.

Schools are managed by Granite Falls School District and are excluded from the ICR.

Public streets and associated parking are managed by the City of Granite Falls. There are approximately 260 dedicated parking spaces, 4 of which are EV charging, with additional on-street parking available on the surrounding streets. This parking is not time-restricted and is free of charge, presenting an opportunity to generate additional revenue.

There are no capital improvement projects in the construction phase at this time. Currently, the Veterans War Memorial Plaza and the Community Center CIPs are in the scoping phase. Preliminary budgets allocate \$1.5 million for the war memorial plaza and \$2.1 million for the community center. Mid-range capital improvement projects include a new Park & Ride lot with EV fast charging stations and the relocation of the city public works building (COGF, 2024). The capital facility budgets are shown in the comprehensive plan tables CF-1 and CF-2.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- We do not anticipate any pushback from the general public as these improvements will be approved directly by the City of Granite Falls.
- The PUD and City of Everett indicated that they have adequate water supply and storage for their customers over the next decade.

Weaknesses

- Desire to maintain maximum parking limits how much of the Right of Way can be adapted for other uses such as bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Like many small cities, Granite Falls may face constraints in funding and staffing, which can impact the timely implementation of capital projects and maintenance of existing facilities.
- Some of the city's infrastructure components may be aging and in need of upgrades or replacement, posing challenges to maintaining service levels without significant investment should an emergency arise.

Opportunities

- Lots of free on-street parking that could be metered by the city to generate additional revenue
- Multiple empty (or soon to be empty) lots centrally located

Threats

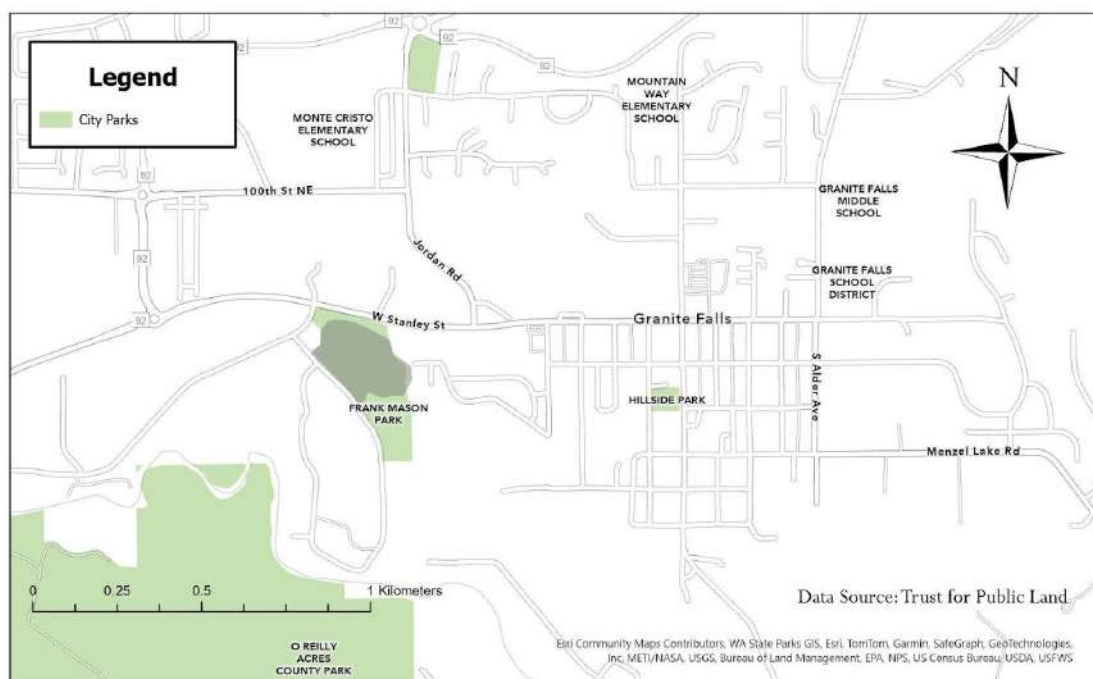
- Cost overruns from other capital projects impacting the general fund budget
- Potential to prioritize short term gains over long-range opportunities
- External economic factors may impact construction costs

Open Space and the Environment

Green Space

Open green space in the form of public parks, pedestrian trails, and recreation opportunities are key to successfully activated city districts and, as such, will be a key part of our design master plan for the city's municipal campus. Green corridors are also important in the maintenance of natural habitats, ensuring multi-species benefits and long-term symbiotic preservation. The Growth Management Act encourages jurisdictions to retain open space, conserve fish and wildlife habitats, develop recreational opportunities, and increase park facility access.

