

11 | **Historic Resources**

11 | A **Vision & Purpose**

Lebanon's rich heritage will be made accessible to our citizens and young people through ongoing efforts to protect, research, study and communicate about the City's historic structures and documents. Both residents and visitors will be given a sense of the community's history, including the significance of those structures and documents, and the stories of the people involved in them.

The City of Lebanon will work to protect and preserve the distinctiveness of its historic and representative architecture, natural landscape and resources, homesteads of historic persons, historic structures, and properties of historic value. The City will also educate its residents and visitors about the City's many architectural and historic sites and resources to encourage the preservation of its history for generations to come. Finally, the City will preserve its historic legacy through careful planning and quality design by encouraging adaptive reuse of and respectful infill development around its historic buildings that are not used as museums and preserved historic sites.

11 | B **Issues & Priorities**

11 | B-1 **Provide Adequate Protection for Historic Resources**

As the City continues to grow and develop, there will be continued pressure for development or redevelopment that could result in the loss of historic structures or landscapes. Perhaps the most vulnerable to development pressure are the remaining historic farmsteads in the City's rural areas. Guiding development towards the already built-up parts of the City and away from rural lands can help preserve the remnants of Lebanon's historic agricultural landscapes. In the core developed areas, finding new uses for old buildings is one of the most effective ways to protect historic structures, such as barns in rural areas.

11 | B-2 **Fostering Community Awareness & Appreciation**

Historic buildings and heritage landscapes are critical components of Lebanon's community character and identity. In addition to the quality of life benefits, preserving historic resources can result in significant economic benefits for communities as historic sites draw tourists, historic restoration projects create jobs, and historic downtowns become thriving business districts. By creating more awareness of and appreciation for the historic resources in the City and the benefits associated with them, citizens will be more likely to support projects and programs aimed at protecting historic buildings and properties. Likewise, the private owners of historic buildings will be more likely to take pride in and properly maintain their property to preserve its historic character when they know more about its history and see that it is an asset that is valued by the community.

[key points](#) | [vision & purpose](#)

- Convey Lebanon's rich heritage to residents and visitors by preserving and interpreting the historic resources that can tell the stories of the City and prior generations of residents.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of and respectful infill development around the City's historic buildings.

[key points](#) | [issues & priorities](#)

- Protect Lebanon's historic resources as the City continues to grow and develop.
- Foster greater awareness of and appreciation for the benefits and opportunities created by Lebanon's historic resources.

key points | existing conditions & trends

- Lebanon's landscape and natural features speak to the City's heritage.
- Several inventories of historic resources have been conducted in Lebanon resulting in the listing of Colburn Park on the National Register of Historic Places.
- There are two organizations focused on historic resources in Lebanon: the Lebanon Historical Society (a private nonprofit organization) and the Lebanon Heritage Commission (an appointed civic committee).
- Downtown revitalization efforts in Lebanon have been strengthened by appropriate rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings that have preserved their character and given the structures a new life.



colburn park



11 | C **Existing Conditions & Trends**

Lebanon has a long and rich history, which is reflected in numerous structures, natural areas, and roads. For example, the Colonial Kings Highway, ten rods wide, passed through Lebanon. With the 1761 signing of the Middle Connecticut River Grants that created Lebanon and other Upper Valley towns, the population began to grow. Farmers roofing their homes on Poverty Lane heard shots fired during the Revolutionary War. Civil War soldiers from Lebanon and the surrounding areas traveled through Westboro Station on their way to war; their relics are housed in the Soldiers Memorial Building. Since the 1760s, proud stoic families have been born, raised, and died here. Tombstones stand as silent sentries to them.

11 | C-1 **Historic Natural Features**

Before European settlement, the Squakheag Indians traveled the fishing waters of the Connecticut River and its tributaries, including the Mascoma River, which bears the name of the Squakheag Chief, Mascommah. From the time European settlers first came to the area, Lebanon's rivers have been utilized to create development opportunities and they are a central part of Lebanon's history. The Mascoma River made Lebanon a wealthy mill town for most of its first two centuries, and as recently as the 1950s. Several of these historic mills have been converted to present day uses, illustrating the benefits of adaptive re-use of historic structures. The dams still in the Mascoma River and its tributaries are also evidence of the City's industrial heritage.

Lebanon's agricultural heritage is still evident in the City's present-day landscape. Although many of these agrarian sites are no longer working farms, they represent a link to the historic past. Historic barns, colonial farmsteads and stone walls are but a few of the historic rural resources remaining in the City today.

