

2010

# Town of Lebanon

## Plan of Conservation and Development



Planning and Zoning Commission

# **Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development**

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**This Plan is dedicated to two of the original members of Lebanon's Planning and Zoning Commission who collectively spent over 65 years guiding Lebanon's land use practices.**

**Harold Liebman, Member/Chairman, 1962-2008**

**David Fields, Member/Secretary, 1962-70 and 1999 to Present**

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## Acknowledgements

### *Planning and Zoning Commission*

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# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## **Introduction**

### **Changes Since 2000**

The *2010 Plan of Conservation and Development* (POCD) builds heavily on the 2000 POCD and subsequent work conducted by Lebanon's Boards and Commissions. The focus of the 2010 POCD (aka "Master Plan") remains to retain Lebanon's rural agricultural character while accommodating growth.

There have been significant changes since the 2000 POCD was completed both on the federal and state level as well as locally. From 9/11 to the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, increases in oil prices, the advent of electric/hybrid cars and alternative energy, greater demands on government services, increases in unemployment, decreases in federal and state tax revenue, and a housing bubble that burst and led to the Great Recession of 2007-09. All of these had an effect on Lebanon and its residents.

Locally, the Town hired a Town Planner, set aside funds to assist those wishing to preserve their land, and partnered with residents, land trusts, and the State and Federal government in preserving over 1,000 acres. This effort was spearheaded by the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission amended several key land use regulations, including mandating cluster subdivision development and agricultural buffers, and adopting other safeguards to protect current land uses to help keep Lebanon rural.

Lastly, the Town increased its request of State and Federal grants for planning, agricultural preservation, and infrastructure. These grants helped pay for the farmers market; planning studies such as a cost of community services study, build-out analysis, value of agriculture study, and resident survey; property appraisals and surveys for those interested in land preservation; hardware and software at Town Hall; Town welcome/entrance signs; and, last but not least multiple road, bridge, school, parking, energy conservation and ball field construction projects.

Implementation of the *2010 Plan of Conservation and Development* will help to assure that Lebanon remains one of Connecticut's finest examples of a rural agricultural community in which people wish to live, work and play.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

## Section 1: Housing and Population

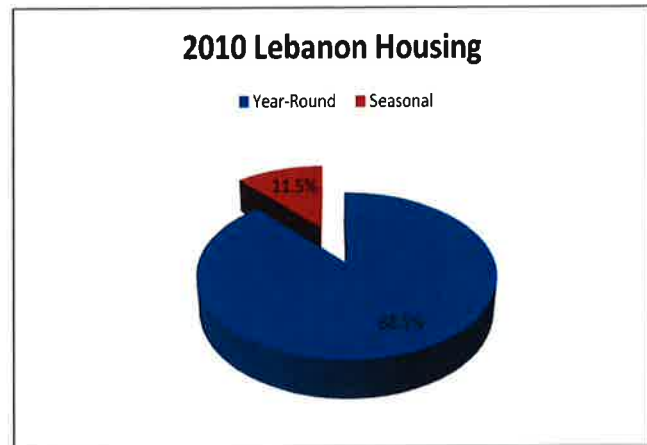
### Goals

**HOUSING:** To promote the development of single-family housing, along with a mix of affordable, senior, rental, age-restricted or active-adult and two-family housing that meets the needs of present and future Lebanon residents.

**POPULATION:** To maintain a stable population in order to provide adequate public facilities and services.

### Existing Conditions

Lebanon's housing stock is comprised of primarily single family owner-occupied housing units made up of a variety of housing styles. The Town has a total of 3,108 housing units of which 2,750 or 88.5% are zoned for year-round use. Another 358 or 11.5% are zoned for seasonal occupancy and found on Amston and Red Cedar Lakes, and Lake Williams. In addition, there are 135 campsites available for occupancy May through October.



As one of the nation's earliest-settled communities, Lebanon contains 300+/- classic 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century houses. As many as 50 homes predate the Revolutionary War. Architecturally, these are fine examples of center entrance colonials, Greek revival, Victorian, New England Saltboxes and revival farmhouses. For a listing of homes in Lebanon built prior to 1940, please see the *Historic Resources Survey, Inventory of Existing Dwellings in Town 1700-1939*, prepared in 1978 by the Connecticut Historical Commission and located in the Jonathan Trumbull Library. In addition to housing, there are numerous barn and outbuildings of distinctive design and historical value.



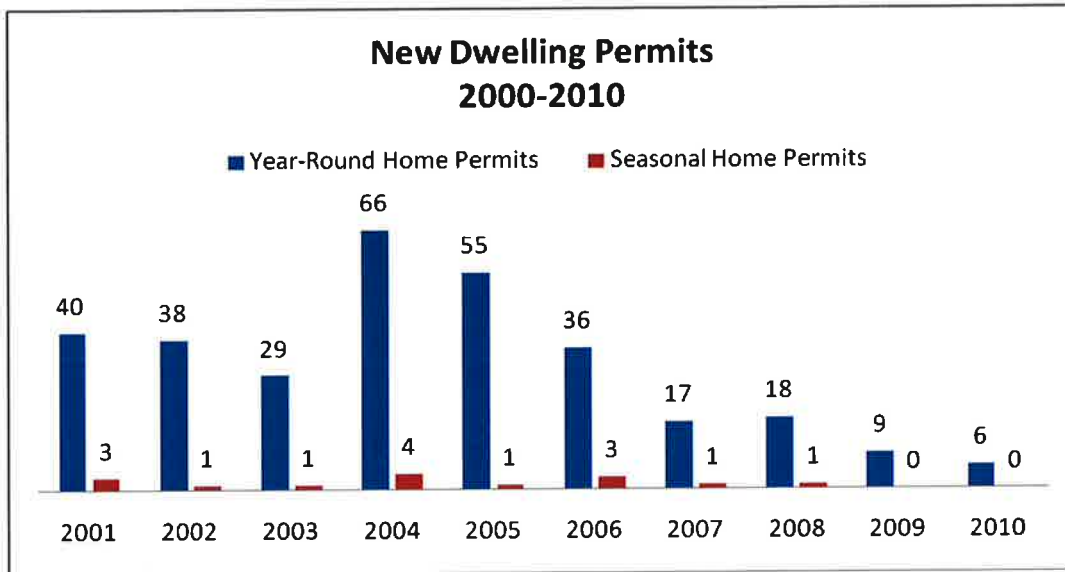
Redwood, 589 Exeter Road (Built 1778)



Governor Jonathan Trumbull House  
168 West Town Street (Circa 1735)

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

A review of building permits for new home construction made between 2000-2010 shows that 329 permits were issued, including 15 to construct seasonal-occupancy dwellings at the Lakes.



Between 2000 and 2006 Lebanon, the State and Nation experienced a tremendous building boom. Since 2007, the average number of new dwelling permits has declined dramatically in Town, a phenomenon experienced throughout the State and Country. The main reason for the decline and the resultant drop in population growth (see Table 1) was a long, deep and widespread recession that began in 2007 and continued through 2009 coined as the Great Recession.

Other reasons include the limited availability of developable land coupled with the amount of land which has been preserved in Lebanon over the past decade (2,000+/- acres), a reduction in the number of children per household and an aging population which stays in their homes longer.

The median real estate tax bill for a non-farm residence in 2009 was \$3,853 versus \$4,520 for a farm residence. The median sales price of a home sold in Lebanon in 2008 was \$235,000. Land values for a single-home lot range in price from \$70K-\$100K depending on the lay of the land and location.

Today, Lebanon has an estimated “year-round” population of 7,500 persons. However, there are an additional 1,500+/- persons who reside up to seven (7) months each year in the 358 seasonal homes and 135 campsites located along the Lakes. With the exception of schools, these citizens use Lebanon’s road system, police, fire, library and other town services. Consequently, it is also accurate to describe the Town’s population in 2010 as 9,000+/- persons.

Over the past decade Lebanon experienced its lowest population growth since the 1950s, representing an increase of approximately 593 persons or 8.8%. This was still more than double the 3% State and County population increases over the same period. Nevertheless, since 2000 an average 33 homes per year were constructed in Lebanon, resulting in over 1,000 acres of land being developed for new home sites, often on large lots that were formerly used for farm or wood land.

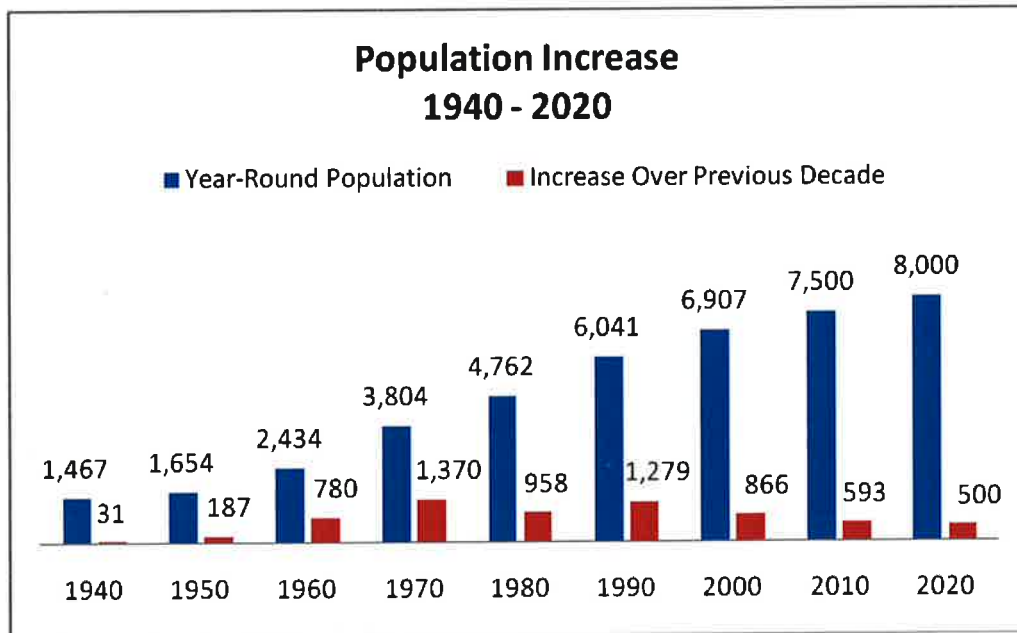


# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

**Table 1**  
**Change in Year-Round Population**  
**1940 - 2020**

Year	Population	Increase over previous Decade		Median Age
		Persons	Percent	
1940	1,467	31	2.1%	
1950	1,654	187	12.7%	
1960	2,434	780	47.2%	
1970	3,804	1,370	56.3%	
1980	4,762	958	25.2%	
1990	6,041	1,279	26.9%	33.8
2000	6,907	866	14.3%	38.2
2010 est.	7,500	593	8.8%	44.4
2020 est.	8,000	500	6.7%	49.6

According to the State Data Center at the University of Connecticut, it is estimated that by 2020 Lebanon will have an all-time high median age of 49.6 years due to an aging baby boomer population or those born between 1946-1964.



It is estimated that Lebanon's future increase in population will be limited to 500+/- persons during this planning period (2010-2020) or the lowest population increase since the 1940s when the Town had approximately one-fifth (1/5) its current population. An additional 200+/- new homes are projected to be constructed in Lebanon during the 2010-2020 planning period.



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## Single-Family Development and Zoning

The current and historic pattern of low density residential development has been incorporated into Lebanon's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations which contain minimum two (2) acre zoning. In an effort to reduce sprawl and retain active farmland these regulations were revised by the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2008 to mandate cluster development and reduce the number of additional rear or back lots.

Mandating cluster and reducing the number of new rear lots helps to maintain Lebanon's rural agricultural character by:

- ✓ preserving large parcels of useable open space;
- ✓ increasing property values of homes abutting the open space and throughout Town;
- ✓ reducing environmental impacts of new development by creating less impervious surface/stormwater runoff, less impacts to natural resource and wetlands, and less bisection of wildlife corridors;
- ✓ preserving scenic views from public roads;
- ✓ enhancing sense of neighborhood by promoting greater social interaction among neighbors due to reduced lot sizes; and,
- ✓ reducing town infrastructure costs.

## Multi-Family Development and Zoning

Lebanon's Zoning Regulations allow for the following multi-family housing types.

