

10 | Recreation

10 | A Vision & Purpose

The City of Lebanon shall foster a high quality of life by maintaining and enhancing the City's recreational resources, and striving to provide residents with access to recreation facilities and programs appropriate for people of all ages, backgrounds, interests and ability levels. The City recognizes the important role recreational activities play in creating social ties and a sense of community, teaching positive values like teamwork and fair play, and promoting healthy lifestyles and an appreciation of nature. City parks and open spaces will continue to provide venues for organized sports and informal leisure-time activities, which create a vibrant, fun and stimulating atmosphere that enriches residents' daily lives. Lebanon's parks and open spaces will continue to foster a sense of civic pride and community identity, and will be among the amenities that help attract new businesses and residents to the City. The City's parks and open spaces will be linked to our residential neighborhoods, central business districts, schools, and employment and service centers through an interconnected multi-use path system.

10 | B Issues & Priorities

10 | B-1 Growing Demand for Recreation Facilities and Programs

The City of Lebanon strives to provide recreation facilities and programming that meets the needs and interests of residents, and to expand recreation amenities to keep pace with growing and shifting demand within the community. To meet future demand, the City will have to be creative in balancing residents' desires with realistic space and resource limitations.

For example, the demand for playing facilities for school sports activities and Little League regularly exceeds the availability. Team sports are very popular in Lebanon among school-age children, and many seasons there is a crunch when it comes to the availability of facilities. At the same time, many feel that the City should encourage recreation opportunities where residents of different ages can interact. The 2009 Master Plan Survey showed that there is a strong interest in expanding recreation opportunities for young adults, older adults and senior citizens. Recreation planning will need to consider and balance the recreation needs of all residents - from preschoolers to seniors.

By taking measures to make Lebanon a more walkable, livable City with community gathering places, residents of all ages will find creative, unstructured ways to utilize their leisure time. This may slow the growing demand for additional City parks and expanded recreation programs.

10 | B-2 Sustainable Development of Parks and Recreation Facilities

Sustainability as it relates to balancing the demand for development with the desire to maintain open space is a common theme woven throughout and connecting the various chapters of this plan. One of the main issues confronting the City of Lebanon is how to achieve a balance between development and the need for less developed areas devoted to recreational, cultural and community activities for residents, visitors, and the daytime

key points | vision & purpose



- Foster a high quality of life by offering residents a variety of recreation facilities and programs including organized sports, informal natural areas, cultural activities, etc.
- Recognize the important role recreational activities play in creating social ties, fostering civic pride, attracting new businesses and residents to the City, promoting healthy lifestyles, and teaching positive values.
- Link the City's residential neighborhoods, central business districts, schools, employment and service centers, and parks and open spaces through an interconnected multi-use path system.

key points | issues & priorities



- Strive to provide recreation facilities and programming that meets the needs and interests of residents by expanding recreation amenities to keep pace with community growth, while recognizing that residents' desires will have to be balanced with space and resource limitations.
- Balance the demand for development with the desire to retain open space and less developed areas for recreational, cultural and community activities, and use City recreation and open space resources sustainably.

key points | existing conditions & trends

- The most recent recreation master plan provides a detailed description of Lebanon's recreation resources, and recommendations for future amenities and improvements.
- Lebanon has a Recreation and Parks Department that coordinates City recreational programs and special events, and that maintains the City's parks and recreation facilities.
- Within Lebanon, there are a variety of public recreation amenities including state lands, City recreation areas, and school district recreational facilities.



riverside community park

workforce. When planning for recreation, the tension between these two factors is further evident in discussions regarding whether additional land in the City should be developed as formal recreation areas (sports fields or courts, playgrounds, etc.) or be managed in a more natural state for informal recreation use (trails, wildlife viewing, canoe/kayak access, etc.).

It is also important for City parks and recreation areas to be used in a sustainable manner - one that does not result in degradation of the City's recreational, cultural, historical and natural resources. Increased use without adequate oversight and maintenance, or misuse, could result in damage or loss of our valued resources. This issue needs to be confronted as the City grapples with continued growth.

10 | C **Existing Conditions & Trends**

10 | C-1 Recreation Planning

The most recent Recreation Facilities Master Plan and Addendum provides a detailed description of existing recreation resources within the City, as well as recommendations for future amenities and improvements. A brief summary of the City's recreation resources is provided below, but readers seeking more detailed information should refer directly to the Recreation Master Plan. The subsequent sections of this chapter combine the recommendations from the Recreation Master Plan with input gathered from residents through surveys and planning forums in the years since the recreation plan was developed. The importance of recreation to City residents is evident. Two of the core concepts that residents have repeatedly communicated to City planners and officials are recreation-related: stewardship of natural and recreational areas; and improvement of bikeways, walkways, and public transit systems (recreational-commuter corridors).

10 | C-2 Recreation Department and Programs

The City of Lebanon has a Recreation and Parks Department that coordinates a variety of public recreation programs and special events year-round for City residents of all ages. The department is also responsible for the maintenance and development of the City's open spaces, parks and recreation facilities.

The City also has a Recreation Commission composed of citizens and representatives from City government and the school district. The commission is involved in master planning, annual budgeting, capital improvement planning and grant applications.

