

1 | Introduction

1 | A Guiding Principles

1 | A-1 Residents First

This Master Plan has been developed in accordance with Lebanon’s “Residents-First” policy adopted on June 18, 2008 by the City Council:

All actions and policies of the government of the City of Lebanon shall be intended first and foremost to benefit the current residents of Lebanon.

Residents have consistently communicated their support for the following core concepts to City planners and officials at public forums held throughout the process of developing this plan:

- Support of smart growth principles.
- Improvement of civic participation and transparency in government through better communication and varied, manageable opportunities for involvement.
- Consideration of the impact of new development on City services.
- Development of a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation plan.
- Improvement of bikeways, walkways, and public transit systems (recreational-commuter corridors).
- Stewardship of natural and recreational areas.
- Balance between environmental sustainability and landowner rights.

1 | A-2 Purpose Statement

The input of residents guided the writing of this plan beginning with the following purpose statement intended to set the plan’s tone and direction:

With this plan, the City of Lebanon presents a collective philosophy for the management of development. The City shall sustainably manage its physical, social, and economic development in such a way as to maintain a pleasant, healthy, safe and stimulating environment for all residents. The City recognizes that this will be balanced by respect for and protection of the rights of all property owners.

1 | A-3 Sustainability Principles

The City of Lebanon defines sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Lebanon has recognized that in order to best serve its residents, City government must become more sustainable, effective, and responsive. The City Council adopted “Principles for a Sustainable Community” on February 18, 2009, addressing seven essential areas in which better local government can make a positive difference in our community. The policies and recommended actions of this plan are intended to implement the City’s sustainability principles.



- All actions and policies of the government of the City of Lebanon shall be intended first and foremost to benefit the current residents of Lebanon.
- The City shall sustainably manage its physical, social, and economic development in such a way as to maintain a pleasant, healthy, safe and stimulating environment for all residents. The City recognizes that this will be balanced by respect for and protection of the rights of all property owners.
- The City has adopted sustainability principles addressing seven essential areas in which better local government can make a positive difference in our community. The policies and recommended actions of this plan are intended to implement those principles.

1. **Community Access and Engagement.** Good government requires that we welcome the public's participation and honor the public trust. Cornerstones of public trust include effective outreach, communication, accountability, and transparency. Encouraging broad, inclusive collaboration in local government decisions recognizes that all levels of government, together with the non-profit and private sectors, have a stake in creating and implementing mutually beneficial policies. Improving public access to information and processes can make City government more accountable, transparent, fair, and responsive to community needs. At the same time, because state and federal government decisions affect our community, we can effectively advocate our interests by increasing our participation at those levels.
2. **Sense of Place.** The traditional character of Lebanon and Northern New England anchors our community identity, civic pride, and quality of life. Preserving the character of existing neighborhoods, and promoting harmonious character in new neighborhoods, helps keep our City unique. Revitalizing and supporting our two downtowns, Lebanon and West Lebanon, helps maintain key focal points for community activity. Preserving the rural landscape supports farm- and forest-based activities, contiguous tracts of open space for people and wildlife, and highly valued scenic assets.
3. **Environmental Responsibility and Energy Efficiency.** A healthy natural environment in turn sustains human physical, mental, and fiscal health. Scientific data and practical experience confirm the value of identifying, avoiding, minimizing, and repairing environmental harm. We benefit from clean air, abundant drinking water, productive soils, and diverse ecosystems. Protecting and strengthening our community's natural resources—including the ability to raise food and timber—enhances our economy and capacity to withstand floods, drought, and other potential disasters. Conserving green infrastructure—a network of open space, waterways, and other natural areas—is vital to this effort. Partnering with citizens, landowners, schools, businesses, organizations, and other governments, we can responsibly enjoy natural assets now and for many years to come. The City can lead by example in following or exceeding best-management practices for all operations. For example, energy efficiency is critical to environmental health and community prosperity. Everyone can help promote energy conservation and more sustainable technology.
4. **Intelligent, Coordinated Development and Transportation.** Sprawling development detracts from many of the principles outlined here, and should be discouraged if we are to secure those assets that have made our community desirable. Coordinating infill development, adaptive re-use of existing buildings, and conservation design for new development will maintain traditional compact settlement patterns and efficiently use existing infrastructure. Developing attractive human-scale, mixed-use, walkable-bikable neighborhoods will help conserve and enhance quality of life – especially with an integrated multi-modal transportation system to promote alternatives to the automobile. Benefits include less traffic congestion, less air pollution, less wear and tear on roads, and safer access for people of all ages and abilities. Managing an orderly pace of development will minimize negative effects on City finances from associated needs for increased facilities and services as the City grows.
5. **Economic Vitality.** The continued vitality of our local economy depends upon proactively positioning our community for a changing world. The City must foster a green, innovative and diversified business environment as it supports a healthy climate for existing enterprises. Local companies have shown that they can compete and succeed in a global economy. Identifying sustainable industry niches that we can fill and successfully compete within, and attracting sustainable businesses within those niches, will