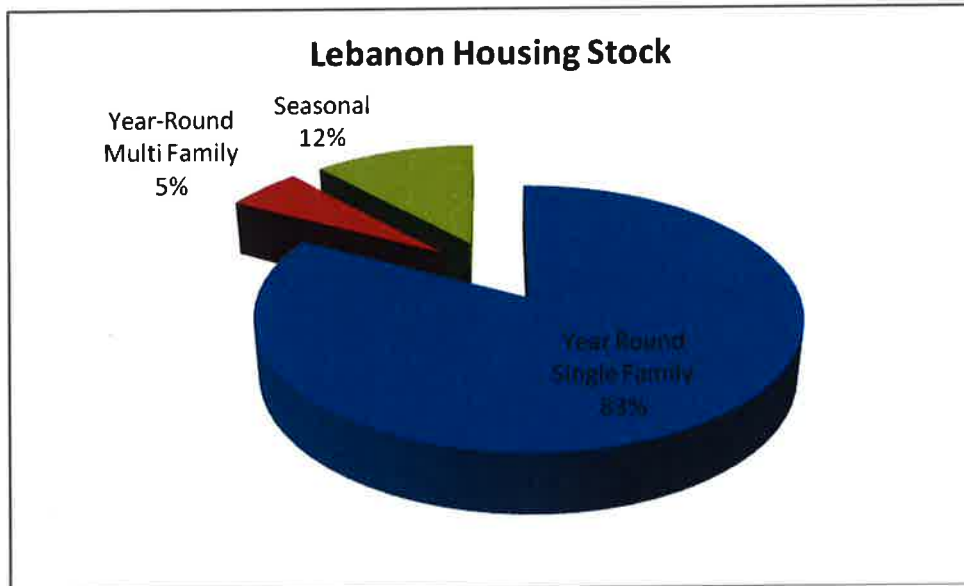
- ❖ Two-family houses by right on four (4) acres.
- ❖ Three-family houses by special exception on three (3) acres.
- ❖ Four-family houses by special exception on four (4) acres.
- ❖ Apartment complexes by special exception up to six (6) units per building per minimum six (6) acre parcel.
- ❖ Elderly housing by special exception up to six (6) units per building and four (4) units per acre on a minimum six (6) acre parcel.
- ❖ Accessory-living units in owner-occupied homes by special permit on two (2) acres.

Lebanon contains 39 two-family houses, six (6) three-family houses and 3 (three) four-family houses all of which are scattered throughout Town. Lebanon's five (5) apartment complexes contain a total of 58 one-and-two bedroom units as follows:

- Heritage Apartments, 844 Exeter Road, 6 (six) two-bedroom units.
- Northwoods Apartments, 225 Mack Road, 4 (four) two-bedroom units.
- Stone Ridge Estates Elderly Housing, 12 Dr. Manning Drive, 23 one-bedroom and 1 two-bedroom units.
- Village Hill Apartments, 281 Beaumont Highway, 12 two-bedroom units.
- Willow View Apartments, 1280-1300 Trumbull Highway, 12 two-bedroom units.

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In total, Lebanon's multi-family housing stock stands at 166 units or 6% of the year-round housing stock and 5.3% of the total (year-round and seasonal) housing stock. An additional 10+/- accessory living units exist in owner-occupied single-family homes.



## Affordable Housing Development and Zoning

Less than three percent (2.7%) of Lebanon's year-round housing stock or 73 units are considered affordable under Connecticut General Statute (CGS) Sec. 8-30g. CGS Sec. 8-30g requires that an affordable dwelling unit be (1) government assisted housing; (2) currently financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority mortgages; or (3) subject to binding recorded deeds containing covenants or restrictions which require that such dwelling unit be sold or rented at or below prices which will preserve the unit as housing for which persons and families pay 30% or less of income, where such income is less than or equal to 80% of the median income, i.e., \$44,800 for one (1) person, \$64,000 for a family of four (4) in 2009.

HOMEConnecticut is a statewide campaign aimed at increasing the stock of affordable housing in the State. It issues an annual *Affordability in Connecticut* study that analysis the ability of a household making median income to afford a median sales priced home in each of state's towns and cities. Since 2006, Lebanon has been deemed affordable under this study and was ranked as the 25<sup>th</sup> most affordable town in Connecticut out of 168 towns in 2008.

Lebanon's Zoning Regulations allow a density bonus and reduction in open space when affordable housing is proposed in a conservation or cluster subdivision. Because Lebanon does not have an affordable housing stock of 10% it is not exempt from the affordable housing appeals procedure which can shift the burden of proof to a municipality to show that public safety or health concerns outweigh affordable housing need.

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## Senior Housing Development and Zoning

As noted, Lebanon's Zoning Regulations permit the construction of elderly housing by special exception up to four (4) units per acre on minimum six (6) acre parcels. The maximum number of units per building is six (6). There is only one senior housing development in Town (Stone Ridge Estates), which was built in 1991 and consists of 24 units. Lebanon has no town-owned housing, or housing authority.

## Groups Homes

There are currently 10+/- group homes located throughout Lebanon that house up to six (6) persons plus staff. These homes are privately owned and managed, with licensing provided through the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services. State Statute does not allow communities to prohibit this use.

## The Lakes

Amston Lake, Red Cedar Lake, and Lake Williams were planned and developed as seasonal or summer communities on lots under ¼-acre in size. With the onset of zoning in 1962, Lebanon's Planning and Zoning Commission established standards for permitting year-round occupancy at the lakes. These included that only homes which were in place and used year-round prior to 1962 were permitted to obtain year-round status. New homes built at the lakes since that time were limited to seasonal occupancy use unless a lot contained the minimum area required.

Today, 558 houses or cottages are located on the lakes, the majority of which or 358 are zoned season occupancy use. There are an additional 200+/- vacant lots at the lakes almost all of which are zoned for seasonal occupancy as they are less than two (2) acres in size or the minimum lot size required by Lebanon's Zoning Regulations. Roads servicing these areas are largely private and below Town standards in terms of road construction, grade, width, intersection turning radius and drainage.

A 2010 build-out analysis and fiscal impact study of Amston Lake prepared by the Green Valley Institute concluded that if Amston's existing seasonal homes and vacant lots were converted and built-out to year-round occupancy Lebanon's mill rate would increase by 1.47 or 6.9%. The study also noted that relaxing the Zoning Regulations to permit conversion of seasonal to year round housing could increase the pace of development activity at Amston Lake resulting in:

- 10+/- additional acres of land around the lake being lost to impervious surface;
- a 79% increase in vehicle trips on lake roads, 2.3 miles of which are privately owned, unpaved and narrow limiting emergency access, especially in winter. A cost estimate to improve the private lake roads was \$2 million and would result in 6+/- acres of additional impervious surface;
- 150+/- additional school children requiring additional investment in school infrastructure;

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- a 360% increase in year-round population from the current 230 to 1,058 year-round residents at build-out; and,
- potential for a decrease in existing year-round property market values.

Lebanon's *Plan of Conservation and Development* calls for retaining seasonal occupancy use at the lakes. Increasing lake use or occupancy would negatively impact the fragile environmental and water quality at the lakes, as well as the seasonal character of its neighborhoods. In addition, public health and safety could be jeopardized due to the lack of adequate roads and infrastructure.

In addition, seasonal properties are assessed 20% less than year-round properties, a reflection of market value. Increasing occupancy at the lakes would require additional municipal services for police, fire, schools and road maintenance, the cost of which would be felt town-wide and would more than offset any future tax benefits.

## Recommendations

Implementation responsibility is identified in *italics*.

1. The *Planning and Zoning Commission* should consider amending the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to:
  - a. Establish inclusionary zoning (CGS 8-2i) for medium size residential developments (e.g., developments with 10 or more units or lots) so that at least 10 percent of proposed units or lots are affordable as defined by CGS Sec. 8-30g.
  - b. Establish regulations to encourage age-restricted or active-adult housing by special permit. Said regulations shall not increase density beyond that permitted elsewhere in the Zoning Regulations.
  - c. Amend Subdivision Regulations to require consideration of passive solar techniques when laying out roads and homes.
2. Acquire land to encourage the private development of senior housing. *Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting.*
3. Maintain two (2) acre zoning density for single family dwellings and mandatory cluster development for subdivisions. *Planning and Zoning Commission*
4. Maintain allowing two (2) family dwellings by right on four (4) acres. *Planning and Zoning Commission*
5. Maintain existing mix of seasonal and year-round housing in the Lake Zone so as not to change the environmental and other characteristics of the Lakes including public health and safety. *Planning and Zoning Commission*

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## Section 2: Community Facilities and Services

*Goal: To maintain and expand community facilities and town services to meet the needs of the current and projected population.*

As noted in the 2000 *Plan of Conservation and Development*, a principal function of local government is to provide community services, facilities and infrastructure that meet town needs. Lebanon's Town Government is conducted by 54 elected and 93 appointed officials, and approximately 275 full or part-time employees (80% school, 20% other). There are 18 standing Town boards and commissions, and over a dozen ad-hoc committees. [See *Lebanon Town Government Organizational Chart* in appendix.]

The following recommendations are an outgrowth of discussions with each department.

### Town Hall

Constructed in 1969, Lebanon Town Hall contains 6,888 square feet maintained by the Board of Selectmen. In 2007, renovations in the form of asbestos abatement, installation of outside perimeter drainage, reconstruction of the parking lot, and installation of energy efficient indoor and outdoor lighting fixtures were conducted. Expansion of town government since 1969 has caused the downstairs meeting room space to be diminished to make room for additional offices.



*Consideration should be made to relocate overflow town offices to adjacent Community Center lower level or attic.*

### Community Center/Town Pool

Constructed in 1970, the 4,000 square foot Community Center is maintained by the Board of Selectmen and used for civic and municipal meetings, and private functions by fee for residents. The Town Pool is located directly behind this facility. In 2006, renovations were conducted to the lower level. In 2010 the Town completed construction of the Alden Tavern parking lot adjacent to the Community Center to accommodate overflow parking.



*Consideration should be made to accommodate overflow municipal offices in the lower level and/or attic space should Town Hall needs arise.*

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## Senior Center

Constructed in 2008, the 6,450 square foot Senior Center is operated by the Commission on Aging and open to those of qualifying age. The facility contains meeting rooms and activity spaces, a commercial kitchen and other areas utilized by Lebanon's seniors. Programs offered include but are not limited to luncheons, health screening, computers, exercise, games, dancing and guest lectures. Senior van service dispatch is operated from this location.



*Complete driveway loop from Senior Center to Dr. Manning Drive to improve access. Once the grant-required-age-restrictions expire in 2013, allow utilization of facility by other organizations (i.e., recreation) during off-peak hours.*

## Public Works Facility

Constructed in phases beginning in 1950, the town garage contains 6,600 square feet of buildings which house the highway garage offices, and truck, material and equipment storage. Senior vans are also housed at this site. The town garage is in poor condition, lacking potable water, with seasonal septic issues. The site is located at a major focal point for those entering or exiting the Town Center and contains a pond. The facility is not large enough to accommodate the existing (9) trucks, salt and sand storage, and staff parking. Many of the truck bays, including the repair facility, are too small to accommodate large vehicles. The site is environmentally sensitive, with salt and sand storage left uncovered and exposed to the elements.



*Consideration should be made for the construction of an updated facility sized to accommodate current and future needs with proper water and sanitary facilities. The existing site should be redeveloped for economic development, location of a new Post Office or a greenway entrance to Town Center. Consideration should also be made to provide satellite sand/salt shed facilities.*



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## Jonathan Trumbull Library

Constructed in 1967, with an addition completed in 1974, the Jonathan Trumbull Library contains 7,500 square feet. The library is open five (5) days a week for 38 hours, which is up from four (4) days a week and 30 hours in 2000. In 2009, the library had a collection of 48,210 books, periodicals, videos, tapes, DVD's and CD's. Since 2000, circulation has grown by 60% with 80,148 items loaned out and 44,000 library visits in 2009. Parking is limited and shared with the First Congregational Church and users of the Town Green. A 2010 Library Space Needs Study determined a need for added library space.



*Consideration should be made to construct an addition to the existing facility along with additional parking to accommodate current and future user needs, and to increasing library hours to include Fridays and all-day Saturdays.*

## Fire Safety Complex

Constructed in 1988, the 17,000 square foot facility houses the Fire Department, Fire Marshal, Police Department, Cemetery Sexton and function hall with commercial kitchen. An addition to the facility was constructed in 2007 to enlarge the truck bays and create Fire Department offices and a training facility. The function hall and kitchen are available to the community for rent at a fee and was renovated in 2010. The function hall is also used as Lebanon's sole voting station and for occasional meetings. The parking lot is undersized. The Town's Dog Pound is located to the rear of the property and is shared with the Town's of Bozrah, Franklin and Sprague. The Fire Department is currently looking into the possibility of building a substation(s) to facilitate emergency services.



*Consideration should be made to acquire land for future substation(s) and hire a full-time staff person(s) to man the stationhouse during the day.*



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## Schools

Lebanon's public school system is comprised of three (3) facilities, which include an elementary, middle and high school. For the 2008-09 school year there was a total of 1,546 students. This represents a 2.9% or 44 student increase over 2000. It is estimated that 97.4% of Lebanon's school-age children attend public schools.

Lebanon Elementary School contains 72,000 square feet and serves grades PK-4. Built in 1936, additions were made to the facility in 1956, 1966, 1983 and 2005.

Lebanon Middle School contains 70,500 square feet and serves grades 5-8. Built in 1959 to serve grades 7-12, additions were made to the facility in 1977, 1981 and 2005.

Lyman Memorial High School was constructed in 1992 to serve grades 9-12 and contains 117,000 square feet. The Town of Columbia contracts with Lebanon to send 110+/- students to Lyman High School. Lyman contains a vocational agricultural science center, which in addition to Lebanon students, serves those from Andover, Bozrah, Colchester, Chaplin, Columbia, Hampton, Hebron, Franklin, Marlborough, Salem, Scotland and Sprague.

With recent additions made to the elementary and middle schools, it is anticipated that Lebanon's public schools possess enough capacity to handle a modest increase in the number of students over the next decade. This assumes no sizeable in-migration or the advent of newly mandated state education requirements.