11 | C-2 **Historic Inventories and Districts**

The 1984 Historic Resources Survey, commissioned by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, identified 530 historic structures within Lebanon. An additional survey for the West Lebanon village area was completed in 1997.

There are three listings on the National Register of Historic Places in Lebanon (the Colburn Park Historic District, the Spring Hill Farm, and the Stone Arch Underpass) and one listing on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places (the Dana House). Lebanon's Landmark Designation program was created to identify and aid in the protection of sites and structures of significant architectural and historical value in the City. As of 2010, 73 buildings and structures have been designated as Historic Landmarks.

The City's Colburn Park Historic Overlay District was established in 1996 and includes 19 contributing historic buildings and Colburn Park along the Hanover Street Mall. The district is comprised of a concentration of architecturally interesting structures in a variety of styles from the 19th and 20th centuries. Unifying the diversity of these buildings is their common siting fronting Colburn Park.

11 | C-3 **Historical Organizations**

The Lebanon Historical Society, a private, non-profit organization established in 1958, has been active in the collection of historical information pertaining to Lebanon's past. The society worked closely with one of its

founding members, Robert Leavitt, who also served as the City Historian from the position's creation in 1973 until his death in 2007. The Historical Society has a wealth of historical information and documentation - photographs, clippings, artifacts and other materials - cataloged, recorded and stored in its vault at the Marion Carter Homestead. The Lebanon Historical Society has developed a web site that provides a wealth of information on the City's history. The site is online at www.lebanonnhhistory.org.

In 2006, the Lebanon Heritage Commission was created to supersede the City's Historic District Commission. The Heritage Commission is responsible for oversight of the Colburn Park Historic District, serves in an advisory role to the City, and provides stewardship for the Dana House in West Lebanon. The commission is also responsible for the dissemination of information regarding the City's historical resources and for conducting the landmark program. The designated City Historian is a regular member of the Heritage Commission.

For properties within the Colburn Park Historic District, the Heritage Commission assumed the powers granted by the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the historic district. As set forth in RSA 674:44-a, the commission generally advocates for "the proper recognition, use, and protection of resources, tangible or intangible, primarily man-made, that are valued for their historic, cultural, aesthetic, or community significance within their natural, built, or cultural context."

11 | C-4 Downtown Revitalization

The rehabilitation and adaptive use of various local structures has been critical to the visibility and acceptance of historic preservation. The rehabilitation of older buildings can be less expensive than new construction, and can benefit the tax base while giving older structures new life. Increased delays in project review and competition for limited resources dedicated to historic preservation are some of the challenges associated with the rehabilitation of historic structures.

A well-executed renovation project can act as a catalyst for similar work in the area, enhancing the downtown's overall image. However, structures remodeled in a manner not compatible with the historical character of the downtown can visually degrade the entire area. Structures that have found new uses in Lebanon include:

The former Woolworth Building, now an innovatively restored Lebanon College.

- The former Hotel Rogers, now senior citizen housing
- The Rivermill Complex.
- The H.W. Carter and Sons Factory, which now houses the AVA Gallery.

11 | D **Future Challenges & Opportunities**

11 | D-1 Protecting Historic Resources

Lebanon residents enjoy many aesthetic, cultural and economic benefits of the community's rich heritage by living in the midst of the reminders of the past. Parts of our nation's history that exist nowhere else in this country can be found in Lebanon. However, many of these reminders have been lost to change, growth and



[dana house](#)

key points | future challenges & opportunities



- Lebanon residents enjoy many aesthetic, cultural and economic benefits of the community's rich heritage by living in the midst of the reminders of the past. These historic resources should be recognized, valued and protected so they are not lost as the City continues to grow and develop.
- The City's historical organizations should continue their coordinated efforts to identify historic resources, interpret the City's history, and seek funding for historic resource preservation projects.
- The City should continue to evaluate and consider creating other historic districts.
- The City should continue to identify historic structures and sites for national, state and/or local recognition, and should continue efforts to restore City-owned historic buildings.
- The City should continue efforts to preserve historic transportation resources including historic and scenic roads, and railroad corridors and infrastructure.
- The City should continue efforts to preserve open space and protect rural character, which would also preserve the City's remaining heritage landscapes.
- The City should continue to support and sponsor opportunities that educate City residents, particularly youth, and visitors about the City's history.
- The City should pursue partnerships, funding opportunities, and other mechanisms for protecting historic resources.
- Lebanon's historic resources should be promoted for cultural and heritage tourism.