strengthen overall quality of life. For example, encouraging local markets and community-supported agriculture can revitalize the rural economy. Providing a range of affordable housing options and incubating high-tech, medical, recreational, and creative businesses can help strengthen our job base, especially by promoting training for a skilled, diverse, productive workforce. All of these activities will encourage further community investment, reduce poverty, and promote prosperity.

6. **Fiscal Responsibility.** The City's finances must be managed such that current and future generations of residents can afford to live here. The alternative will erode the traditional socioeconomic diversity that has distinguished our community from some of our neighbors. City budgets must judiciously assess and prioritize current demands, keeping debt low while making selective investments such as energy efficiency to meet future needs. Careful attention to land use and tax policy, such as promoting redevelopment in order to increase asset valuations, can raise new revenues without incurring new costs for municipal services. Incentives for sensible frugality can yield further savings. Above all, fiscal responsibility depends on continuing to improve transparency and public understanding of municipal budgetary matters.
7. **Regional Leadership.** Lebanon has become the hub of the Upper Valley. The City, as well as the region, can benefit by actively engaging with neighboring towns to achieve common goals and address common challenges and opportunities more effectively. Financial and operational efficiencies may result from economies of scale. Encouraging a regional view of community interdependence while respecting local autonomy can enable the community to manage growth locally and collaborate regionally. We should promote positive innovation and excellence by achieving and exceeding best-management practices.

1 | B

The Master Plan

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Purpose of the Master Plan

The State of New Hampshire authorizes cities and towns to adopt a master plan in order to manage development within their jurisdictions. The state defines a master plan as: public policy duly adopted by a municipality to manage physical and socioeconomic development. Being duly adopted, this Master Plan for the City of Lebanon is an official, legal document expressing City policy.

A master plan is the statutorily-required basis for zoning, subdivision, and site plan regulations as well as the annual capital improvement program and other City planning projects. It provides a vision for the City's growth and development, which the City then implements through various regulatory and non-regulatory actions. In essence, this plan is the foundation for the management of the City's future.

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History of the Master Plan

The City of Lebanon adopted its first master plan in 1957 and has regularly updated it following review of existing conditions within the City and discussion with residents about what they want for their community's future. Prior to adoption of this plan in 2012, revised master plans were adopted in 1970, 1977, 1986, 1993 and 2006.



key points | the master plan

- This Master Plan provides a vision for the City's growth and development and is the foundation for the management of the City's future.
- Lebanon adopted its first master plan in 1957 and has regularly updated it since.
- Many citizen volunteers have been involved in the master planning process through public forums and advisory committees including members of the Planning Board, City Council, and other boards, commissions, and community groups.
- This 2012 Master Plan resulted from a process to refine the 2006 plan and re-engage the public in forums and chapter review subcommittees.
- The Planning Board adopts the Master Plan and the City Council will be requested to adopt the plan.
- The vision for each chapter of the Master Plan is supported by a set of outcomes, strategies, and action items that provide an outline for implementation.

