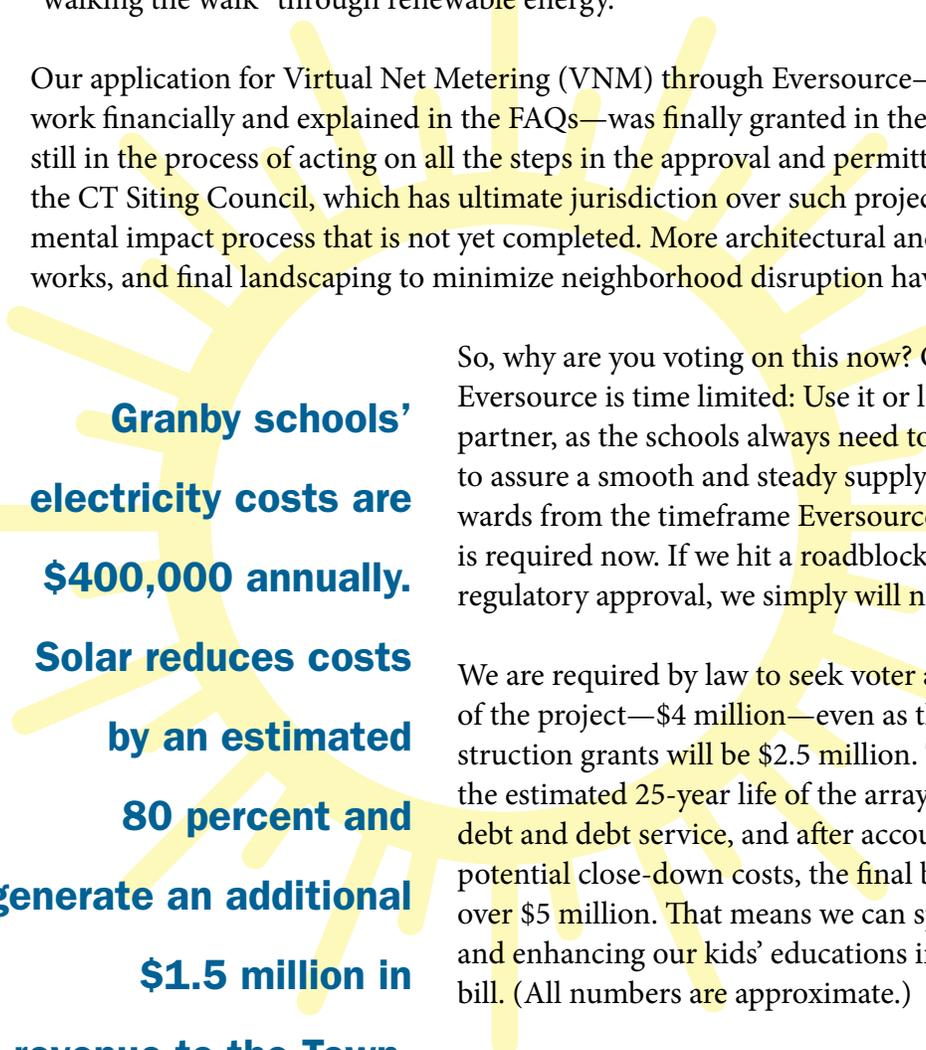


# SCHOOL SOLAR PROJECT

Granby is pursuing the construction of a 1.6 MW solar array on roughly 6 of the 15 acres at Wells Road School, which would produce 2.9 kWh of electricity, or 80 percent to 100 percent of the total electricity usage for all four schools, annually.

After years of implementing energy-efficiency efforts, Granby's schools have managed their electricity cost down to \$400,000 annually. Now, in a brief window of opportunity, we have a chance to reduce this by an estimated 80 percent and generate an additional \$1.5 million in revenue to the Town by building our own solar array in an unused, overgrown field behind Wells Road School. We have been exploring saving taxpayer money through renewable energy for over four years, and after extensive analysis with support from a variety of experts (with no stake in the outcome), the opportunity is clear: a ground mounted array at Wells School is the most cost-effective, least disruptive, and environmentally sound way to reduce annual costs, produce revenue, and augment our educational curriculum by "walking the walk" through renewable energy.