In addition to its public schools, Lebanon contains the Lebanon Cooperative Nursery School (ages 3 and 4), Red Sneakers childcare/kindergarten (ages 3-6), and a dozen in-home day cares.

*Land for a new school is not projected to be necessary during the Plan period.*



Lebanon Elementary School



Lebanon Middle School



Lyman Memorial High School

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## Recreation Facilities

The 2000 POCD recreation objective is adopted into this Plan: “*Seek to provide adequate land to meet active recreation needs, while ensuring that existing active recreation areas are properly managed for maximum use.*”

In addition to the recreation fields located at the schools, the Recreation Commission along with a part-time Recreation Coordinator manages the Aspinall Recreation Complex and the Community Center Pool and run a variety of programs throughout Town.

In 2008, the Recreation Commission prepared an *Active Recreation Needs Analysis* which identifies three (3) recreation projects that are ready for construction in order to meet current and projected population needs. These include:

1. Construct three (3) ball fields at Tyler Field off Bascom Road;
2. Renovate Aspinall Recreation Complex; and,
3. Construct three (3) soccer fields at the West Town Street Senior Center property.

In addition, the *Active Recreation Needs Analysis* notes that the Recreation Commission requires adequate funding for current and future maintenance and staffing needs.

*Funding consideration should be made to (1) implement Tyler Field construction; (2) renovate Aspinall Recreation Complex; (3) construct West Town Street Field; and, (4) hire a full-time Recreation Coordinator.*

## Solid Waste Facility

Lebanon’s Transfer Station and former landfill occupy 12+/- acres of a town-owned 141-acre site on Exeter Road near the Franklin town line. The former landfill was closed and capped in the 1990’s. Residents have the option of transporting their household waste to the Transfer Station and paying a per-bag fee or contracting with a private hauler. The Transfer Station accepts recyclables, bulky waste, metals, yard waste, tires and spent oil and antifreeze. The Town joins with other area municipalities to provide hazardous material waste collection once or twice per year outside of Town. Waste is transferred from Lebanon to resource recovery plants in Lisbon and Preston. The Town leases the remaining open land for corn and hay production.

*Consideration should be made to sponsoring hazardous material waste collection within the Town of Lebanon on an annual or biannual basis and to upgrade the Solid Waste Facility such as modifications to facilitate single-stream recycling, adding compactors to the facility, and recycling of certain electronic items.*

## Cemeteries

Most of Lebanon’s cemeteries are managed by the Cemetery Commission and a part-time Sexton. The Town’s cemeteries are anticipated to reach capacity during this planning period.

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*A new 5+ acre cemetery site is necessary to be acquired to meet Lebanon's short and long-term needs.*

## Old Fire House

The old fire house is located at 900 Trumbull Highway and is used for Public Works storage. The site is limited in size (1/4 acre) and lacks parking, water and septic. The facility is structurally sound and the roof was last replaced in 1993.

*No change in use is proposed.*

## Police Services

Police services are conducted by a Resident State Trooper and four (4) part-time Police Officers with support from State Police Troop K in Colchester.

*Assuming Lebanon's crime rate remains low, no changes are proposed.*

## Lebanon Post Office

The Post Office is located on a 1/4-acre site with limited parking at 562 Exeter Road. A new facility is needed to accommodate current and projected population on a site located near the Town Center. (The Town may be able to facilitate a new post office by redeveloping the site which currently houses the Public Works Facility should it be relocated.)

## Transportation

Lebanon contains 56 square miles and is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest community in size in Connecticut. Lebanon contains 120 miles of road, including 91 miles of Town roads (of which 15 is gravel or unpaved) and 29 miles of State roads. Any road improvements should seek to maintain the rural character of the community.

Unpaved roads should be preserved in order to maintain a visible component of the Town's scenic and rural character. To date only Smith Road has been classified under the Town's *Scenic Road* ordinance. The following roads are recommended for future Scenic Road designation:

- Bogg Lane
- North and West Town Streets
- Bender Road, Goshen Hill Road, and Tobacco Street Extensions
- Babcock Hill, Barstow, Briggs, Church, Cook Hill, Fowler, Randall, Roger Foote, Sisson, Taylor Bridge, Village Hill and York Roads

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With respect to safety and utility of Town roads and bridges, the Selectmen currently recommend the reconstruction of Leonards Bridge Road (Phase V) and Bascom Road, and replacement of the McGrath Road Bridge over the Yantic River

*The Conservation Commission should assist property owners in the scenic road designation process. The Town should petition Connecticut DOT to include the installation of bicycle lanes where feasible when resurfacing Routes 87, 207 and 289.*

## Utilities, Water and Sewer

Electricity reaches Lebanon's homes and businesses through either Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P) or Bozrah Light and Power Company. (CL&P is the highest taxpayer in Town, owning 450+/- acres of land.) Water is provided to most homes and businesses by private wells. Exceptions to this rule are at Amston Lake, Frankel Acres, Carriage Drive, and Norwich's Deep River Reservoir which provides service to limited properties along Norwich Avenue.

In the late 1990's the Town lobbied for and received purveyor of water status from the Department of Public Health. With this authority, the Town must approve any proposed public water supply, with the exception of south of Norwich Avenue.

In 2009, the Town established a Water Pollution Control Authority to sewer or offset environmental concerns at Amston Lake. The Town voted to sewer Amston Lake in 2010. Sewers are anticipated to be in place by 2013.

## Energy

An Energy Task Force Advisory Committee was established in 2008 to apply for and oversee grants to support local public awareness and education projects that support clean renewable energy. Lebanon has taken the EPA Community Challenge pledge to reduce total energy use 10% by 2013 and conducted an energy audit of town buildings. In 2010, the Town erected a wind turbine at the Middle School to provide partial school electric needs.

*Renewable energy modules should be integrated into the vo-ag curriculum, and senior center and library programming. The Town should purchase Energy Star equipment.*

## Town Services

Lebanon operates without a Town Charter or professional town administrator. As the Town is required to deal with an increasing array of local, state and federal mandates, consideration should be made to establish a Town Charter and enact an alternative form of government, e.g., town administrator or manager.

*Consider establishment of a Charter Study Committee.*

## Section 3: Agriculture

*GOAL: To encourage the continued dominance of land-based agriculture as the primary land use in Lebanon by protecting farmland for current and future generations; promoting agriculture-based economic opportunities; and, allowing agricultural uses and related activities to thrive as the Town grows.*

Lebanon is Farm Country! It's historical and agricultural roots are inseparable. Lebanon's farms continue to provide food and fiber necessary to sustain the masses, just as it did at the time of our nation's founding. Maintaining a significant agricultural base is a central theme of Lebanon's *2010 Plan of Conservation and Development*.

The Town understands that without municipal planning and support, agriculture could become a thing of the past. Maintaining and growing Lebanon's agricultural base is not only good for the tax base but is paramount to providing and protecting valuable open space and scenic vistas, tourism and local economy, jobs, wetlands and wildlife habitat, and public health.

### Existing Conditions

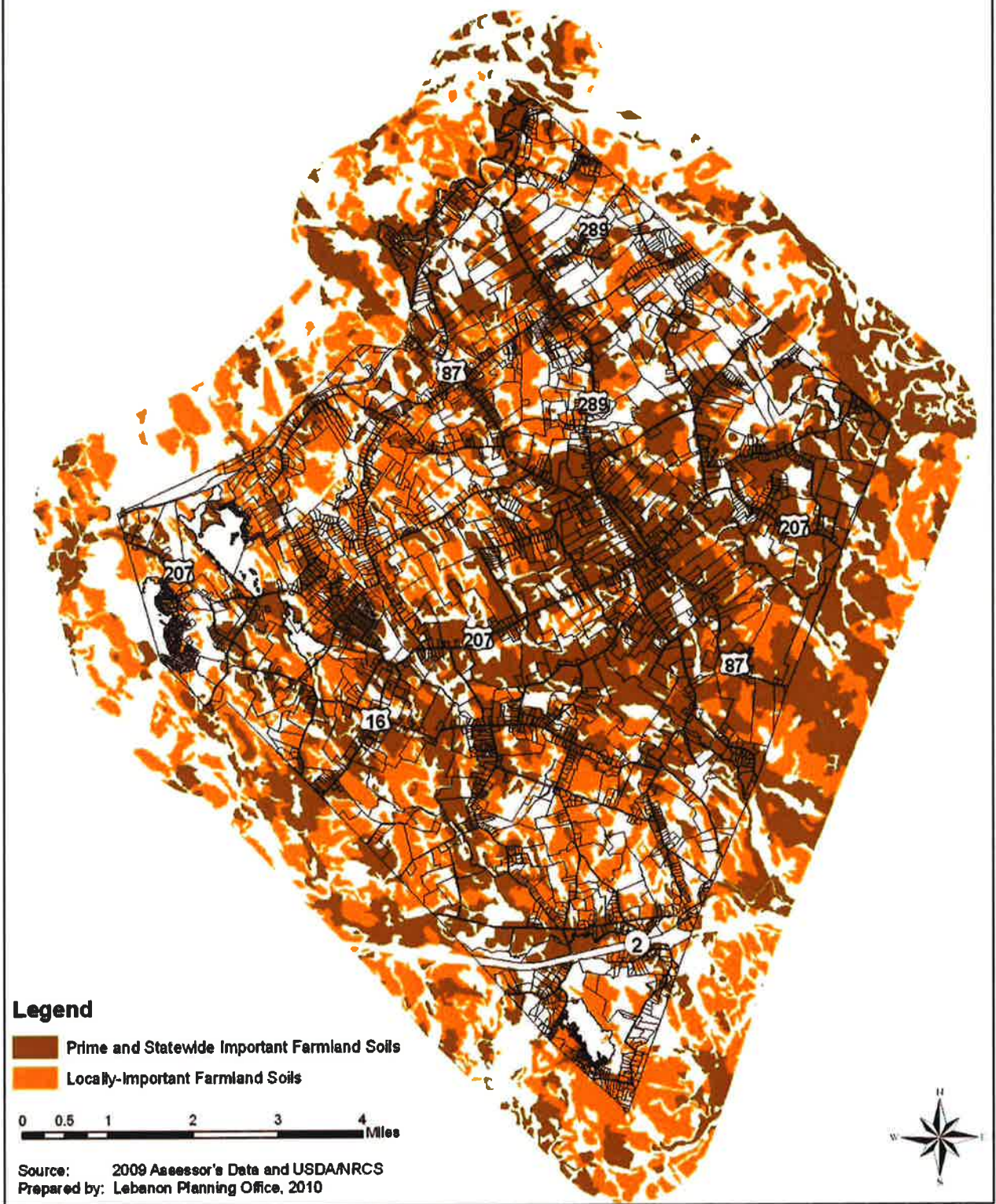
Lebanon remains one of Connecticut's largest agricultural communities despite residential growth pressures. Agriculture and its ancillary businesses are the dominant economic activity and consumers of land in Lebanon, representing seven (7) of the top nine (9) taxpayers. Its presence dominates the overall character of Town.

Lebanon has one of the highest concentrations of prime and important farmland soils in the State comprising 23,928 acres or 67% of Town. Approximately 10,000 acres in Lebanon are in active agricultural use, with the majority of this land or 6,000 acres unprotected from future development. According to the University of Connecticut's Center for Land Use Education and Research, between 1995 and 2006 Lebanon lost 2.9% (or 212 acres) of its agricultural fields. This former farmland now contains residential development or has grown fallow. The 2007 Agricultural Census reports 122 farms in Lebanon.

In addition to a large number of traditional farms in Lebanon there are a growing number of smaller farms as more and more residents choose to invest in their land. It is no coincidence that new smaller farms continue to sprout up as more and more Nutmeggers choose to buy locally grown products after more than half a century consuming mostly processed and non-local foods.



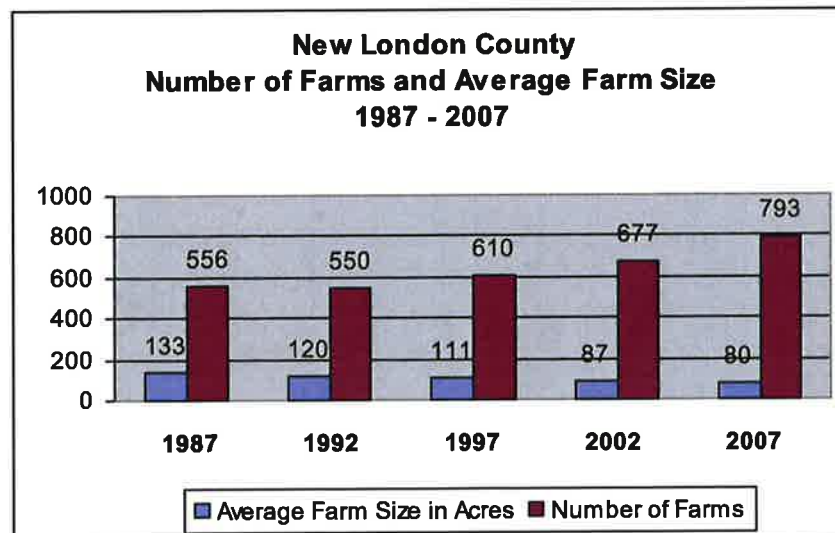
**TOWN OF LEBANON**  
**Prime and Important Farmland Soils**



## Farmland and Lebanon

- Over 37 square miles or 23,928 acres of prime and important farmland soils.
- Greatest amount of active farmland in the State of Connecticut. (10,000+/- Acres)
- Greatest amount of permanently protected farmland in Connecticut – representing 10% of the farmland protected by CT Department of Agriculture. (4,000+/- Acres)
- Greatest amount of unprotected farmland in State of Connecticut. (6,000+/- Acres)
- Largest Agricultural Zoning designation in State of Connecticut. (5,000+/- Acres)
- One of Connecticut's dairy (2,000+ cows), poultry (1.2+ million chickens), wholesale nursery and goat dairy capitals.
- Home to first farm permanently protected by CT Department of Agriculture in 1979. (Kofkoff Egg Farm)
- First Connecticut municipality to obtain Federal "locally-important" farmland soils designation from USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.
- Home to one of the largest wholesale nursery (Prides Corner Farm) and goat dairy's (Oak Leaf Dairy) in Connecticut.
- Only Town Green remaining in agricultural operation in Connecticut. (27+/- Acres)
- Major supplier of provisions to the Continental Army during the Revolution.