Downtown Granite Falls Parks and Recreation Access

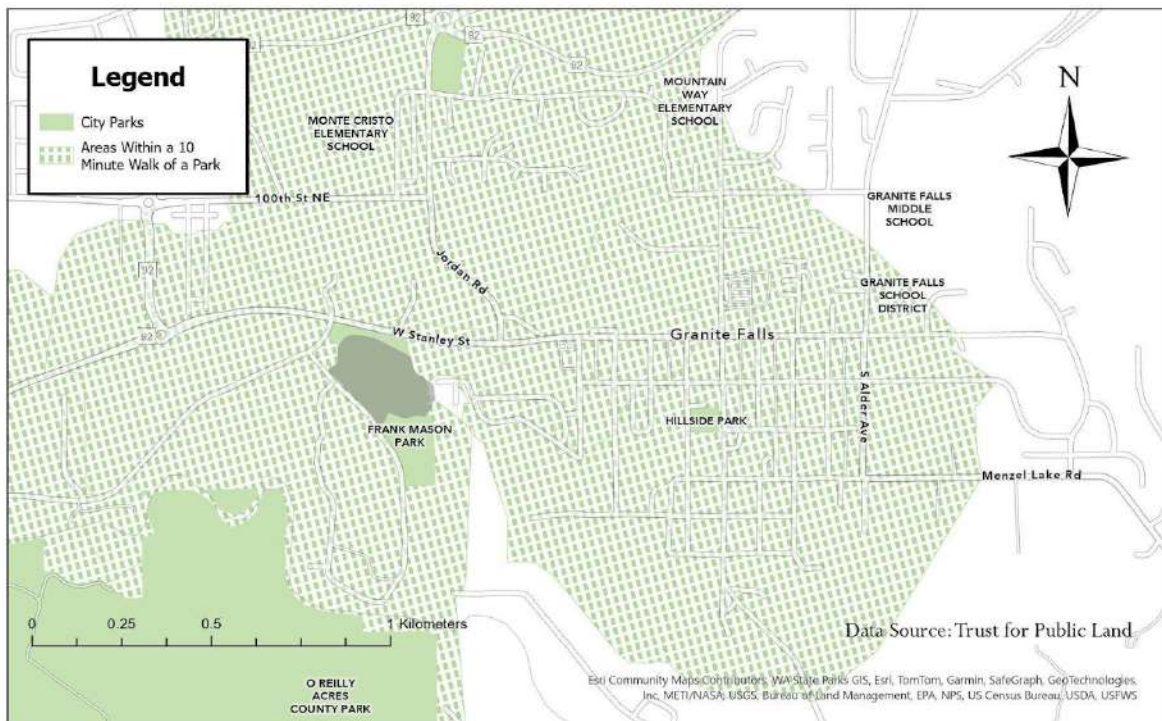


Map Credit: Erik Byron; Tool Used: ArcGIS
Figure 39: Parks and Recreation Access

There are six developed parks within Granite Falls' park system, the centerpiece of which is Jim Holm Park, labeled in the figure as Hillside Park, and is situated strategically within both the municipal center as well as the central business district. Jim Holm Park is 1.45 acres and offers a

play area, skate park, covered gazebo, basketball facilities, and open grass for the community. Permanent seating has been removed due to safety concerns, however, we plan to look into ways to re-introduce that element. Another park of notice for the community is Frank Mason Park, which is 10.4 acres and located near the western edge of the city. The park offers a dock, picnic/BBQ facilities, and walking paths. Gardner lake is the main point of interest. The city also maintains a small dog park on Galena Street and a mini-park in the CBD that offers public restrooms for patrons. The city also holds approximately 34 acres of undeveloped park land throughout the city in the form of grassy open plots, wetlands, waterfront habitats, meadows, and forests. Opportunities to develop these into formal parks, or symbiotic hiking trails/nature preserves, are on the table for the city.