1|B-3 **Citizen Involvement in the Master Plan**

This Master Plan has been prepared under the auspices of the Planning Board. New Hampshire law encourages municipalities to involve its citizens in the preparation of a master plan in a way that is most appropriate for the municipality. There is no better-qualified group of people to set policy for the physical and socioeconomic development than the municipality's own citizens.

The drafting of Lebanon's 1993 Master Plan set a new precedent for citizen participation in planning, which has since come to play an integral role in subsequent master plan revisions. Since then, many citizen volunteers have been involved in the master planning process through public forums and advisory committees. These volunteers included members of the Planning Board, City Council, and other boards, commissions, and community groups. This collective work provided a solid foundation for the same kind of approach to the drafting of this plan.

1|B-4 **Most Recent Update of the Master Plan**

Many of the concepts and themes expressed in this 2012 Master Plan are rooted in the "Lebanon: A Look Ahead" community forum held in 1999. A local steering committee, assisted by Vital Communities of the Upper Valley and UNH/Grafton County Cooperative Extension Service, brought 100 people together for a weekend to produce a report, which outlined the basic ideas that became the 2006 Master Plan.

After the successful adoption of a revised master plan in June 2006 by the Planning Board, and subsequent endorsement by City Council, work commenced on a zoning amendment to implement the plan's policies. When the zoning amendment referendum did not pass in 2008, the Planning Board, at the request of the City Council, created a new Master Plan Steering Committee for the purpose of determining whether or not the issues, goals, and objectives expressed in the 2006 plan were relevant to the community in 2009. With assistance from the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, the steering committee undertook a process to refine the 2006 plan and re-engage the public in forums and chapter review subcommittees. The Planning Board, City Council and Conservation Commission, as well as members representing the chapter working groups, and residents at large, reviewed revised master plan materials in public meetings, resulting in this 2011 Master Plan.

1|B-5 **Adoption of the Master Plan**

The Planning Board, pursuant to New Hampshire law (RSA 674:1), adopts the Master Plan. There is no mention in law as to whether or not the City Council should also adopt the plan, but action by the council is important since many of its decisions may either support or contradict the plan's policies. Therefore, the City Council will be requested to adopt the Lebanon Master Plan.

1|B-6 **Master Plan Implementation, Amendments and Updates**

The vision for each chapter of the Master Plan is supported by a set of outcomes, strategies, and action items that provide the outline for implementation. Lebanon staff and City boards and commissions will use the Master Plan to guide their policies and actions for a 20-year planning horizon.

The Master Plan provides the framework for achieving the vision for Lebanon out to year 2030, while the subsequent development of topic implementation plans based on chapters of the Master Plan, e.g. housing,

economic development, and transportation implementation plans, will provide a greater level of specificity directed at realizing the overall vision and outcomes set forth in the Master Plan.

The Master Plan will continue to be dynamic in nature, requiring periodic updates at desired time intervals in an effort to re-assess community visions, and assess the status as well as potentially alter or modify desired outcomes, strategies, and action items as changing conditions warrant.

1|C **The City of Lebanon**

The City of Lebanon, New Hampshire - together with our neighboring communities of Hanover, New Hampshire (to the north) and Hartford, Vermont (to the west) - is the regional center of the Upper Connecticut River Valley. Lebanon is a thriving small City that offers our 13,151 residents (2010 Census) the best of rural and urban living - a fact that was recognized by our being ranked third in a recent listing of the 100 Best Small Towns in America.

Approximately 19,000 people work in our City, including at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) campus, in one of the many high-tech companies located in our business parks, at one of the national or local retail stores or restaurants in our commercial areas, or at a small business in one of our historic central business districts. Lebanon's infrastructure — state-of-the art telecommunications, direct interstate highway access, public water and sewer systems with available capacity, and recently resumed freight rail service — supports a dynamic and diverse business community.