The 2007 Agricultural Census shows that the number of farms in New London County increased sharply between 1997 and 2007 from 677 to 793 farms or an increase of 30.0% in 10 years. Between 1997 and 2007 the average size of a New London County farm decreased from 111 to 80 acres, representing a 28% reduction in farm size.





# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## **Agricultural Economy**

Agriculture is Connecticut's original green industry. According to a 2010 University of Connecticut Study entitled *Economic Impact of Connecticut's Agriculture Industry*, agriculture contributes \$3.5 billion dollars annually to the State's economy, employs 20,000 people, and utilizes 400,000 acres of land. Consequently, agriculture adds to and is a major component of the region's economic diversity. Most farm production dollars are spent locally. Ancillary businesses such as machinery and operators, feed and fertilizer, fuel and tires, and veterinary services help make up the agricultural economy.

Agriculture in Lebanon is represented by many sectors, most of which are interconnected, reliant on and complement one another.

### **Town of Lebanon Agriculture Sectors**

Christmas Trees	Maple Syrup
Dairy and Cheese	Nursery/Greenhouse
Equine	On-Farm Sales/Farm Stands
Farmers' Market	Orchards
Hay and Straw	Poultry
Honey	Wood Production
Livestock Production	Wool and Fiber Production

The relationship of agriculture to the economy in terms of tourism, job creation and maintaining lower property taxes is strong. Farmland offers a fiscal benefit to communities as evidenced by Lebanon's 2007 *Cost of Community Service* (COCS) study. This study compared the cost of town services to residential, commercial/industrial, and farmland/open space land uses.

The COCS study, prepared by the Green Valley Institute, analyzed Lebanon's fiscal year 2006-2007 expenditures and determined that agriculture and open space paid a disproportionate share in taxes compared to residential development. It also determined that agriculture and open space are nearly equal to commercial and industrial development in terms of positive tax benefit.

The study showed that for every dollar (\$1.00) collected in municipal taxes for residential development \$1.12 was expended in municipal services, whereas for commercial/industrial and farmland/open space development only \$0.16 and \$0.17 was spent on municipal services respectively.

The results are not surprising when one considers that farmland, which represents a sizeable portion of Lebanon's total land area, requires limited municipal services. The results show that farmland and open space, along with commercial and industrial land pays more than their fair share in taxes thus helping to offset the municipal costs associated with residential development.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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Lebanon is a major contributor to the state's agricultural economy. As such, the long-term economic viability of agriculture remains considerably better here than in other parts of the State where development pressures have been more intense. Biotechnology should bring great changes to agriculture in the future. One outcome may be a greater diversity in crops and products. These will depend on Lebanon's expansive agricultural land base. Low intensity agritourism and heritage tourism can reinforce and expand the economic value of agriculture.

In addressing the future of agriculture in Lebanon, it is vital to recognize that many farms are their owner's principal financial asset. The community as a whole derives many benefits from farms, but the farmer is compensated for only a few. While many wish to keep their land open, selling land for residential development offers an alternative option. Town efforts to preserve and promote agriculture must take this squarely into account.

## **Agriculture and the Environment**

Few property owners understand their land or its natural workings more than farmers. Without healthy water and soil, agricultural production would cease. Most of Lebanon producers prepare Conservation Plans and many participate in USDA Conservation programs such as WHIP or EQUIP.

The environmental benefits to agricultural development are many. Most agricultural operations provide natural limitations on impervious surface coverage compared to other land uses. Consequently, agricultural development provides less potential for pollution run-off, loss of habitat and biodiversity, flooding, erosion and sedimentation, and diminished air quality.

Lebanon and communities near Connecticut's coast contain a unique microclimate favorable to fruit crops, including vineyards. In the event of global warming and rising sea temperatures it is believed that the environment for these and other warm climate crops will increase and make the region even more agriculturally viable.

Local agriculture helps reduce carbon emissions by providing local food and horticultural sources versus a developing dependence on products shipped across regional, state and continental divides. According to the Food and Drug Administration approximately 50% of all fruits and vegetables are imported from outside the United States. It is further estimated that 85% of all food products consumed in Connecticut are trucked in annually across State lines. Local agriculture helps provide food security should a natural or manmade disaster occur outside our region.

## **Agricultural Incentives**

Until recently only developers were interested in farmland – not for farming but for residential development purposes. Governmental incentives or options for farmers looking to preserve their land were few.

## Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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An early option for farmers and one that hoped to quell the rapid loss of farmland was the establishment of Public Act 490 in 1963. Public Act 490 requires Connecticut towns to assess farm and forest land on the basis of use rather than development or market value. Consequently, taxes are reduced when compared to developable or open land. If a particular parcel of land is sold for development within 10 years of its classification in Public Act 490, towns receive a conveyance tax from the property owner to recover part of the lost taxes.

Approximately 19,000 acres of land is classified in Lebanon under Public Act 490, which represents 54% of the Town's total land area. The majority of this classification or 63% is farmland, with the remainder forest land.

Another tax reduction assistance program mandated by State Statute is a \$100,000 tax exemption for farm equipment available for farm businesses that spend or make at least \$15,000 annually. In Lebanon, 25+/- farm entities participate in this exemption. In addition, the Town enacted an additional \$100,000 farm-equipment tax exemption (for a total of \$200,000) in 2002.

Additional State programs created to assist agricultural businesses that Lebanon could adopt include a \$100,000 farm-building tax exemption and an abatement of up to 50% of property taxes for certain type of farm businesses, i.e., dairy, fruit orchards, vineyards, vegetable farms and nurseries.

Another program established by the legislature in 1978 is the State Department of Agriculture Farmland Preservation Program. This program pays up to 100% of the conservation easement or development rights value for farmland that contains at least 30 active acres. To date, 35,000 acres on 250 farms have been preserved, including 3,500 acres in Lebanon – the most of any town in the State, representing 10% of all farmland preserved through this program.

The Department of Environmental Protection manages an Open Space Acquisition Grant Program that pays up to 50% of either the fair market value of development rights or purchase price, whichever is less. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program where state or local governments, or non-profit land trusts provide 25% of the conservation easement value in exchange for receiving 50% funding from NRCS.

There are also several private non-profit land trusts available to assist farm owners in Lebanon interested in land preservation. Connecticut Farmland Trust for example focuses exclusively on preserving farmland, with staff and funding to meet this goal. The Trust for Public Lands provides technical assistance and funding for land preservation, including farmland. Joshua's Tract, a local land trust will accept easements from farmers and others interested in land preservation.

Lastly, the Town is in an enviable position to assist farmers and agricultural businesses in a variety of ways. In addition to adopting the optional tax reduction programs identified above, the Town owns farmland which it leases to area farmers. The Town has also set aside funding for farmland preservation and partners with organizations interested in land preservation. Finally, the Town can assist residents interested in preserving farms and promoting agricultural businesses by appointing an Agricultural Committee under the auspices of the Economic Development Commission to work with this constituency group.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## **Agricultural Planning Since 2000**

Lebanon's Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission and others have taken significant steps to protect and promote agriculture since 2000. Examples include:

- ✓ Set goal to preserve at least 2,000 acres of agricultural and open space over the next decade;
- ✓ Adopted Right-to-Farm Ordinance;
- ✓ Created system for ranking farmland and open space for preservation purposes;
- ✓ Charged Town Planner and Conservation Commission to create and manage Lebanon's farmland preservation program;
- ✓ Applied for and received multiple State and Federal Grants and non-profit funding to preserve agriculture;
- ✓ Set aside \$200,000 for open space and farmland preservation efforts;
- ✓ Enacted \$100,000 farm-equipment tax exemption for qualified farmers;
- ✓ Provided local funding to promote Community Supported Agriculture operations;
- ✓ Established and promoted successful weekly farmers market;
- ✓ Mandated agricultural buffers, cluster housing and other farm-friendly regulations;
- ✓ Became first Connecticut town to partner with the USDA/NRCS to officially recognize and designate locally-important farmland soils;
- ✓ Quantified the value of agriculture by commissioning a *Cost of Community Services Study*;
- ✓ Celebrated farms on the Town web site ([www.lebanontownhall.org](http://www.lebanontownhall.org)); and,
- ✓ Reached out to area farmers and large-lot property owners by presenting options for land preservation and expressing an eagerness to assist those interested in preservation.

These efforts have been recognized locally, statewide and by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. For example, in 2007 the Town received the *Farmland Preservation Pathfinder Award for Outstanding Group* from the Working Lands Alliance and Connecticut Board of Trustees for the Eastern States Exposition. In 2008, Lebanon received the *Green Neighbor Award* from the Green Valley Institute for "valuable steps ... taken to protect Lebanon's rural character and agricultural resources".

## **Resident Attitudes on Agriculture**

In November 2008 the Town engaged the University of Connecticut's Center for Survey Research & Analysis to conduct a statistically valid survey of resident attitudes toward agriculture and farmland preservation. Approximately 1-in-7 year-round households participated in the survey.

Key survey findings include:

- ✓ 96% believe that having working farms make Lebanon a better place to live.
- ✓ 93% consider it important to preserve additional open space and farmland in Lebanon.
- ✓ 86% assume Lebanon is one of the largest agricultural communities in Connecticut.
- ✓ 77% believe the Town should fund open space preservation efforts.
- ✓ 71% feel that farmland and open space preservation should be Lebanon's planning focus over the next decade.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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When it came to funding, 70% of residents said they would be in favor of a \$2 million dollar 20-year bond referendum to support land preservation even if it cost them up to an additional \$50 annually in property taxes. When asked if residents would support a similar referendum if both farmland preservation and construction of recreation fields were provided, the number was 66%.

The survey also showed that residents believe Lebanon should consider tax exemptions to encourage agriculture. When asked if the Town should partially exempt property taxes on farm buildings, 84% were in favor. This number dropped to 67% when respondents were told that it could cost them up to an additional \$15 annually in property taxes. Similarly, 71% were in favor of partially exempting property taxes for certain types of farmland, including dairy and orchard, even if it cost them up to an additional \$25 in annual property tax.

## Agriculture Today

A major attraction in Lebanon is its farmland and open spaces. The Town is blessed with a variety of agricultural venues each of which contributes to Lebanon's community character, quality of life, local economy and tax base. Agriculture in Lebanon means business!

- **Beef Cattle.** Cattle raised for beef are located on half a dozen farms in Lebanon. The largest beef operation is Four Winds Farm with 100+ head and 600 acres. Beef cattle operators and those in the dairy business are important stewards of land in Lebanon.



- **Christmas Tree Farms.** New London County ranks first in the State in number of Christmas tree farms according to the 2007 Agricultural Census. These farms contribute to the environment and provide a valuable product. Lebanon contains a number of Christmas tree farms.

- **Dairy.** In 2000, Connecticut had 240 dairy farms whereas it has 151 today. Nevertheless, the Dairy Industry continues to represent the largest agricultural land base in Lebanon and the State. The Dairy Industry contributes \$1B annually to the State's economy, providing up to 4,200 jobs.



Lebanon contains over half a dozen dairies with 2,000+/- cows (1 cow for every 4 residents). Each cow requires two (2) acres of farmland. The largest dairy is Graywall Farm, headquarters to The Farmers Cow, which produces milk, ice cream and other dairy products. Lebanon's Graywall Farm, Square A Farm and River Plain Dairy have been awarded Dairy Farms of Distinction by the Dept. of Agriculture. Since 2000 several Lebanon dairy farms have ceased to have active dairy herds; however, their cropland continues to support larger herds from other farms. Lebanon also contains Oak Leaf Dairy and Beltane Farms which produce sought after goat cheese, yogurt, milk and soap.



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

- **Equine.** Connecticut boasts 40,000+ horses -- the third most per square mile than any other State. Horse owners spend on average more than \$20,000 annually on their horses – much of which is spent locally. Lebanon has approximately 125 horses, with facilities for training, lessons, boarding and recreation.