Downtown Granite Falls Parks and Recreation Access



Map Credit: Erik Byron; Tool Used: ArcGIS
Figure 40: Distance from existing parks

Beyond park space owned by the city, there are numerous hiking trails available a short distance away, including Lime Kiln Trail, Granite Falls and Fish Ladder, and Centennial Trail. This is also a popular area of the state for mountain biking. Numerous lakes and natural monuments are

available a short distance from the city, including Lake 22, Heather Lake, and the Big Four Ice Caves. Major activities for both locals and tourists include hiking, fishing, and camping.

The city currently uses a typical level of service standard to determine what amount of parks and open space are appropriate for a certain population. As of now, it is determined that community parks (10+ acres large) should have a ratio of 5-8 acres per 1,000 people and that the parks should be within $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the population that they are serving. Neighborhood parks (1-10 acres) should have a ratio of 2 acres per 1,000 people and be within $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 miles of the population they are serving. The city notes that this may not be fully one size fits all and that individualized community-by-community evaluations may be more appropriate. With a developed park acreage of 20 acres, Granite Falls satisfies this level of service standard with approximately 5 acres per 1,000 people.

To support this level of service, Granite Falls' park system has a relatively generous budget of approximately \$2.8 million. It is allocated as follows:

Figure 41: City Parks Budget

Category	Budget Allocation
Park Maintenance	\$1,000,000
New Park Development	\$600,000
Facility Upgrades	\$500,000
Trail & Greenway Expansions	\$400,000
Community Programming	\$200,000
Administrative Costs	\$100,000

The parks system is funded through levers like the city general fund, state and federal grants, community partnerships, and impact fees from new developments. In addition, the city is actively seeking additional grant funding to support park improvements and land acquisitions.

Strategically, most of the city's residential areas are within a ten minute walk from a park (see figure 40). However, not every household is within walking distance to a park, and there are numerous people that do not live within the city center area, so there is still much work to be done to ensure that each inhabitant has close access to green space.

Ecology and Environmental Conditions

The environment is a complex and interdependent web of humans, animals, plants, water, and minerals. All of these natural elements are touched by the activity of humans, especially political policy. As such, our planning should be that it moves us in the area of symbiosis and mutual aid rather than the direction of extraction and exploitation. The Growth Management Act sets out a goal to “protect the environment... including air and water quality, and the availability of water.” Of specific concern for the GMA are wetlands, aquifers of potable water, fish and wildlife conservation areas, flood-risk areas, and geologically hazardous areas. The Puget Sound Regional Council, of which Granite Falls is a member, seeks to ensure that all residents regardless of immutable characteristics have clean water, air, and a healthy environment available to them.

Granite Falls rests within the reach of the Pilchuck and Stillaguamish rivers, in a land adorned by a vast sky and a vast expanse of trees. Mountain hemlock, western redcedar, yellow cedar, and especially pacific silver fir have crafted their own built environment over several cycles of destruction and renewal, both aided by human activity. No less splendid in their architecture are the wild orchids, the huckleberries, the vine maples, the stair step moss, and the bracken ferns. In secret nooks of these forests, one may even find the elusive and majestic lily-of-the-valley. Inhabiting this world are communities of deer, elk, black bears, wood ducks, quails, bald eagles, rabbits, peregrine falcons, hummingbirds, owls, and nuthatches. In the resplendent rivers and lakes can be found rainbow trout, largemouth bass, and the venerable coho salmon. Salmonoid species have suffered great decline across the Pacific Northwest the past decade due to human activity.

In this land of rich forests, we find the ancestral home of several Indigenous tribes, such as the Stillaguamish tribe and the Skykomish people. The Stillaguamish hold land to the northwest of Granite Falls, along the banks of the river that bears their name. The city stands under the watch of Mt Pilchuck and the other Cascades in which the community is set in.