Our application for Virtual Net Metering (VNM) through Eversource—required for the project to work financially and explained in the FAQs—was finally granted in the fall of 2018. As a result, we are still in the process of acting on all the steps in the approval and permitting process. Most importantly, the CT Siting Council, which has ultimate jurisdiction over such projects, has an extensive environmental impact process that is not yet completed. More architectural and engineering details are in the works, and final landscaping to minimize neighborhood disruption have yet to be detailed.



**Granby schools' electricity costs are \$400,000 annually. Solar reduces costs by an estimated 80 percent and generate an additional \$1.5 million in revenue to the Town.**

So, why are you voting on this now? Quite simply, the contract with Eversource is time limited: Use it or lose it. Eversource is a required partner, as the schools always need to remain tied to the electric grid to assure a smooth and steady supply of electricity. Working backwards from the timeframe Eversource requires, voter authorization is required now. If we hit a roadblock, such as failure to secure State regulatory approval, we simply will not borrow or spend the money.

We are required by law to seek voter approval for the full gross cost of the project—\$4 million—even as the actual cost net of State construction grants will be \$2.5 million. The financial projections for the estimated 25-year life of the array are that after paying back the debt and debt service, and after accounting for any maintenance and potential close-down costs, the final benefit to Granby taxpayers is over \$5 million. That means we can spend taxpayer money delivering and enhancing our kids' educations instead of paying a big electric bill. (All numbers are approximate.)

The solar array project for Granby's schools is still a work-in-progress, with all indications pointing to projected benefits so substantial that we can't afford not to seek your endorsement to try to make it happen. **Your YES for Solar vote assures that opportunity.**

# SCHOOL SOLAR PROJECT: FAQs

## **Why is this a Board of Education, not a Town-wide Project?**

Granby schools can offset construction costs with a 39 percent state grant, but only for projects serving exclusively the schools' needs.

## **Why are we ground mounting the array instead of using school rooftops?**

Space on the schools' roofs can only support about 30 percent of our electricity needs, and rooftop panels impairs regular roof and HVAC maintenance and replacement.

## **Why was Wells Road Intermediate School chosen for the ground mounted solar array and what about the wetlands?**

Wells Road Intermediate School has the available acreage for a ground mounted solar array with enough capacity to serve the entire district without impairing the wetlands. The project is subject to extensive environmental impact assessment by the CT Siting Council, and any construction will be done in full compliance.

## **If we don't have all the approvals in place, why do we need to decide now?**

This project works, financially, as a virtual net metering project and is subject to LREC credits, both of which are time-limited by the State and Eversource. We need voter approval now to keep pursuing the benefit, estimated at over \$5 million. If we hit a roadblock, we won't borrow the money.

## **Why do we need virtual net metering?**

Virtual net metering allows the BOE, as an Eversource customer, to credit electric generation from one location (the Wells Road array) to the other schools. The program is limited—we are approved if we act now—and without it we would need separate arrays at each school, which is not financially or practically feasible.

## **What is an LREC?**

An LREC is a Large Renewable Energy Credit, available to approved customers of Eversource who generate renewable energy and deliver it to the electric grid. Eversource is obligated to the Granby BOE, under a 15-year contract based on the proposed project, to compensate us for the generation of renewable energy. These credits—revenue to the Town that is above and beyond the direct value of the electric use offset for the schools—total over \$1.5 million.

## **What about maintenance?**

Solar panels are made of durable tempered glass and require little to no maintenance for the 25 to 35 years that they will generate power. They do not need regular cleaning or maintenance and shed snow naturally. If they are damaged, insurance and warranties come into play, all of which has been accounted for in the financial model. The model also contemplates potential removal of the array, and a return of the area to its natural state.