- **Farm Markets.** The Town established a weekly Farmers Market at Town Hall in 2007 which provides a local venue for 20 area farmers to sell their products directly to the public. The Market is supported by the State Department of Agriculture which provides WIC clients and income eligible seniors vouchers to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. Other seasonal farm markets include West Green Market on West Town Street and Bluebird Hill on Trumbull Highway. In addition, there are various farm stands and a few pick-your-own scattered throughout Town.



- **Lebanon Agricultural Fair.** The Lebanon Lions Club operates the Lebanon Country Fair on its 44-acre fairground on Mack Road. The purpose of the Fair is to promote agriculture in Lebanon and the region by providing a venue for local agricultural producers and vendors to showcase their products, and to provide an opportunity for the public (including future farmers) to learn about agricultural uses. The Fair runs for three (3) days in August and attracts some 20,000 people.



- **Nursery and Greenhouse.** The nursery and greenhouse industry represents half of all farm sales in Connecticut employing 48,000+/- persons. The State's largest wholesale nursery operation or Prides Corner Farm is located in Lebanon. Prides Corner operates on 400+ acres and employs 400+/- workers just south of the Town Center. Lebanon's retail greenhouses include Liberty Hill Farm Market Greenhouses on Trumbull Highway and Kristin's Country Greenhouse on Sisson Road.



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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- **Poultry.** Connecticut has more chickens per square mile than any other state. Lebanon houses at least ¼ of these chickens or over 1.2 million, most of which can be found at the Land O'Lakes (Kofkoff Egg Farm) facility on Mack Road. Manure from chickens is rich in nitrogen and phosphorus and used throughout Lebanon and the State to fertilize corn and hay fields.



- **Town Green.** Approximately one (1) mile long and 27 acres in area, Lebanon's Town Green is not only the Town's signature historical and cultural venue but is Connecticut's only working Town Green still in agricultural use and farmed for hay.
- **Other.** In addition, the Town contains fuel wood and forestry production; llama and vegetable farms; maple syrup operations and a corn maze. In addition, there are many farms that provide mainly corn and hay production, including Oweneco Farm which has been farmed by the same family for over 300 years.

## **Agricultural Opportunities**

The agricultural base is the Town's most significant economic asset to build on. The economic dominance of agriculture in Lebanon also makes it the likely focus for future economic development. In addition to supporting existing agricultural operations, given the large amount of permanently preserved farmland, there are a number of agricultural opportunities which the Town should encourage.

- **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).** CSAs provide the public the opportunity to partner with a farm to obtain fresh local products. Farmers are guaranteed income and are able to plan according to their customer base. Consumers are provided the benefit of seeing their food grow, learning about agriculture and interacting with the grower. The number of consumers looking to participate in a CSA far outnumbers existing growers in the State. Because Lebanon has available farmland and no supermarket the potential for CSA development is strong.
- **Farm-To-School.** This program, operated through the Connecticut Departments of Agriculture and Education, promotes the use of locally grown products in public schools. Lebanon could expand its participation in this program by providing fresh local products to its children while supporting local agricultural businesses.
- **On-Farm-Sales/Farm Market.** There is a seasonal potential for this venue in Lebanon.
- **Milk and/or Food Processing Facility.** Given Lebanon's prominence in the dairy industry and desire to add to its tax base, the Town should encourage this agricultural business.



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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- Meat Packing Plant. The State of Connecticut is in need of a USDA sanctioned meat packing plant. A 2009 University of Connecticut study showed that 74% of State producers said they would expand beef production in the next three (3) years if they had increased access to local USDA-inspected slaughter and processing facilities. This type of facility could be located on an appropriate site in Lebanon.
- Pick-Your-Own and Vineyards. As noted, the climate in Lebanon is favorable to fruit crops, including vineyards. Because few of these operations exist in Lebanon, development of this agricultural venue should be encouraged.

## Recommendations

- A. Regulatory Responsibility. The following recommendations are regulatory in nature and require legal action by one or more town agencies.

### Planning and Zoning Commission

1. Review regulations to encourage agricultural business.

### Town Meeting

2. Adopt the \$100,000 farm building tax exemption for buildings used exclusively in farming as permitted under CGS Sec. 12-91(c).
3. Adopt up to 50% property tax abatement for certain types of farms as permitted under CGS Sec. 12-81m.
4. Pass bond referendum(s) that provides multi-year funding for farmland and open space preservation so that the Town maintains a land preservation fund working balance of \$500,000. Consider linking bond package with other capital expenditures recommended in the *Plan of Conservation and Development* (i.e., recreation fields and library addition construction) for both cost savings and to garner wider support.
5. Continue utilizing town funds, State and Federal grants and other funding sources which may become available to promote and preserve agriculture.

- B. Non-Regulatory. The following recommendations are administrative in nature and do not require legal action. The group(s) responsible for their implementation are identified.

1. Lebanon ordinances, regulations, policies and actions should support the continuation of agricultural uses in Town. *All Town Boards, Commissions and staff.*
2. Establish an Agricultural Committee under the auspices of the Economic Development Commission to assist in promoting Lebanon's agriculture, including the review of

## Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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existing and proposed ordinances and land use regulations. *Economic Development Commission.*

3. Expand participation in the Farm-To-School Program and deliver fresh nutritious meals to students to promote healthy learning/living. *Board of Education, Food Service Coordinator.*
4. Continue outreach efforts to farmers and agricultural businesses, and educate the public about the benefits to agriculture. *Agricultural Committee, Town Planner, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission.*
5. Continue to partner with USDA/NRCS, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, land trusts and others to preserve and promote farmland preservation with a goal to preserve at least 2,000 acres of land over the next ten years. *Agricultural Committee, Town Planner, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Town Meeting.*
6. Continue to celebrate agricultural business in Town, including the Farmers' Market and local farms through advertising, including on the Town web site. *Agricultural Committee, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission.*
7. Continue to lease town-owned land for farming. *Board of Selectmen.*
8. Provide agricultural education curricula at all grade levels. *Board of Education.*

## Section 4: Economic Development

*"Lebanon is not strategically situated to attract large scale industrial or commercial activity. The agricultural base is the Town's most significant economic asset to build on. The economic dominance of agriculture also makes it the likely focus for future economic development in town." 2000 Lebanon Plan of Conservation and Development*

The preceding statement is as true today as was when written ten years ago. However, in addition, there are also limited commercial and service needs of town residents to be filled as well as the promotion of heritage tourism – all of which should also be the focus of future economic development efforts.

### GOALS:

- 1. To continue to promote agricultural businesses.*
- 2. To promote heritage tourism through identification and advertisement of available resources and attractions and by increasing visitor accommodations and services.*
- 3. To allow for integrated business and residential development in the Town Center, specifically the South Green, to meet the commercial and service needs of residents.*
- 4. To promote an increase in commercial and industrial development within designated non-residential zones.*
- 5. To rezone established commercial businesses in residential zones into neighborhood commercial zones.*
- 6. To allow non-residential development by rezoning where business development master plan proposals meet the physical, social, economic and environmental needs of Lebanon.*

### Existing Conditions

Due to the proximity of Lebanon to adjacent commercial centers in Willimantic, Norwich, Colchester, and recently Hebron, the economic development needs of the Town are limited. Residents mainly travel outside Lebanon for employment, shopping and personal services. In response to the amenities offered in adjacent towns, including the lack of public water and sewer in Lebanon, land uses in Town consist of agriculture and rural residential with a limited number of small commercial and industrial establishments interspersed throughout Town.

There are approximately 71 parcels in Lebanon zoned for commercial or industrial use. The majority of these parcels or 65% (46 parcels) have been developed residentially. Only 14% or 10 parcels are commercially or industrially developed, 18% or 13 parcels are vacant, and three (3) are permanently preserved as farmland. With the exception of home-based business, there has been little in the way of additional economic development established in Town since 2000.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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Agriculture remains the dominant economic activity in Lebanon. Agriculture consumes the largest amount of developable land in Town, makes up the largest tax base and is the highest non-governmental employer. Approximately 10,000 acres or 28% of Lebanon is actively farmed, which include land-based field crop agriculture and large commercial or industrial agricultural operations. Since 2000, over 1,000 acres have been preserved under the Farmland Preservation Program by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and through Town efforts.

The number of home-based businesses has continued to increase since 2000. This is in part due to the allowance of home occupations in all zoning districts except for the Light Industry and Lake Districts.

## Economic Environment

Lebanon's labor force consists of approximately 4,400 residents, of which approximately 12% work within the Town of Lebanon. The largest employer of full-time workers in Lebanon is the Town itself, with approximately 215 full-time and 75 part-time employees. According to the 2000 Census, the majority of Lebanon residents are employed in the communities of Windham, Norwich, Hartford, Groton, Colchester, Mansfield, Glastonbury, Manchester and Killingly respectively.

Next to the Town itself, the largest employment sector in Lebanon is in the field of agriculture. Approximately 10% of Lebanon's grand list of taxable property is made up of agricultural uses, with just under three percent (3%) made up of commercial and industrial uses. Of Lebanon's top 10 taxpayers in 2009, seven (7) were agricultural operations (identified in bold and italics below).

### Town of Lebanon Top 10 Taxpayers

<u>Name</u>	<u>2009 Assessment</u>
Connecticut Light & Power Company	\$13,662,470
<b><i>Prides Corner Farms Inc</i></b>	<b><i>4,816,820</i></b>
<b><i>Kofkoff Egg Farm Holding LLC</i></b>	<b><i>3,189,330</i></b>
<b><i>Kofkoff Egg Farm LLC</i></b>	<b><i>2,909,830</i></b>
<b><i>Earthgro Incorporated</i></b>	<b><i>2,586,360</i></b>
<b><i>Robin &amp; Kathryn Chesmer</i></b>	<b><i>1,160,360</i></b>
<b><i>Charles River Labs Incorporated</i></b>	<b><i>1,006,950</i></b>
Harold & Florence Liebman	968,260
<b><i>Southern New England Eggs LLC</i></b>	<b><i>956,100</i></b>
Stone Ridge Estates LLC	949,380

Source: Lebanon Assessors Department

In 2009, Lebanon's median household income was reported at \$77,110, which was 22% higher than the New London County median household income of \$63,239 and 13% higher than the State median household income of \$68,055.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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Lebanon's unemployment rate has historically remained lower than the State and National average. Since 2000, Lebanon's unemployment rate has increased from an historic low of 1.9% to an average 7.3% in 2009. The increase in unemployment can be attributed to what has been coined the "Great Recession" or generally considered to be the longest and deepest economic recession since the "Great Depression", which began in 2007 and continued through 2009.

With a lack of public sewers and water, close proximity to commercial centers, and limited vacant commercial or industrial zoned land, it is unlikely that large-scale commercial or industrial growth will occur in Lebanon over the coming decade. Likewise, Town's people have made clear that they do not want these types of uses in Lebanon. Consequently, agriculture is projected to remain Lebanon's top economic asset over the next ten years.

## **Agricultural Business Development**

Agriculture adds to and is a major component of the region's economic diversity. Consequently, most farm production dollars are spent locally. Ancillary businesses such as machinery and operators, feed and fertilizer, fuel, tires and veterinary services help make up the agricultural economy.

The relationship of agriculture to the economy in terms of tourism, job creation and maintaining lower property taxes is strong. Farmland offers a fiscal benefit to Lebanon as evidenced by a 2007 *Cost of Community Service* study conducted by the Green Valley Institute. This study compared the cost of town services to residential, commercial/industrial, and farmland/open space land uses. The study determined that agriculture and open space paid a disproportionate share in taxes compared to residential development. It also determined that agriculture and open space are nearly equal to commercial and industrial development in terms of positive tax benefit.

The study showed that for every dollar (\$1.00) collected in municipal taxes for residential development \$1.12 was expended in municipal services, whereas for commercial/industrial and farmland/open space development only \$0.16 and \$0.17 was spent on municipal services respectively.

**Town of Lebanon  
FY 2006-07  
Cost to Provide Community Services per Dollar of Revenue Raised**

Residential	\$1.12
Farmland/Open Space	\$0.17
Commercial/Industrial	\$0.16

*Source: 2007 Lebanon Cost of Community Services Study*

In 2008, the Planning and Zoning Commission rezoned approximately 5,000 acres of residential land to Agriculture to identify land permanently protected for agriculture. Lebanon's Agricultural Zone is the largest in the State of Connecticut.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## Non-Residential Commercial and Industrial Development

Current zoning designates three (3) non-residential zoning districts in Lebanon, including Business, Light Industry and Neighborhood Business. These zones allow for moderate developments that are complementary to and have a minimal impact on surrounding residential properties. Residential development is allowed in all above zones except for Light Industry.

- **Business Zone.** The purpose of the Business Zone is to allow for business development by special permit intermixed with residential properties in an organized manner. Three (3) areas are currently zoned Business in Lebanon.

*Norwich Avenue.* The largest area zoned Business in Lebanon is along Norwich Avenue (Route 616). Prior to construction of Route 2 this area was zoned Business and was the main east/west thoroughfare from Hartford to points east. Since construction of Route 2 in 1970, however, this road has had limited traffic and the majority of development has been in the form of single-family residences. Of the 47 parcels zoned Business only two (2) are developed for business (one of which has been vacant for some time) and seven (7) are undeveloped. The remaining 38 parcels contain residential homes, which makes future commercial development outside of the Route 2 interchange and the west abutting the Light Industry Zone potentially incompatible with existing residential uses.