1|C-1 Natural Landscape

Lebanon developed along the Connecticut and Mascoma Rivers and the natural landscape is characterized by the ridgeline and undulating hills that define the river valleys. The Mascoma River serves a dual role of linking historically the eastern and the western ends of the City and of partitioning the north from the south. The Connecticut River serves as a landmark that defines our City limits on the west and ties the northwest section of Lebanon with the southwest corner.

1|C-2 Built Landscape

Today, our built landscape is a composite of traditional and modern land use patterns. Lebanon's early use of land replicated traditional European development patterns - a dense urban center surrounded by farm and forest land. That land use pattern remains within our two urban centers, located in the river valleys, one in central (Lebanon village) and the other in western (West Lebanon village) part of the City. Spurred by the construction of Interstate 89, a new pattern began to emerge 50 years ago. The modern land use pattern included the large-lot residential development in rural areas and retail strip development along the main highways now described as suburban sprawl.

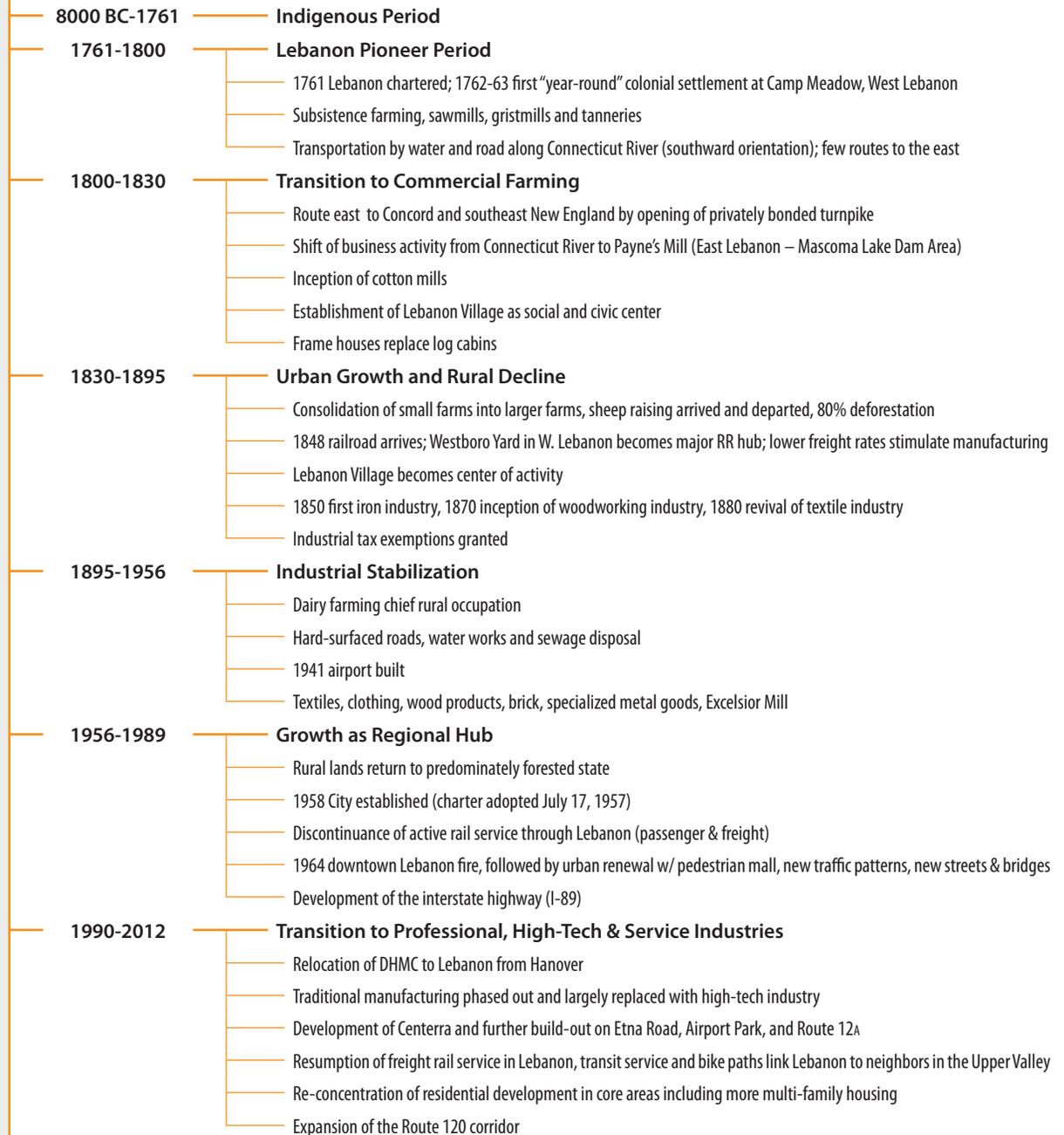
While much development has occurred outside the traditional urban centers in recent decades, we are fortunate to have retained a substantial amount of rural land. The value of these open, rural spaces to the City's quality of life is now widely recognized. Lebanon's land use patterns are again shifting - from auto-dependent, low-