Figure 42: Lime Kiln Trail. Erik Byron.

Granite Falls, like much of western Washington, has a temperate rainforest ecology. There is significant rainfall, and average temperatures of around 30F to 65F. The city enjoys a high level of air quality year-round due to the community's small size and adjacency to several forests. However, a significant amount of the city still relies on wood burning as a heat source which can create health concerns if done without proper ventilation. The City of Granite Falls is committed to creating a Climate Change plan by 2029, however, it has not done so yet.

The city has adopted the Snohomish County hazard mitigation plan, a document that creates holistic protection for events like mass earth movements, flooding, and epidemics. Granite Falls has few hazards that are of immediate concern, however, there are some areas which are at a 1% risk of flooding annually, as shown in teal on figure 44. There are a handful of brownfield sites within Granite Falls, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, however, the comprehensive plan makes no mention of these or how they may impact future growth.

The land cover of the area has been altered significantly in the past eight years, with such forest and agricultural land being used to make way for new developments. As seen in figure 43, this change is most notably seen on the edges of the city, as forest land (green) is being largely transformed into built-up lands (red). Granite Falls' groundwater contains naturally occurring arsenic, so the city purchases water from the county.

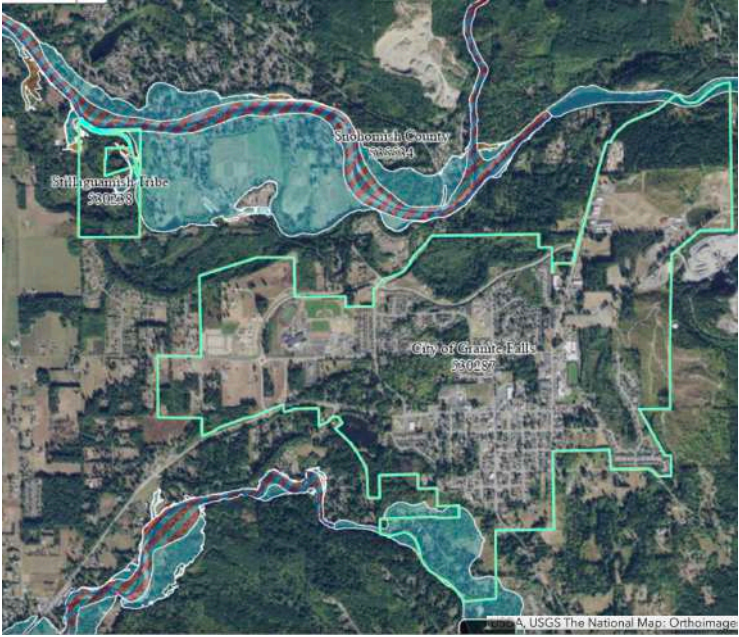
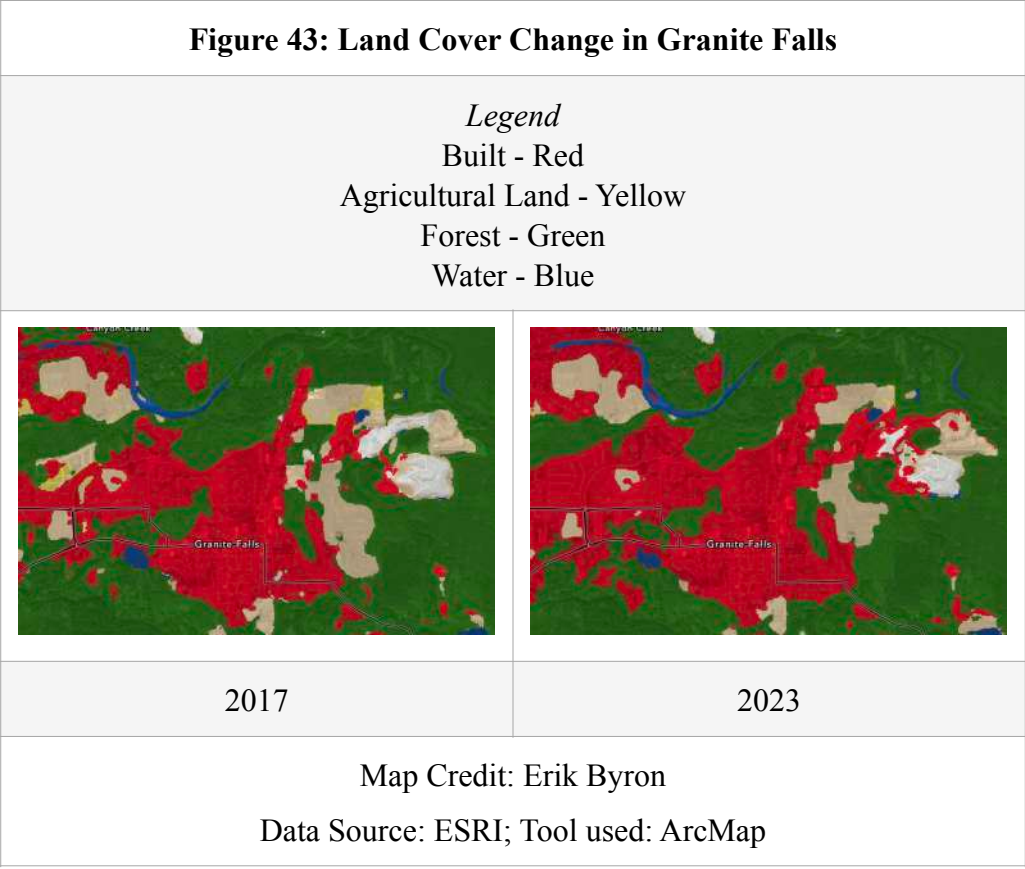