*Other.* The remaining two (2) areas zoned Business are located at the intersection of Trumbull Highway and Tobacco Street (currently occupied by the Log Cabin restaurant and a vacant parcel) and on the westerly side of Beaumont Highway (Route 289) between Burnham and Village Hill Roads (currently occupied by Country Commons Plaza). Both areas are limited in size and have limited growth potential.

- **Light Industry Zone.** The purpose of the Light Industry Zone is to allow for a range of office, research and light industrial facilities that can be located relatively close to residential uses without negative influence, and which will have minimum impacts on the natural resource base of the Town. Three (3) areas are currently zone Light Industry in Lebanon.

*Industrial Park.* The largest Light Industry Zone is located on Exeter Road (Route 207) at the Franklin Town Line, which includes Lebanon's Industrial Park. This area is served by rail but lacks public water and sewer. Of the 17 parcels zoned Light Industry in this area, four (4) are developed for industry with the remaining containing single-family homes, farmed or undeveloped parcels.

*Other.* The other Light Industry Zones are located on either end of Norwich Avenue. Of the six (6) parcels zoned Light Industry, two (2) have been industrially developed (one of which is vacant), one (1) was recently preserved as farmland by the Department of Agriculture, two (2) contain single family homes and one (1) is undeveloped. With the exception of the undeveloped parcel, which was approved by the Town for a 30,000 square foot manufacturing facility in 2007, there is limited potential for future industrial growth in this area of Town.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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- **Neighborhood Business Zone.** The purpose of the Neighborhood Business Zone is to allow for neighborhood-oriented commercial, institutional and office services which encourage a diversity of uses that are complementary to surrounding residential areas by special permit. Currently, there is only one (1) parcel zoned Neighborhood Business, which is located on Exeter Road (Route 207) in front of the Middle and High Schools and contains a gas station, Subway and convenience store.

In addition, there are a number of properties located throughout town that contain businesses that meet the definition of the Neighborhood Business Zone but are zoned Residential.

*Should a business development master plan be proposed that meets the physical, social, economic and environmental needs of the community, the Planning and Zoning Commission should be open to such development, including rezoning accordingly.*

## **Business Development within Residential Zones**

Lebanon contains a large number of home occupation/business establishments that are operated from residences. This is due in part to the allowance of home occupations by right within any zoning district except for the Lake and Light Industry Zones. In addition, the Zoning Regulations allow residential business uses by special permit. These businesses include self-employed contractors, agricultural-related business, professional and personal services. The Town should continue to allow home occupations by right and residential business use by special permit in order to allow greater use of property and greater local services for residents.

As noted, the Town also has several properties without homes that contain business development, which are located within the Residential Zone. These grandfathered commercial uses include the Green Store and those at Liberty Hill, Lake Williams and Beaumont Highway opposite Chappel Road.

## **Heritage Tourism**

Preservation and promotion of Lebanon's superb historic assets should be a central theme of any economic development within the Town Center. Unfortunately few if any complementary businesses exist which assist in promoting Lebanon's heritage tourism. Restaurants, public restrooms, safe pedestrian circulation and parking are all necessary to increase visitation, which in turn helps financially support museums and area businesses. In addition to creating design review requirements, the Town should allow non-owner-occupied uses in the Village Center which are necessary to promote businesses to enhance the services provided those who frequent Lebanon's museum and historic sites.



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## Recommendations

A. Regulatory Responsibility. The following recommendations are regulatory in nature and require legal action by the *Planning and Zoning Commission*.

1. Rezone a portion of the Village Rural Agricultural (VRA) Residence District to the Town Center Village (TCV) District permitted under CGS 8-2j. This area could include the current VRA Zone south and east of Route 207 (Exeter Road). The purpose of the TCV Zone should be to allow for integrated residential and business development which meets the service needs of the town and promoting ancillary businesses and services for heritage tourism while preserving the rural and historic character of the District. This would allow for non-owner-occupied business such as the "Green Store" to become conforming uses.
2. Rezone a portion of the Business District on Norwich Avenue to Agriculture and Rural Agricultural Residence to conform to the current residential development and agricultural preservation patterns and to reduce the potential for land use conflict. The updated delineation should reflect an existing and projected business presence in the immediate vicinity of the Route 2 interchange and at the westerly end of Norwich Avenue.
3. Rezone the westerly portion of the Light Industry District on Norwich Avenue (Route 616) to reflect current development conditions. The updated delineation should remove the recently preserved lands and residentially developed properties from the district.
4. Continue to rezone properties Agricultural that have been permanently protected for agriculture.
5. Permit business development master plan proposals that meet the physical, social, economic and environmental needs of the community, including rezoning accordingly.

B. Non-Regulatory. The following recommendations are administrative in nature and do not require legal action. Implementation responsibility is identified.

1. Lebanon ordinances, regulations, policies and actions should support the continuation of agricultural uses in Town. *All Town Boards, Commissions and staff*.
2. Continue to encourage growth of home occupations, particularly in those activities that can benefit from and complement tourism. These activities must be of a scale and intensity that is appropriate for existing neighborhoods and areas of the Town. Proposed uses must not alter the essential residential appearance of a property or create off-site impacts that are not appropriate to the surroundings. *Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission*.

## Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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3. Connect or loop the walking path around the Town Green in the vicinity of the Library and incorporate an east/west crosswalk to link the Historical Society Museum and Alden Tavern Parking Lot with the Town Green, Library and other museums. *Board of Selectmen.*
4. Utilize Town web site “VISITOR” section to include a list of and link to museums, agriculture and other businesses, annual events, etc. Prepare and include a town map that locates these features. *Economic Development Commission.*
5. Continue to secure funding for agricultural viability, including for the Farmer’s Market and farmland preservation. *Board of Selectmen, Town Planner, Town Meeting.*
6. Maintain Economic Development Commission (EDC) focus to establish relationships with business property owners, assist with brown field development, promote heritage tourism, and promote agriculture, home-based and other businesses. *Economic Development Commission, Board of Selectmen.*
7. Establish a standing Agricultural Committee under the auspices of the Economic Development Commission to assist in promoting Lebanon’s agriculture, including the review of existing and proposed ordinances and land use regulations. *Economic Development Commission.*
8. Consider adoption of a tax abatement ordinance which provides tax incentives for new or expanded businesses identified in the *Plan of Conservation and Development.* *Economic Development Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting.*

## Section 5: Natural Resources

*GOAL: Provide for the permanent protection of open space tracts and corridors, giving priority to those that are most important to community character and that hold the most important natural resources, while seeking methods to protect open space in ways that keep the land in private ownership.*

Lebanon's primary planning goal remains the preservation of the Town's character as a rural-agricultural community, which underlies the Town's efforts in preserving natural resources and open space. The natural environment significantly influences the quality and character of life in Lebanon, as well as the potential for growth through development. Lebanon's natural resources and open spaces must be protected to support the integrity of the local ecosystem, to continue to provide residents with a healthy and enjoyable environment in which to live, and to safeguard land-based economic resources, such as agriculture and tourism.

In November 2008, the Town commissioned the Center for Survey Research & Analysis at the University of Connecticut to conduct a statistically valid (1 in 7 household) survey of residents' attitudes toward land conservation. The results showed that residents overwhelmingly favored the preservation of land in Lebanon. Key findings included:

- 93% stated that preserving farmland and open space in Lebanon is important;
- 77% said that the Town should fund land preservation efforts, with 70% favoring a 2-million dollar 20-year bond referendum for this purpose that would result in up to \$50 in additional annual property taxes per household; and,
- 71% believe that land preservation should be the focus of the Town's planning efforts over the next ten (10) years.

### Natural Resources Inventory

The Town of Lebanon is rich in natural resources. Wetlands, lakes, vernal pools, forests and wildlife, open space, and productive farmland soils all contribute to the abundance of nature Lebanon residents enjoy and depend on for groundwater, recreation and agriculture.

#### *Wetlands*

Lebanon contains 6,765+/- acres of wetlands representing 19% of the Town. Wetlands are defined by soil type, described as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial, and floodplain. Wetlands provide many benefits including:

- acting as "sponges" for precipitation;
- controlling runoff into rivers and streams;

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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- absorbing contaminants and removing them from water;
- recharging groundwater;
- providing essential habitat for wildlife and plant communities; and,
- acting as natural wildlife and plant corridors linking open tracts of upland habitat.

Lebanon's wetlands are regulated by the Inland Wetlands Commission, which is responsible for assuring that any development that affects wetlands or a buffer within 100 feet of wetlands does not negatively impact the environment.

## *Lakes, Ponds, Streams, and Vernal Pools*

In addition to their importance as components of wetlands systems, lakes, ponds, rivers and streams play an important role in supporting public water supply, fish and wildlife, and recreational activities. Several relatively large water bodies lie within the Town of Lebanon encompassing 776+/- acres or 2% of the Town.

### **Lebanon's Major Lakes, Ponds, Rivers and Streams**

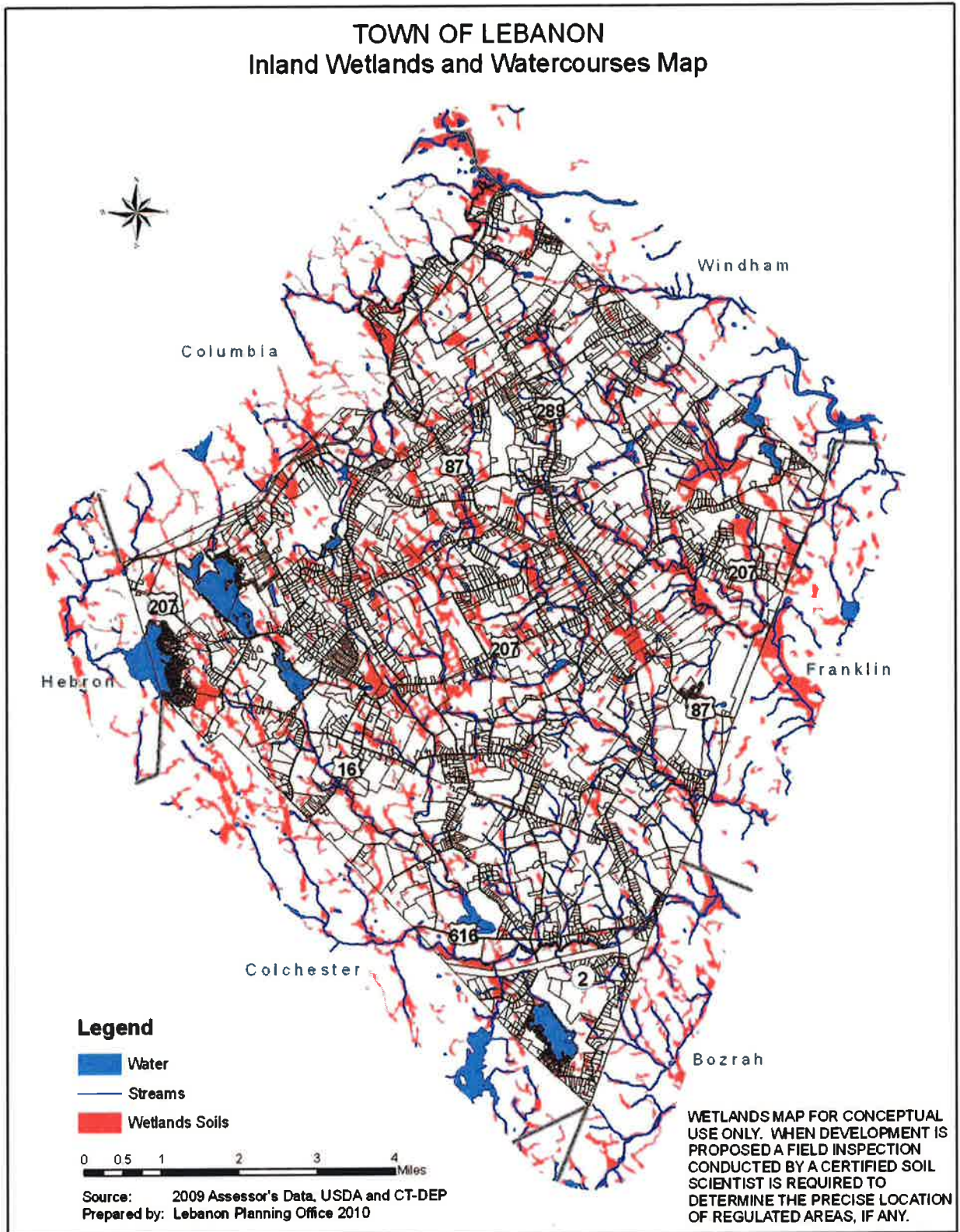
<u>Lakes</u>	<u>Ponds</u>	<u>Rivers/Streams</u>
Amston Lake	Big Pond	Bartlett Brook
Lake Williams	Brewster Pond	Deep River
Red Cedar Lake	Graves Pond	Exeter Brook
Savin Lake	Palmer Pond	Pease Brook
	Spaulding Pond	Susquetonscut Brook
	Spencer Pond	Ten Mile River
	Stiles Pond	Yantic River

Lebanon is unique in being home to lakes, ponds and streams that are bordered by substantial tracts of undeveloped land and offer good recreation potential as well as high resource and habitat value. Much of these undeveloped shorelines are privately owned, and the town should actively seek ways both to preserve undeveloped shorelines through conservation easements, and, where it does not already exist, to allow public access to their waters.