10 | C-3 Recreation Facilities and Parks

The table below offers a short summary of existing public recreation amenities in Lebanon. In-depth assessments may be found in the 1998 Recreation Facilities Master Plan and Addendum. In addition to these public resources, the City of Lebanon has a wealth of private and non-profit facilities and organizations that offer a variety of recreation facilities, programs and activities for people of all ages.

	Location	Size	Description
State Recreation Areas			
True's Brook Car Top Boat Launch	Route 12A		Provides access to the Connecticut River. Needs improved signage, parking & access.
Northern Rail Trail			Off-road, multi-use trail with a crushed-stone surface that travels from Lebanon to Grafton on a former rail bed. Open to use by pedestrians, runners, bicyclists, horseback riders, skiers & snowmobilers.
Mascoma Lake Boat Launch	Route 4A		Provides access to the lake for both motorized and non-motorized watercraft. Heavily used.
City Recreation Areas			
Civic Memorial Field	Crawford Ave adjacent to Seminary Hill School	9 acres	Multiple sports fields and open land, along with a wooden play structure, picnic pavilion, two tennis courts, a basketball court, public rest room and maintenance facility.
Colburn Park	Park Street	2 acres	Historic green at the center of downtown Lebanon is used for evening concerts, festivals, gatherings, and the Farmer's Market.
East Wilder Boat Launch	East Wilder Road	3 acres	Public boat launch on the Connecticut River.
Eldridge Park	Spencer Street	3 acres	Playing fields with public rest rooms and maintenance building contiguous to the recreation facilities maintained by the Carter Community Building Association.
Fellows Hill	Route 4 (east)	5 acres	Picnic facilities with scenic views. Needs improved access to Mascoma River and Mill Road.
High Street Park	High Street	0.5 acres	Lawn, bench and fountain used as a resting spot by pedestrians.
Lebanon Veterans Memorial Pool	Pumping Station Road	22 acres	Olympic-size pool, a wading pool with spray features, diving well, bath house, playground and green space completely renovated in 2003. Rail-trail and Mascoma River access.
Logan Park	Water Street		Little League field parking lot, dugouts, fencing and concession stand/rest room facility.
Mill Road Trail	off Route 4		Road closed to vehicles and maintained as Class A Recreational Trail. Offers a scenic walk along the Mascoma River & a link to the Rail Trail.
Pat Walsh Field	Riverdale Extension		Recreation field, seasonal skating.
Riverside Community Park	Glen Road	8 acres	Park developed in 2003-04 with a pavilion, skateboard park, horseshoe pit area, picnic area, accessible playground and an ADA-accessible riverfront trail that extends to the Powerhouse Mall.



lebanon veterans memorial pool

key points | future challenges & opportunities

- Residents have expressed a desire for increased recreational facilities and programs.
- Lebanon needs improved public access to waterways, which must be accomplished while protecting environmental quality in sensitive shoreline areas.
- The City needs a more robust pedestrian/bicycle circulation system that can provide both recreational opportunities and serve as an alternative mode of transportation that is healthier for people and for the environment. Active recreation parks and fields should be located in close proximity to existing neighborhoods.
- The land owned by the City at the Westboro Rail Yard should be developed into centrally-located park that can serve as a community gathering place.



eldridge park

	Location	Size	Description
Storrs Hill Ski Area	Spring Street with frontage on Great Brook	20 acres	Ski area with lodge and 3 trails with a 300-foot vertical drop, served by a surface lift. Abuts Goodwin Park & its system of trails.
School Recreation Areas			
Lebanon High School and Hanover Street School	Hanover Street	36 acres	Multiple uses, including football and lacrosse fields with nighttime lighting, a playground, and a rubberized track.
Lebanon Junior High	Bank Street	7 acres	Playing fields
Mount Lebanon School	White Avenue		Includes, Kidsplace, a primary age playground, a nature trail and open space. The City's Camp Kaleidoscope uses this school as a home base for its 5-8 year old age group.
Sacred Heart School	Eldridge Street		Playground
School Street School	School Street		Playground
Lebanon Middle School	Moulton Avenue		Playing fields

10 | D

Future Challenges & Opportunities

10 | D-1

Meeting Current Demand

As described above, City residents have consistently communicated a desire for increased recreation opportunities and public parks, including in their responses to the 2009 Master Plan survey. Each spring, the demand for sports fields, in particular, is evident as field time is scheduled for school sports, adult leagues and Little League. At times, some playing fields cannot be used because of poor drainage, grass surface or uneven playing surface. Through the eighth grade, every child who wants to play is allowed to do so resulting in an increase in demand for facilities. The City should evaluate, improve and increase the number of facilities for sports activities.

Other specific recreation programs that residents have expressed a desire for include:

- Expanded ADA and special programs such as after school programs that engage children through high school.
- Expanded cultural offerings and programming of Colburn Park like the summer concert series and multi-cultural festivals.