Figure 44: Map of areas within and near Granite Falls that are at risk of flooding. Political boundaries are outlined in teal. Data credit: FEMA. Application used: ArcGIS.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Diverse range of parks and green spaces serving different community needs.
- Proximity to regional natural attractions, making the city an outdoor recreation hub.
- Strong community engagement in park planning and maintenance.
- Support from the Growth Management Act (GMA) for park conservation.

Weaknesses

- Unequal access to parks for residents in certain areas.
- Aging infrastructure in some parks, requiring significant investment.
- Limited budget for new park development and trail expansion.

Opportunities

- Development of underutilized land into parks, hiking trails, or nature reserves.
- Public-private partnerships to fund park improvements and programming.
- Potential for ecotourism expansion, leveraging nearby natural attractions.
- Smart technology integration for park safety, maintenance, and visitor engagement.

Threats

- Urban development pressures potentially reducing available green space.
- Climate change impacting natural ecosystems and increasing maintenance costs.
- Budget constraints limiting the ability to expand and improve parks.

Historical Preservation

Introduction

Today, the City of Granite Falls considers historic preservation to be an “integral part of the City’s land use planning policy” and contends that “Historic structures contribute substantially to a city’s quality of life and its residents’ sense of community” (COGF, 2024, p. HP-1 (151)). With these values in mind, the City aims to prioritize the adaptive reuse of existing structures where possible, both for their historic value and as methods to maximize capital budgets.



Figure 45: Early Granite Falls

While the City currently does not have a landmark designation program to identify historically significant buildings, an inventory conducted in 2015 by the Snohomish County Historical Preservation Commission identifies all sites and structures 50 or more years old. The City uses this inventory when reviewing building or demolition permits. Figure LU-3 below, included in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, maps the subset of these buildings that the City considers to have specific historic significance.

rehabilitate, or reuse existing facilities wherever feasible and still meet the capital needs of the population.” The City is currently in negotiations with the fire department for the purchase of the building, but a final purchase and sale agreement has not yet been reached.



Figure 47: The old firehouse - soon to be community center

Built in the early 1900s, the firehouse was renovated in 1995 and again in 2002. It is predominantly built of brick, concrete, steel, and wood. During its most recent renovations, the building was upgraded to current seismic Zone 3 standards. It is currently zoned Public/Institutional, which would allow for use as a community center without additional zoning changes.