Vernal pools, which are self-contained, usually seasonal water bodies, are the sole breeding habitat of some amphibians, mollusks, crustaceans and insect species, and are essential to the life cycle of certain other species. Some dependent species must have undeveloped forest floor to move to and from their vernal pool. Vernal pools and their surrounding habitat are key to maintaining biodiversity. Nearby development disrupts or destroys these fragile systems. No inventory of vernal pools exists in Lebanon.

Lebanon's lakes, ponds, river, streams, and vernal pools are regulated by the Inland Wetlands Commission, who is responsible for assuring that any development that takes place in or within 100 feet of each does not negatively impact the environment.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## *Open Space, Forest and Wildlife*

Lebanon's Conservation Commission (1) maintains an inventory of open space<sup>1</sup> and natural resources; (2) works to preserve additional important open space (farmland, forest, open land, and wildlife corridor) tracts; (3) works to protect natural resources; and, (4) assists in educating the public and managing conservation easements. In 2007, the Conservation Commission prepared a draft Natural Resources and Open Space Plan, which this section of the POCD relies heavily on.

Apart from actual economic uses supported by open space, such as agriculture and tourism, many other economic as well as environmental and quality of life benefits depend on sound conservation and open space planning. Some of these include:

- Maintaining and enhancing Lebanon's rural character;
- Allowing agriculture and forest-based industries to flourish;
- Protecting the health and diversity of our native wildlife population;
- Providing recreational, tourism and educational opportunities;
- Removing carbon dioxide from the air and helping to produce the oxygen we breathe;
- Protecting groundwater resources and controlling flooding; and,
- Maintaining low property taxes as open space requires less in municipal services than taxes paid.

The Conservation Commission utilizes a system for rating farmland and open space parcels to determine the value for each when considering future preservation projects. Approximately 7,000 acres or 20% of Lebanon is considered permanently preserved open space.

<u>Type/Owner of Open Space</u>	<u>Acres (+/-)</u>
Conservation Easements <sup>2</sup> (non-farmland preservation)	552
Farmland Preservation (where agriculture is permitted)	3,700
Private Non-Profits (Nature Conservancy, CT Forest & Parks, Joshua's Tract)	296
State-Owned Land (Bartlett Brook, Pomeroy, Red Cedar, Savin, Pease Brook)	2,020
Town-Owned Land (not all land open space, i.e., fire/safety, cemetery, schools)	<u>492</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,060</b>

Other large parcels are currently maintained as private open space but not permanently protected. These include the 343-acre Camp Laurel owned by the Girl Scouts, Bozrah Fish and Game Club (142 acres), Lebanon Lions (44 acres) and Hebron Sportsman Club (36 acres).

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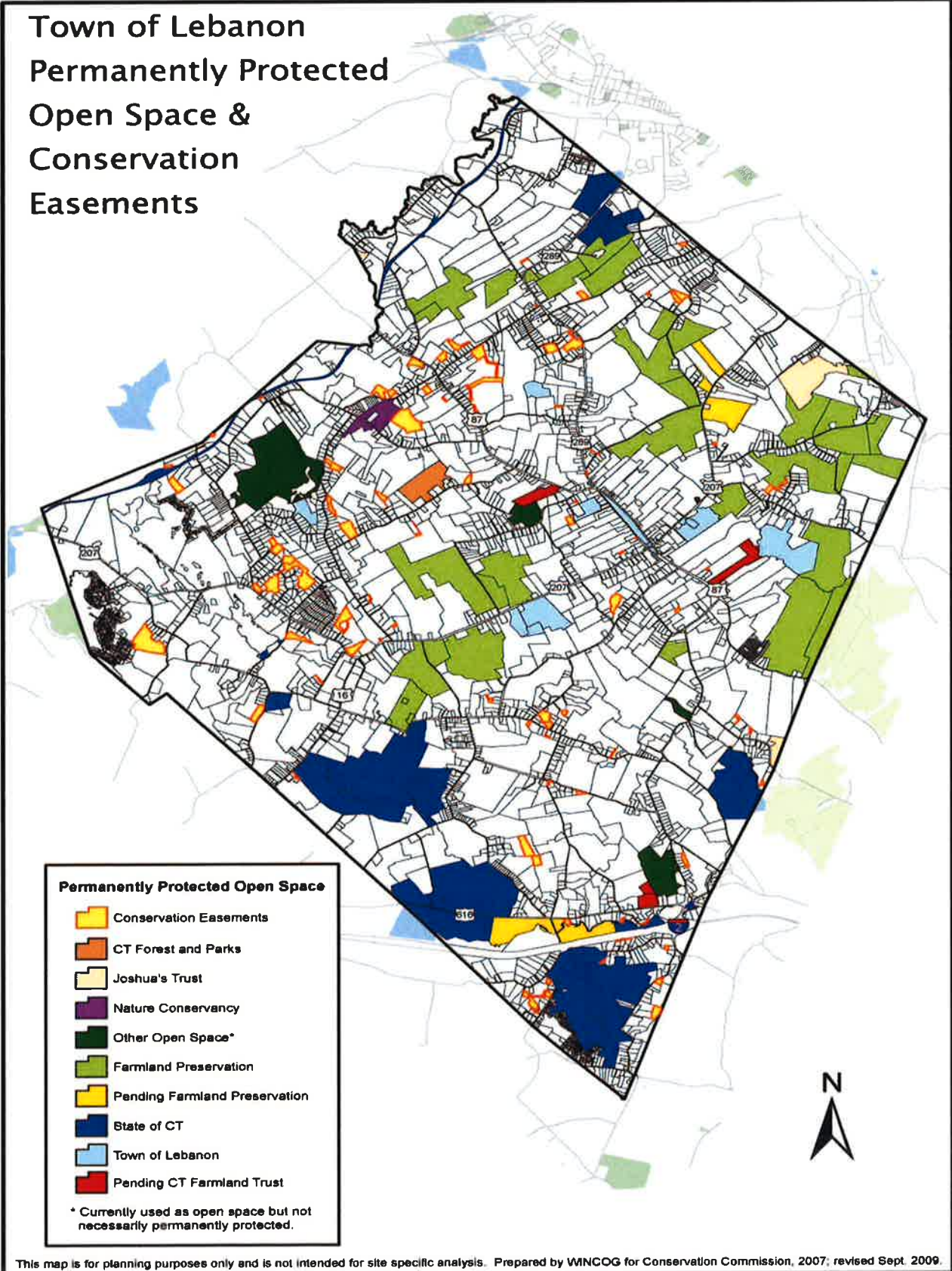
<sup>1</sup> Open Space is defined in Lebanon's Zoning Regulations as "land permanently preserved through deed or conservation restriction in its natural state and/or developed for recreational or farming use as approved by the Commission".

<sup>2</sup> Conservation Easements are a non-possessory interest in real property imposing limitations, the purposes of which include retaining or protecting natural, scenic, or open space values of real property assuring its availability for agricultural, forest, recreation, or open space use.



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

## Town of Lebanon Permanently Protected Open Space & Conservation Easements



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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Although not officially designated as open space, the Lebanon Green has been used as such by townspeople for centuries. It deserves special recognition for this as well as for its historical and cultural value to the Town. The walking path that encircles the Green is the most heavily used passive recreation facility in Town.

Since 2006, the Town has assisted landowners in successfully preserving 1,000+/- acres of land - land which otherwise could have yielded 125 homes at a one-time local cost of \$150,000+/- . In these efforts the Town has helped broker partnerships with the Department of Agriculture, USDA/NRCS, Connecticut Farmland Trust, Joshua's Tract, and Connecticut Forest and Parks Association, yielding \$2.5+/- million dollars for these effected property owners.

The Airline State Park Trail runs parallel to the Ten Mile River for much of the 7.2 miles it covers in Lebanon. The trail occupies an abandoned railroad bed and is managed by the Department of Environmental Protection. Lebanon's Rails to Trails Committee has spearheaded development of this trail and volunteers have worked to remove debris, repair and control erosion, and construct bridges for safe public use.

In addition to the Airline Trail and the Town Green, Lebanon has several other sites offering walking/hiking opportunities. In 2009, Lebanon's Conservation Commission developed a hiking trail from Route 87 to Town-owned land on Commons Hill, near Schalk Road. State-owned wildlife management areas and parks offer hiking, as well as hunting and fishing opportunities.

## **Analysis**

Given Lebanon's growth as a residential community, it must be acknowledged that subsurface penetration of pollutants on virtually any area of land in Town can potentially affect water used for drinking. While protection of open space cannot ensure groundwater quality, woodlands and properly managed agricultural lands carry the benefit that they are extremely unlikely to be sources of groundwater pollution. In addition, several high-yield aquifers in Town hold potential as future public drinking water supplies and should be considered in prioritizing open space.

The health of surface waters can be affected by wastewater discharges, hazardous material mismanagement, water diversions, dredging, polluted stormwater runoff, and wetlands alteration. Such activities may arise from residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses. The greatest threat to water quality in Lebanon is not industrial or commercial pollution, but "non-point" pollution sources. These include effluent from septic systems and contaminated stormwater runoff carrying such pollutants as fertilizers, manure, pesticides, petroleum products, and road salt and sand.

Surface water quality and ground water quality are interdependent, and proper management of both is critical. Proper management includes appropriate protection of wetlands, protection of riparian zones, avoidance of potentially polluting land uses over high yield ground water areas, and avoidance of inappropriate land uses in flood management areas.



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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Most of Lebanon's forest land is privately owned by individuals and families. As development pressures increase and the forest continues to "fragment" into smaller individual parcels interspersed with housing, the ability of the forest to provide its many benefits declines rapidly. Wildlife habitat value also diminishes rapidly as forests fragment.

State-owned parks, open space, and development rights represent the greatest quantity of protected land in Lebanon. This land, along with Town and privately owned open space land are the building blocks upon which Lebanon's future open space efforts should be concentrated.

By connecting large tracts to one another, vegetated and habitat corridors can be maintained and should be a land use priority. Often, such corridors logically run along stream belts, and their protection will overlap with wetlands protection and the riparian buffer zone recommended below.

In view of current conditions and the Town's overall planning goals, the following represent Lebanon's major challenges in protecting natural resources going forward:

1. *Potential contamination or degradation of surface and groundwater resources.*
2. *Development of environmentally sensitive areas.*
3. *Forest fragmentation and loss of wildlife habitat.*
4. *Spread of invasive and non-native species.*
5. *Maintenance of Lebanon's Open Space Fund to provide resources for land education and preservation.*

## Recommendations

The following recommendations will help guide Lebanon's natural resource protection strategies and efforts through the next decade. Responsibility for implementation is identified in *italics*.

1. The Town should preserve at least 2,000 additional acres of land over the next ten years and continue to increase its open space account to allow for matching funds/leverage for state, federal, and private-nonprofit open space and agricultural preservation grants, which require town contributions. The Town should build the open space fund to a working balance of \$500,000 either through annual budget allocation or through a revolving bond initiative. *Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting.*
2. Monitor Town-held easements and work with owners as necessary to ensure that conservation restrictions are honored. *Conservation Commission.*

## Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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3. Continue to require that those who subdivide land donate a fee-in-lieu of open space unless the open space donation will be significant in size or rates high in natural resource value. *Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
4. Continue to enlist the assistance of and partner with land trusts and conservation organizations to inform interested landowners about creative land preservation and development options. *Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Meeting.*
5. Implement Town policy to limit or eradicate invasive species by discouraging spread of invasive plants through road and landscape maintenance and dumping of fill and, when possible, involve Town personnel to eradicate invasives on road right-of-ways and Town property. *Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
6. Protect and improve the quality of all surface waters, wetlands, and groundwater in Lebanon. Since the Town relies almost solely on groundwater for its water supply, the quality of groundwater in Lebanon should be protected. Privately owned wetlands and undeveloped land abutting ponds, streams, and wetlands should receive high priority in open space protection. *Inland Wetlands Commission, Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
7. Maintain overall development densities at or below existing levels. Limit development in lake areas to a density that will ensure water quality is protected, whether sewers are introduced or not. *Planning and Zoning Commission.*
8. Require riparian buffer zones to protect all surface waters by regulating activity within the buffer so as to discourage and prevent any activity -- except legitimate forest, wildlife or agricultural management activities -- that involve soil disturbance. Such activity should be permitted only if no "prudent or feasible" alternatives exist. The aim should be to protect existing vegetation as well as the banks or body of the water resource. Adopt procedures in the permitting process to encourage and assist in establishing streamside vegetation where it is absent. Adopt a 150-foot riparian buffer or regulated protection zone around streams and rivers. *Inland Wetland Commission, Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
9. Prepare a vernal pool inventory map using aerial photographs and ground sampling, and incorporate vernal pool protection into the development and subdivision review regulations. *Conservation Commission, Inland Wetland Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
10. Ensure that stormwater management practices in new development protect the quality and availability of surface and groundwater; and, require that any development results in no net increase in stormwater discharge at the lot line. Ensure that stormwater discharges are managed so that they will not degrade receiving waters by siltation, point-source pollution, or other contamination. For all land uses, place limits on amounts of impervious cover so as to protect water quality. Incorporate DEP's 2002 Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control and 2004 Stormwater Quality Manual into Zoning Regulations. *Inland Wetlands Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*

## Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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11. Develop and aggressively pursue a town-wide sewer avoidance program to include septic system education. Sewers should be introduced within Lebanon only to solve an existing, critical wastewater disposal problem within a limited area, and not as an inducement to development. The pending sewer development around Amston Lake should be strictly limited to the identified problem area. *Board of Selectmen, Water Pollution Control Authority, Health Department.*

12. Utilize the State Environmental Review Team and Conservation Commission for town development projects or private development that could affect environmentally sensitive areas. *Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*

13. Require curbing only to manage stormwater, and in such cases use “cape-cod” style. *Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen/Public Works.*

## **Section 6: Historical and Cultural Resources**

*GOAL: To preserve, promote and recognize Lebanon's historical and cultural resources, including the Lebanon Green and its surrounding environment.*

Lebanon is steeped in historical and cultural resources all of which significantly contribute to the Town's rich heritage. Home to Connecticut's largest Town Green, historically significant buildings and sites, and the greatest abundance of farmland, Lebanon has established itself as a unique historical and rural agricultural community.