development. Additional historic sites and resources will be lost if action is not taken. These losses will result from acts of omission rather than commission. The danger is not just in the loss of an historic landmark, but also in the gradual and pervasive erosion of historical character that happens with incremental changes to buildings and neighborhoods

In the absence of diligent stewardship on the part of the City of Lebanon and its citizens, the links to our community's treasured past will be lost forever. Future generations will never see, touch, walk through, enjoy, or cherish them; while some will be mentioned in books, the rest will be completely forgotten as the last of those who remember pass on. It is the City of Lebanon's obligation, therefore, to protect and preserve these precious symbols of the community's heritage, and to instill in its children a sense of pride and reverence that they will pass on for generations to come.

Successful preservation of the City's past heritage will only be accomplished if information and knowledge is passed on and valued. The City needs to remind its citizens of the rich history that surrounds the community. A recent example of the worthiness of this concept has been the statewide requirement to teach local history in the schools.

An historic preservation program provides an historical context for future planning and land use policies, particularly as these policies relate to urban design. Using past architectural styles as a benchmark, historic preservation gives residents an important connection and "sense of place" that fosters pride and encourages community involvement.

11 | D-2 Historical Organizations

The Heritage Commission, as well as the numerous private organizations and citizens that have traditionally participated in promoting and preserving Lebanon's historic resources, should continue in their roles and with actions such as the development of interpretive signs, walking tours, publications and events with an historical focus.

Through its Heritage Commission, the City should complete an updated comprehensive Historic Resources survey of the City's historic buildings, and then periodically update that information. The members of both the Historical Society and Heritage Commission should meet periodically to keep each other informed of goals, accomplishments, and challenges, and to avoid duplication of effort. Furthermore, there may be opportunities for collaboration on certain projects of mutual interest.

The Lebanon Heritage Commission should pursue Certified Local Government (CLG) status, which would make the City eligible to apply for matching grants for community preservation activities, such as surveys, educational projects, and preservation planning, as well as training for commission members and technical assistance for completing its responsibilities.

11 | D-3 Historic Districts

The Heritage Commission is currently evaluating the possibility of creating new historic districts, including expanding the current district in Lebanon and creating a new one in West Lebanon's Maple Street area. In order to prepare for this process, the commission should look at evaluating property for historic preservation. The

commission also should produce a public information document on historic districts to raise public awareness of their value. The creation and administration of a local historic district is the most comprehensive preservation tool available to local governments under state law.

11|D-4 Historic Buildings

The City, with assistance from the Heritage Commission and the Historical Society, should continue to identify buildings that qualify for the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places and the City's Historic Landmark Designation Program.

The Dana House in West Lebanon currently is a primary preservation focus for the City. One of the Heritage Commission's hopes is to eventually develop a comprehensive list of the families who have lived in the house over its 250-year history. The commission is studying whether the Dana House will qualify for inclusion on the National Historical Register of Historic Places.

Another historic building that could be better utilized is the Soldiers' Memorial Building. The Soldiers' Memorial Building now serves as a memorial to veterans of all wars, and various veterans groups meet there. If the City wants to open this building more frequently for public visitation, ADA access and security issues may need to be addressed. Currently, the Soldiers' Memorial Building Advisory Board opens the building to the public only several days per year. The board is composed of volunteers and it is often difficult to find enough volunteers to open the building more often.

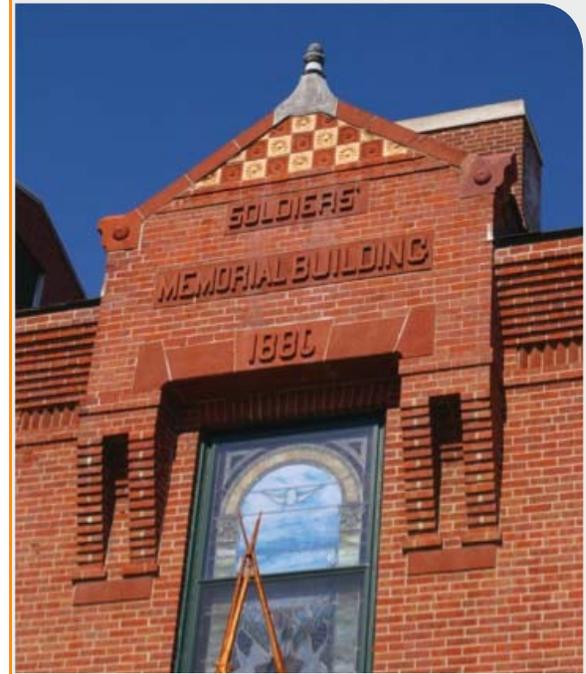
Lebanon has a wealth of old mill buildings, some of which have been renovated for reuse. The City could follow examples set by Manchester, New Hampshire and other mill towns in capitalizing on its mill history. Residents and visitors could learn more about the importance of that era through photo and interpretive displays, walks or lectures.