Figure 48: Inside the firehouse

The building has five equipment bays that are currently divided into three separate areas. Bays 1 and 2 are separated from Bays 3 and 4 by a brick wall that is thought to not be load bearing. Bays 3 and 4 are further separated by a wall from Bay 5 (see ground floor plan in Appendix 1 from the 2002 renovation). The City has expressed an interest in removing these walls to create a large open space that is reconfigurable for multiple types of events. Should this occur, they would like to retain the brick from the wall separating Bays 1 and 2 from Bays 3 and 4, reusing it elsewhere in the project.

In addition to the improved site, the purchase of the fire station is expected to include the parking lot directly to the west of the building (in the rear of the facility) and the 0.5 acre Horseshoe Park site to the north of the parking lot, which currently includes four horseshoe pits and a grass area with trees for picnics. Cascade Avenue borders both of these sites to the west and is the site of a weekly farmer's market in the summer.



SWOT Analysis

The following are considerations for the conversion of the fire house into a community space:

Strengths

- Maintains historic (circa 1900s) building in line with Historic Preservation goals in the comprehensive plan
- Adaptively reuses existing structure, saving public funds as compared to new construction and improving sustainability for the project, in line with the Capital Facilities goals in the comprehensive plan
- The location one block north of City Hall, in line with the other civic campus buildings and adjacent to downtown retail and restaurants provides a walkable option to other services
- A one-mile radius from the location include the entirety of the city limits
- The building is already integrated with water, sewer, and power. Future uses are not anticipated to require expanded capacity for any of these services.
- Parking is available in the rear of the building.

Weaknesses

- The most recent known renovation was 2002 (23 years) and fairly significant upgrades could be needed.
- The brick wall between bays 2 and 3 will need to be removed but reuse of the brick is desired. It is assumed this wall is not load bearing.

Opportunities

- The open bays are reconfigurable into large open spaces that could serve as event spaces for art, weddings, meetings, etc.
- The office, living, and kitchen spaces can be reused as meeting rooms for smaller groups
- By creating an open space that is usable for many event types, the facility could become an income-generating opportunity for the city.

Threats

- Change of use could impact building codes and standards, including seismic standards
- The City conforms to the International Building Code, 2021 Edition. The last renovation (known) occurred in 2002. Updates to the building may require further seismic or building changes needed to conform to updated code.
- While the condition of the building is thought to be good, the age may reveal unknown structural issues that could exceed the budget for renovation
- Other capital projects are in progress. Cost overruns from these project could impact the final budget for the community center.

Precedents

Firehouse Precedents

The adaptive reuse of firehouse facilities for community and arts centers has a number of successful use cases. Both of the following use cases are owned and operated by non-profit organizations.



Bainbridge, GA - Firehouse Arts Center

Year Built: 1914

Year Renovated: 1995

Location: 1 block off of downtown square

Use: Art gallery, community art space, event space for weddings, meetings



Longmont, CO - Firehouse Art Center

Year Built: 1907

Year Renovated: 1987, 1999

Location: 1 block off Main St. in a downtown walkable location

Use: Art gallery and exhibition space, community art space with adult art classes, event space for weddings, meetings, etc.

Events: Over a dozen art exhibits per year

Rental Rates:

- \$20/hour - classroom
- \$40/hour - art department
- \$60/hour - art gallery
- \$100/hour - art department and gallery
- \$120/hour - whole building

War Memorial Precedents

The city's leadership has expressed a desire to locate a war memorial on Lot 1. While there is not currently design specifics for this memorial, it was suggested that a future memorial could be centrally located to align with the mountain Mount Pilchuck in the distance. They also expressed a desire for this lot to serve multiple purposes as an event space, parking arena, and food-truck lot with utility connections. A custom memorial plaque and/or benches could be commissioned from a local artist using granite or other local materials to create a distinct gathering space in the heart of Granite Falls. The scale of the memorial can range from small interventions to a large monument depending on the wishes of the community leaders. To maintain maximum flexibility for year-round users of the site, any memorial should be appropriately scaled and consider multiple functions in the surrounding area.