key points | the City of Lebanon



- The City of Lebanon is the regional center of the Upper Connecticut River Valley.
- Lebanon developed along the Connecticut and Mascoma Rivers and the landscape is characterized by ridgelines and undulating hills that define the river valleys.
- Lebanon's early settlement pattern resulted in a dense urban center surrounded by farm and forest land. A new pattern began to emerge 50 years ago as development occurred outside the traditional urban centers. Lebanon's land use patterns are shifting back to pedestrian-friendly, higher-density, mixed-use smart growth that will focus growth in core developed areas and conserve open space.
- More than 13,000 people live and approximately 19,000 work in the City. The City is approximately 25% developed and 75% undeveloped land.





density suburban sprawl that would consume our remaining rural lands to pedestrian-friendly, higher-density, mixed-use smart growth that will focus growth in our core developed areas and conserve open space.

1|C-3

Community Snapshot

1|C-3a

People. Lebanon’s 2010 population was 13,151 people and during the 2000s the number of residents grew at an average annual rate of 0.5%. In 2010, Lebanon accounted for 15% of Grafton County’s total population. During the 2000s, our population continued to increase at a slower rate than the county or state. Our population growth rate was higher than the rate in the Upper Valley communities of Hanover, Enfield, Claremont, Hartford and Norwich, but was lower than the rate in Plainfield, Canaan, Grantham and Springfield during the 2000s. In terms of absolute population growth, Lebanon added more residents than any of those Upper Valley communities with the exception of Canaan and Grantham. During the 2000s, most of Lebanon’s population growth was a result of natural increase (births minus deaths) rather than migration (people moving in minus those moving out).

As of 2010, Lebanon:

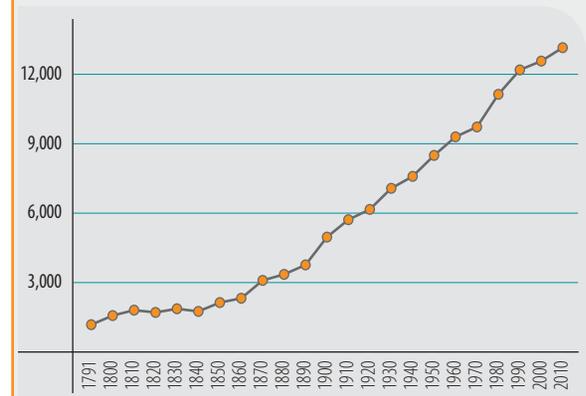
- Had a larger number of preschool-age children and a smaller number of school age children and youth than in 2000
- Had an increase in both the younger (20-34 years) and older (45-64 years) workforce cohorts since 2000
- Had a growing senior population (65+ years)
- Residents are more likely to be a New Hampshire native than the average state resident
- Residents spend less time commuting than the average state resident
- Residents are less likely to be married than the average state resident
- Residents are more educated than the average state resident
- Had an estimated “day-time” population of 25,000 to 35,000, including commuters, patients, shoppers and others traveling into the city from throughout the region

In 2005, the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning projected that the Lebanon population would reach 14,180 residents by 2030.