11|D-5 Historic Transportation Infrastructure

The City has a number of historic and scenic roads that are in danger of being degraded because of a lack of recognition and protection. What remains of the original roads that passed through and connected Lebanon with the rest of New England should be preserved. The remaining portions of these old roads, whether currently in use or not, deserve recognition and a permanent place in the community, possibly as preserved trails for the recreational use. The Lebanon Class VI Roads Committee and the Scenic Road designation process are two mechanisms capable of providing stewardship to these resources.

The Westboro Rail Yard located off of Main Street in West Lebanon is considered one of the City's greatest assets. The preservation of the Westboro railroad lines and properties would be an important reminder of West Lebanon's heritage and the City should continue to work with the state, the Claremont-Concord Railroad, and the citizens and businesses of West Lebanon to develop a viable plan for the site (Chapter 4 of this plan for a more complete discussion of future planning ideas for the rail yard, including historic preservation and partnership opportunities).

An extension of the Rail-Trail from downtown Lebanon, along the Mascoma River, to West Lebanon could provide an alternative transportation link between a revitalized Westboro Yard and the remainder of the City.



soldiers' memorial building



mill parcel

For this concept to come to fruition, however, the trail would need to coexist safely with active rail use in part of the corridor.

11|D-6 Historic Open Space and Natural Resources

The City's scenic and agricultural lands play an important role in providing a link with history and a rural character that is disappearing. The City should continue pursuing conservation and preservation easements with willing landowners, and with the assistance of regional land trusts. The State of New Hampshire provides several historic preservation tools for barns and other historic agricultural structures. The designation of the Connecticut River Byway as a National Scenic Byway in 2005 creates additional grant funding opportunities for preserving historic properties and valuable farmland. Improving access to the Mascoma River would not only help revitalize the Central Business District, but could enable it to be better used as a living historical and recreational resource.

11|D-7 Historic Education

The success of preserving the City's heritage will only be accomplished if information and knowledge is passed on and promoted. The City needs to remind its citizens, particularly its youth, of the rich history that surrounds the community. Educational programs focused on local history and its preservation should be encouraged in both the community's schools and through City-sponsored recreational programs and public awareness activities. The City's historical organizations should work with the schools by providing historical resources and materials, involving long-time residents who can present information or be interviewed, and consulting with the schools on curriculum. This program need not be limited to a classroom, but can include education through participatory civic activities. The City can broaden public awareness of its historic resources in a variety of ways, including:

- Brochures describing local history, and including a map of notable structures.
- Walking tours of historic sites and structures.
- Oral history projects.
- Historic re-enactments on the Green and commemorative celebrations such as Lebanon 250.
- Photographs and murals in City Hall and other public and commercial buildings.
- Better utilization of historic buildings such as the Soldiers Memorial Building and Carter House for educational outreach purposes.
- Establishing an historical museum, preferably in one of the City's historic properties.

11|D-8 Historical Tools, Programs and Partnerships

The Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), the New Hampshire Main Street Program, and Certified REHAB federal tax incentives, are examples of programs and tools that could benefit the City and private owners of historic buildings. Additionally, the City should make better use of local human resources when making decisions that impact Lebanon's historic assets. This could be accomplished through an inter-board review process for City projects affecting historical resources. As development occurs, the City needs to

weigh the importance of preserving our history out of respect for those who came before us and for the value it brings to us in our everyday lives.