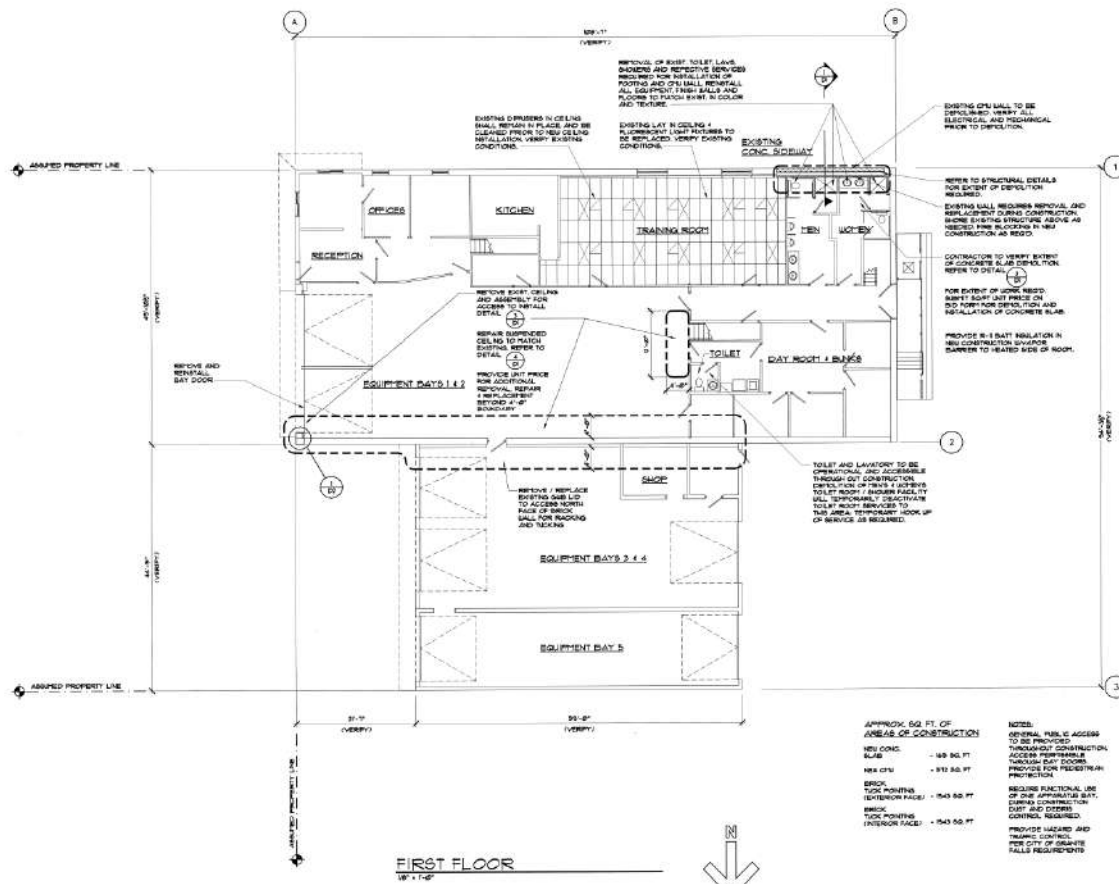
Figures 54 - 56: Small War Memorial Examples (Source: Pinterest, Pacific Coast Memorials, PG Memorials)