1|C-3b

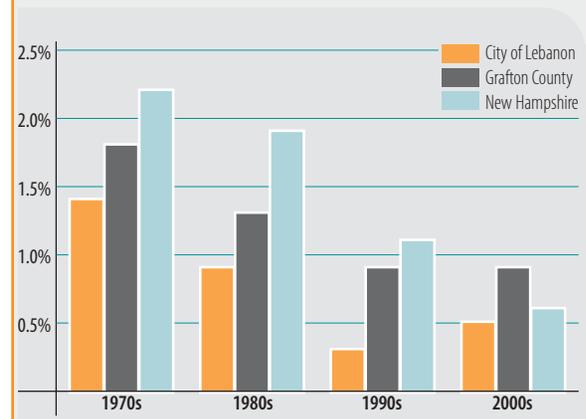
Built Environment. Lebanon added 942 housing units during the past decade, representing a 16.5% increase. The absolute number exceeds that of neighboring communities of Hanover (450), Hartford (323), and Claremont (614). The percent increase is close to identical to that of Grafton County (16.9%), and exceeds both the NH State rate (12.4%) and Vermont State rate (9.6%). Lebanon Housing Units are 49.3% owner occupied and the 2010 overall vacancy rate for Lebanon Housing units is 7%. (2010 Census)

Non-residential development in Lebanon includes general commercial (e.g. retail, industrial and office), public institution, and medical use. Starting in the 1960s, Lebanon has demonstrated robust non-residential growth. Currently, there is believed to be 8.8 million square feet of non-residential development within the City (11% public institution, 21% medical and 68% general commercial/industrial/office).



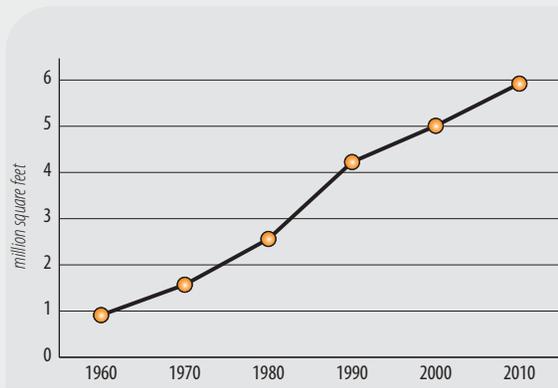
Lebanon's total population

US Census Bureau



city, county and state average annual population growth

US Census Bureau



total non-residential space (excluding medical & government)
Lebanon Planning Office

During the 2000s, more than 75,000 square feet of public institution use was added to the City, including the Moses Sanville DPW facility, Grafton County Senior Center, Veterans Memorial Pool, Airport Hangars, and both new and expanded religious buildings.

Medical use in the 1980s was estimated to account for less than 100,000 square feet, consisting of the Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital. During the 2000s, approximately 700,000 additional square feet were added to the approximately 1.0 million square feet built in the 1990s. Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, including the main building and additional campus structures, accounted for the vast majority of this development.

In 1959, there was approximately 850,000 square feet of general commercial and industrial space in the City. The average amount added per decade since has been just shy of 1 million square feet, with a high of 1.35 million square feet in the 1980s and a low of 626,000 square feet in the 1960s. The 2000s brought an additional 1.07 million square feet. Current proposed projects, if approved by the Planning Board, would ensure that the decade average is met or exceeded out to 2030.

1|C-3c **Natural Landscape.** As documented in Lebanon’s Landscape Report (2008), the City is approximately 25% developed and 75% undeveloped land. The vast majority of the undeveloped land is forested with a small percentage of open field, active farm, or shrubby woodland. There are approximately 2,100 acres of permanently protected land, representing 11% of the undeveloped land. It is estimated that the City of Lebanon was 7.1% developed as of 1955.