11 | D-9

Historical and Cultural Tourism

Historic and cultural resources account for a significant portion of the tourism spending in the state. As the travel and tourism industry becomes a larger segment of the regional economy, opportunities to promote heritage and cultural tourism should be explored. As Lebanon is on the Connecticut River Byway, there are opportunities to promote its cultural heritage through the Connecticut River Byway Council. In addition to creating new jobs and new businesses, well-managed tourism improves the quality of life and builds community pride. Cultural heritage travelers are an attractive market to target, as they tend to stay longer and spend more money, according to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Perhaps the primary benefit of cultural heritage tourism is the preservation of a community's historic character. However, the largest challenge facing heritage tourism is ensuring that its success does not destroy what attracts visitors in the first place.



west lebanon congregational church

OUTCOME 1 Protect Lebanon's historic resources as the City continues to grow and develop.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
1 Encourage local citizens to cooperate in preserving our cultural heritage by identifying and adequately protecting historic resources.	Conduct oral history projects with long-time residents who wish to share their knowledge and experience. 1
2 Seek grant money to develop and restore areas of historic interest.	Continue to pursue obtaining status as a Certified Local Government. 2
3 Work jointly with local individuals and organizations, as well as with those from other geographic areas, to provide a broader basis for funding for historic preservation projects.	Continue identifying structures that qualify for the State and/or National Historic Register and the Historic Landmark Designation Programs. 3
4 Explore and support financing options for adaptive reuse of historic buildings.	Continue preparing a complete historic resources survey for Lebanon, building on the 1984 partial survey carried out by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. 4
5 Continue to consider the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) and other sources of funding for critical historic preservation projects, if funding for this program continues.	Continue efforts to nominate the Dana House for the National Register of Historic Places. 5
6 Investigate the New Hampshire Main Street Program for assistance with Central Business District revitalization.	Evaluate historic features along the railroad corridor in Lebanon and East Lebanon for preservation. 6
7 Consider utilizing the Connecticut River Byway Program to help promote the City's heritage.	Continue seeking conservation and preservation easements of sites with historic value with willing landowners. 7
8 Continue evaluating the appropriateness of new historic districts, such as expanding the current District to include the neighborhood between School and Bank Streets, and a new district in the Maple Street and Main Street area of West Lebanon.	Work with the Conservation Commission to raise awareness among residents of the benefits of conservation easements. 8
9 Continue to investigate historic preservation grant and tax incentive programs to save or restore barns and other agricultural outbuildings, including the new state law that enables local government to grant tax relief to landowners wishing to maintain and repair their agricultural buildings.	Preserve and plant street trees in the Historic District and Central Business Districts of both Lebanon and West Lebanon. 9
10 Continue to support the Conservation Commission and Class VI Roads Advisory Committee in their efforts to map all historic Class VI roads and identify their historic and current uses.	
11 Continue to support efforts to designate scenic and/or historic roads and recognize them with plaques.	
12 Support the Westboro Committee in its efforts to develop a plan for Westboro Yard.	
13 Support efforts to extend the Northern Rail Trail/Mascoma River Greenway from downtown Lebanon to West Lebanon.	
14 Recognize the historic value of open space and natural resources.	

OUTCOME 2

Foster greater awareness of and appreciation for the benefits and opportunities created by Lebanon's historic resources.

STRATEGIES

- 1 Better utilize the Soldiers' Memorial Building, Carter House, and other historic buildings for educational outreach purposes, while ensuring their careful preservation.
- 2 Foster community appreciation and involvement through public education strategies, such as: brochures, walking tours, oral history projects, and displays/murals in public buildings.
- 3 Assist the City Historian in outreach efforts with schools.
- 4 Recognize the economic potential of historic resources.
- 5 Explore opportunities to promote heritage tourism, through historic walking tours, heritage festivals, and signage.
- 6 Consider developing interpretive educational materials and events focused on the City's mill history.
- 7 Continue to investigate and encourage ways to bring attention to our rivers and to use them as a source for history education.

ACTIONS

- 1 Develop a plan for ADA access for all City-owned historic buildings whenever feasible.
- 2 Develop educational and interpretive signs recognizing the Historic District and historic buildings.
- 3 Establish an historical museum, preferably in one of the City's historic properties, to be operated by the Heritage Commission, the Historical Society, or both.
- 4 Continue to write articles on community history for local newspapers.
- 5 Develop a joint effort with the schools to help educate students about the City's history and historic resources (buildings, rivers, documents, and people) and involve students in heritage projects.
- 6 Prepare a "white paper" and a publicity and property owner's packet on the benefits and value of historic districts, to raise public awareness of their importance.
- 7 Continue restoring the Dana House in West Lebanon and develop plans to convert it to a museum.