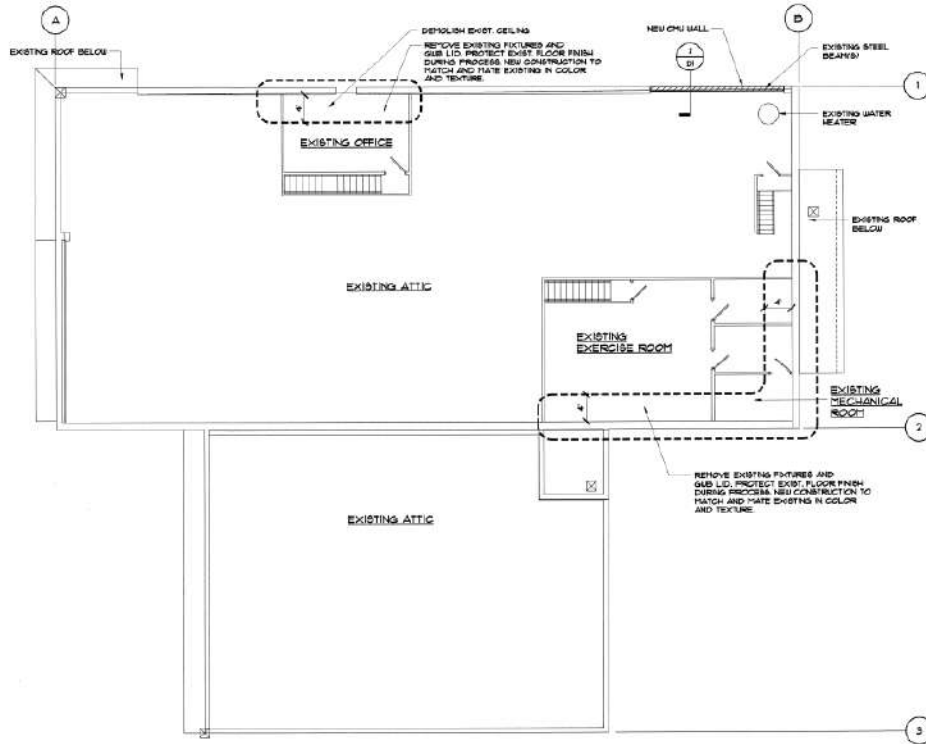




Appendices

Appendix 1 - Firehouse Floor Plans - 2002 Renovation





UPPER FLOOR
1/8" = 1'-0"



Appendix 2: CIP

**Table CF-1
General Facilities System CIP**

PROJECT	Priority Level	Estimated Cost	Project Date	Funding Source
CIP General Facilities Projects (Year 1-6)				
Veteran's War Memorial Plaza	High	\$1,500,000	2026	General Fund, Grants
Community Center	High	\$2,100,000	2027	General Fund, Grants
New Park and Ride Lot and EV Fast charger stations	Medium	\$145,000	2028	General Fund, Grants
City Public Works Building Relocation	Medium	\$1,100,000	2029	General Fund, Grants
	TOTAL	\$4,845,000		
Future General Facilities Projects (Year 7 to 20)				
Law Enforcement Building Expansion				
City Hall addition/expansion				

**Table CF-2
Water System CIP**

PROJECT	Priority Level	Estimated Cost	Project Date	Funding Source
CIP Water Projects (Year 1-6)				
Citywide Advanced Metering Infrastructure	High	\$305,000	2024-2029	Water CIF
Rehabilitation Wells	High	\$185,000	2024-2029	Water CIF
Sample Stations	High	\$15,000	2025	Water CIF
Cut & Cap Water Main – North Granite Ave	High	\$25,000	2025	Water CIF
Grand St. Water Main Replacement	Medium	\$531,000	2026	Water CIF
Cascade Ave. AC Water Main Replacement	Medium	\$442,000	2026	Water CIF
	TOTAL	\$1,503,000		
Future Water Projects (Year 7-20)				
Menzel Lake AC Water Main Replacement				
Wabash Ave., AC Water Main Replacement				
Granite Falls Middle School DI Water Main Replacement				
Anderson Avenue AC Water Main Replacement				
West 100 th St. (Burn Rd.) Master Meter				
Mt. Loop Hwy. Master Meter				

Appendix 3 - Parking Benefit District Definition

Parking Benefit District – “Parking Benefit Districts (PBD) are geographic areas with boundaries set by local ordinances. They were first championed by University of California, Los Angeles Professor Donald Shoup to utilize parking meter revenue to fund local improvements. These public improvements are intended to attract more visitors, which generates additional parking revenue and fosters continued development” (Parking Benefit Districts, State of Practices in the United States).

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