10 | D-2

Waterway Use and Access

Lakes and beaches offer opportunities in a natural setting for safe, supervised swimming, relaxation and picnicking, and are especially attractive for young families. In addition to the city-owned Lebrun Meadow, which includes marginal Mascoma Lake access, there is a state-owned boat launch. The City should work with the Town of Enfield regarding public beach access to the lake for Lebanon residents.

One issue raised at the 1999 “Lebanon: A Look Ahead” forum was residents’ desire for more walking access to both the Mascoma and Connecticut Rivers. The Northern Rail Trail and the Mill Road recreational trail have certainly improved access to Mascoma Lake and the upper portions of the river. However, access to the Mascoma River in the downtown central business district and downstream to the Connecticut River could be improved and capitalized upon.

Improved public access to waterways must be achieved with minimal environmental harm, as laid out in the Addendum to the Recreation Facilities Master Plan. Any projects adjacent to waterways must comply with the New Hampshire Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (RSA 483-B) as well as the Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan.

10 | D-3 Pedestrian and Bicycle Amenities

Residents have consistently expressed a desire for roads that are safe for walking and biking throughout the City. For many older residents or parents with young children, walking through their neighborhood or in downtown Lebanon or West Lebanon is a daily/primary recreational activity.

A more walkable/bikable City is a more livable City. Walking and biking create more of a sense of community, as it promotes interaction between neighbors, and can also help reduce roadway congestion and associated air quality problems when replacing a trip by car. Roadway improvements to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles can also enhance safety for motorists. For example, adding paved shoulders on two-lane roads has been shown to reduce the frequency of run-off-road, head-on, and sideswipe motor vehicle crashes.

Walking and biking should be promoted within the City. Lebanon shall create safer walking and bicycle paths throughout the City and to other Upper Valley communities. Locating recreational parks and amenities within or in close proximity to existing neighborhoods is fundamental to supporting this concept.

10 | D-4 West Lebanon and Westboro Rail Yard Opportunities

Within West Lebanon, there is an identified need for a centrally located park or facility that would serve as a community-gathering place, a place where there could be both formal scheduled events as well as opportunities for informal gatherings and play. The Westboro Railroad Yard, which includes land leased to the City by the state, is centrally located and contains prime river frontage, could provide much-needed recreational space in West Lebanon.

Outcomes & Strategies

OUTCOME 1 Continue to meet the growing demand for varied recreational facilities and activities, parks, trails, and open spaces.

STRATEGIES

- 1 Promote programs that encourage physical fitness for children through high school.
- 2 Continue to involve children in civic activities.
- 3 Encourage teens to become involved in coaching, umpiring, and being “Big Brothers and Sisters” to younger children.
- 4 Continue and expand the summer day camp program’s leadership development program for junior high school age youth.
- 5 Continue to offer recreational and cultural activities where senior citizens can interact and collaborate with people of all ages.
- 6 Consider decommissioned school buildings and playgrounds for indoor and outdoor recreation.
- 7 Broaden support for the growth of structured after school programming that is coordinated and inclusive of youth at all ages and income levels.
- 8 Improve public access to Mascoma Lake, the Mascoma River, and the Connecticut River.
- 9 Support the “String of Pearls” project of the Lebanon Rotary Club.
- 10 Develop additional safe multi-use trails to offer connectivity throughout the City and to other Upper Valley towns.
- 11 Ensure that walking/bicycle routes have well maintained sidewalks, safe road crossings & benches.
- 12 Provide opportunities along walking and biking trails for picnicking and non-structured uses.
- 13 Improve communication between residents and the City regarding the addition of multi-use paths.
- 14 Address walkability and bikability in conjunction with traffic planning.

ACTIONS

- 1 Evaluate the need for facilities and continue to form partnerships with user groups (such as Lebanon Youth Baseball Association, Upper Valley Trails Association, Rotary Club, and Greater Lebanon Youth Hockey) to develop these facilities
- 2 Investigate and develop City-owned lots for use as pocket parks.
- 3 Incorporate the statistical information on citizen recreational uses from the 2001 and 2009 Survey of Lebanon Taxpayers’ Recreation Preferences and Views on Recreation Services and Facilities
- 4 Review the current availability of a boat launch at the Mascoma Lake and other sites for Lebanon residents.
- 5 Work with the Town of Enfield to allow Lebanon residents beach access.
- 6 Identify and establish off-road multi-use routes central to Lebanon and West Lebanon for residents’ use as in-town trails.
- 7 Update the Pedestrian & Bicyclist Advisory Committee Plan and Recreation Facilities Master Plan to connect City areas via multi-use trails.
- 8 Implement the “Livable, Walkable Lebanon Plan” and “The Blueprint for Community Trails.”

OUTCOME 2 Address the needs of all recreational users while protecting and maintaining conservation lands, and ensuring sustainable use of the City’s recreation resources.

STRATEGIES

- 1 Continue to provide recreational opportunities for all recreational users, including motorized recreational vehicle users, people with disabilities, and other users needing special accommodation.
- 2 Promote an educational program on the recreational opportunities available in Lebanon as well as improve the signage at the sites to make them more visible to the public.

ACTIONS

- 1 Review regulations regarding the proper use of recreational areas and conservation lands within the City.
- 2 Update the “Lebanon Trails & Recreation Map.”