### **Existing Conditions**

Lebanon contains many historic neighborhoods and sites all of which contribute to the Town's rural character. The Goshen, Exeter, Liberty Hill and Village Hill areas were once strong neighborhoods with their own schools, churches, mills, stores, cemeteries and settlement patterns. Although these neighborhoods have changed over time, many of the aesthetic characteristics that made these areas special remain true today and merit continued recognition and protection. (See "Historical and Cultural Resources Map" on following page.)

### *Lebanon Green*

The heart of the community remains the Lebanon Green in the town center. The Green distinguishes Lebanon from all other communities in the State, and from all other picturesque towns and villages in New England. A mile in length and with a major portion still in agricultural use, Lebanon Green is unique because of its size, its preservation as an example of early town settlement, and its association with great events in the American Revolution.

From the time of the first settlement period in the 1690's, the Green has developed as a public place. It was early chosen as the site of the first meeting house and used as a place for militia training, public assembly, a private school, commercial fairs, pasture and grazing, stores and other communal activities. With the growth of the Town, public buildings (town hall, schools, library, community and senior centers) and recreational areas were also located on the Green.

Unlike Town Greens in most New England villages, transfer of title to the Town has never taken place because of complexities of determining shared ownership of the Green by many thousands of descendants of original owners and assigns. Because of the traditional public uses of the Green, the Town has maintained supervision and liability for the entire Green while the custom of abutting property owners to hay on the Green still continues. These civic and farming activities have co-existed on the Green through the 300+ year history of the Town of Lebanon and have preserved the Green as a vast open space for public use.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MAP NUMBER KEY

### Individual Historic Sites

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Lebanon Green                    | 9. Dr. William Beaumont Birthplace |
| 2. Governor Trumbull House          | 10. Second Buckingham House        |
| 3. The War Office                   | 11. Clark Homestead                |
| 4. William Williams House           | 12. Yantic River Dam               |
| 5. Jonathan Trumbull Jr. House      | 13. Bridge over Ten Mile River     |
| 6. "Redwood" – David Trumbull House | 14. Town Pound                     |
| 7. The Welles House                 | 15. Five Mile Rock                 |
| 8. Wadsworth Stable                 |                                    |

### Historic Neighborhoods and Churches

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 16. Town Green and First Congregational Church | 18. Liberty Hill |
| 17. Randall and Sisson Roads, Goshen Hill Area | 19. Village Hill |

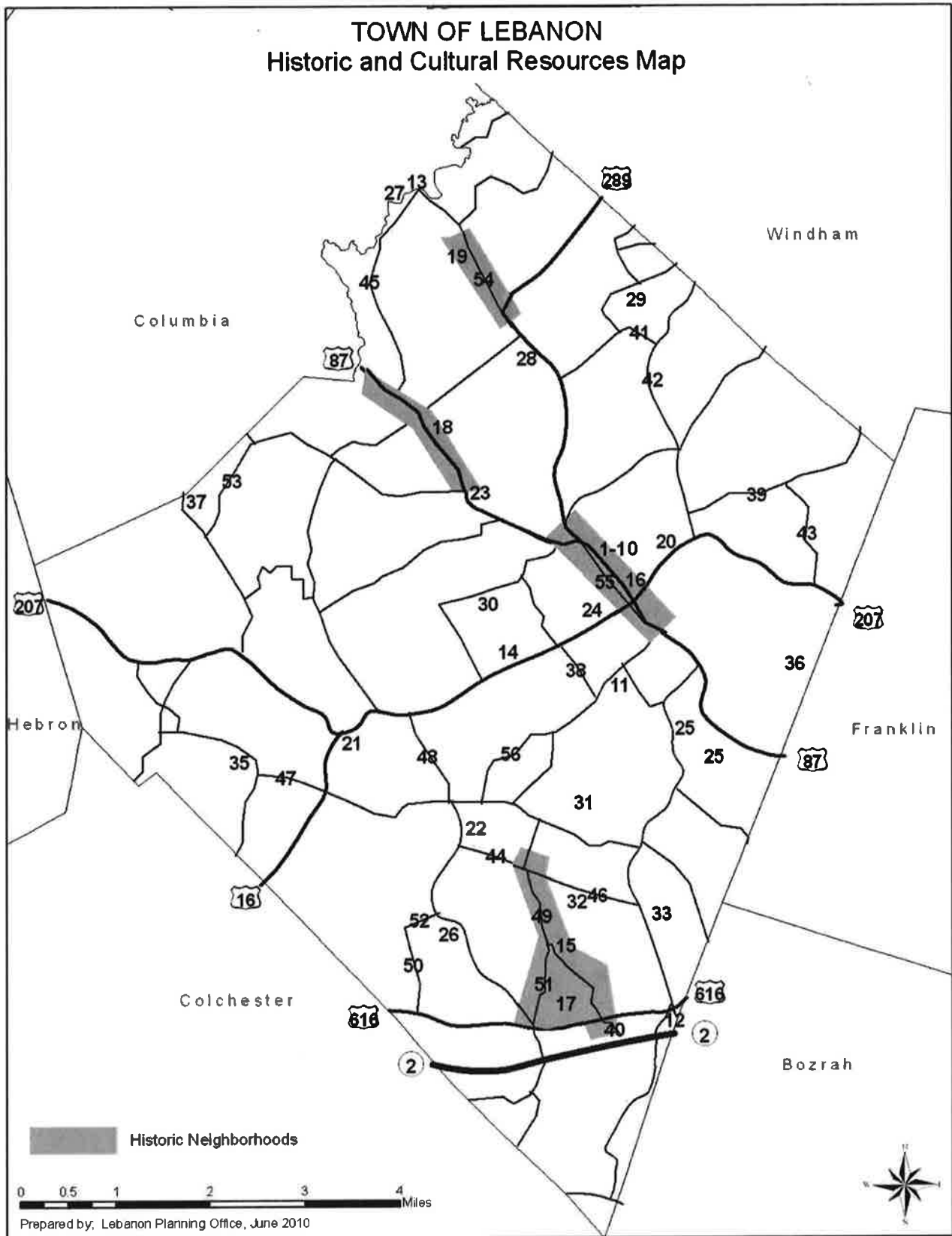
### Cemeteries

- |                                  |                       |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 20. Trumbull (Colonial) Cemetery | 29. Greenman-Card     |
| 21. Exeter (Colonial) Cemetery   | 30. Loomis            |
| 22. Goshen (Colonial) Cemetery   | 31. Bliss             |
| 23. Liberty Hill                 | 32. Mackall           |
| 24. Center                       | 33. Fowler            |
| 25. New Lebanon                  | 34. Young (Unlocated) |
| 26. Geer                         | 35. Webster           |
| 27. Scovell-Buckingham           | 36. Powers            |
| 28. Segar                        | 37. Woodworth         |

### Scenic Roads

- |                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 38. Smith Road                       | 47. Goshen Hill Road Ext. (Proposed) |
| 39. Babcock Hill Road (Proposed)     | 48. North Street (Proposed)          |
| 40. Barstow Road (Proposed)          | 49. Randall Road (Proposed)          |
| 41. Bender Road Extension (Proposed) | 50. Roger Foote Road (Proposed)      |
| 42. Bogg Lane (Proposed)             | 51. Sisson Road (Proposed)           |
| 43. Briggs Road (Proposed)           | 52. Taylor Bridge Road (Proposed)    |
| 44. Church Road (Proposed)           | 53. Tobacco Street Ext. (Proposed)   |
| 45. Cook Hill Road (Proposed)        | 54. Village Hill Road (Proposed)     |
| 46. Fowler Road (Proposed)           | 55. West Town Street (Proposed)      |
|                                      | 56. York Road (Proposed)             |

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development





## Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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The agricultural use of Lebanon Green and the working farms adjacent to it are a prime component of the nature of the open space in the area. Preservation of these farming activities benefits the Town by maintaining the agricultural heritage and open space ambience of the Green and the land-based food and dairy farming that continues to be a vital part of Lebanon's economy.

Around the Green are some of the most important buildings connected with Connecticut's role in the American Revolution when Lebanon was the home of the war governor and the focal point of the State's contribution to the patriot cause. It is these activities that earned Lebanon its place in history as "the heartbeat of the Revolution". Because of the significance of the Green and the number of buildings associated with figures prominent in state and national history, the Lebanon Green was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

*It is therefore the policy of the Town of Lebanon to conserve the Green and its surrounding environs as a unique component of the Town's culture and character and as a resource that sets Lebanon apart from any other.*

### *Village Center/Green*

Preservation of the historic assets of the village center should be the central theme of any economic development within the District. At present, a small area around the Village Center/Green is zoned as the Village Rural Agricultural District (VRA).

The VRA has much open space, agricultural lands, sweeping vistas, a large number of historically significant private homes and museum sites, and at its southern end the Town Hall, Community Center and Green Store. However, the Zoning Regulations provide little protection for the historic assets and open spaces that make the district and indeed the Town unique. Without meaningful design review requirements to ensure that infill structures do not detract from the character of the area, Lebanon's major historical and cultural feature is in jeopardy.

Few if any complementary businesses exist which assist in promoting Lebanon's heritage tourism. Restaurants, public restrooms, safe pedestrian circulation and parking are all necessary to increase visitation, which in turn helps financially support museums and businesses. In addition to creating design review requirements, the Town should allow non-owner-occupied uses in the Village Center which are necessary to promote businesses to enhance the services provided those who frequent Lebanon's museum and historic sites.

In 2000, a Town Center Parking Lot Study Committee was formed to consider parking needs for the Town Hall, Library and Congregational Church. A redesigned parking lot was implemented at the Town Hall in 2007. State funding to construct a parking lot at the Alden Tavern site adjacent to the Community Center and Historical Society Museum was secured in 2009 and construction was completed in 2010. This parking area will serve as a linking force for several venues on the Green. A crosswalk linking this property to the Community Center and Historical Society Museum to the Green, Library and other museums will also be needed.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## Recommendations

A. Regulatory Responsibility. The following recommendations are regulatory in nature. Implementation responsibility is identified in italics.

1. Design Review. Rezone a portion of the Village Rural Agricultural (VRA) Residence District to the Town Center Village (TCV) District permitted under CGS 8-2j. This area could include the current VRA Zone south and east of Route 207 (Exeter Road). The purpose of the TCV Zone should be to allow for integrated residential and business development which meets the service needs of the town and promote ancillary businesses and services for heritage tourism while preserving the rural and historic character of the District. This would allow for non-owner-occupied business such as the "Green Store" to become conforming uses. *Planning and Zoning Commission*
2. Scenic Roads. Certain roads should be preserved in order to maintain a visible component of Lebanon's scenic and rural character. Consider adoption of the following roads under the Town's Scenic Road Ordinance: Church Road, Barstow Road, Bender Road Extension, Bogg Lane, Briggs Road, Roger Foote Road, Taylor Bridge Road, Tobacco Street Extension, Goshen Hill Road Extension, Fowler Road, Sisson Road, Randall Road, North Street, Village Hill Road, Cook Hill Road, West Town Street and York Road. *Conservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission*
3. Demolition Delay Ordinance. A demolition delay ordinance (typically 90 days) should be enacted that provides the Town and/or other interested parties time to negotiate with property owners to find a means to preserve a building that is listed on a local historical resources inventory or that meets the criteria for eligibility for listing on the State Register of Historic Places. *Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting*
4. Financial Incentives for Rehabilitation. A program to defer, through phase in, the full cost of increased property assessments and taxes arising from rehabilitation of historically significant buildings should be implemented. The basis for these properties should be the 1978 Historic Resources Survey prepared by the Connecticut Historical Commission. Flexibility in code compliance in the case of historic buildings should be followed under the State Building Code. *Building Official, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting*

B. Non-Regulatory. The following recommendations are administrative in nature. Implementation responsibility is identified in italics.

1. Conservation Easements and Agricultural Preservation. Continue to support and encourage property owners interested in land preservation, including funding the Town's Open Space Account through annual appropriations and/or through bonding. *Town Planner, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Town Meeting*

## Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

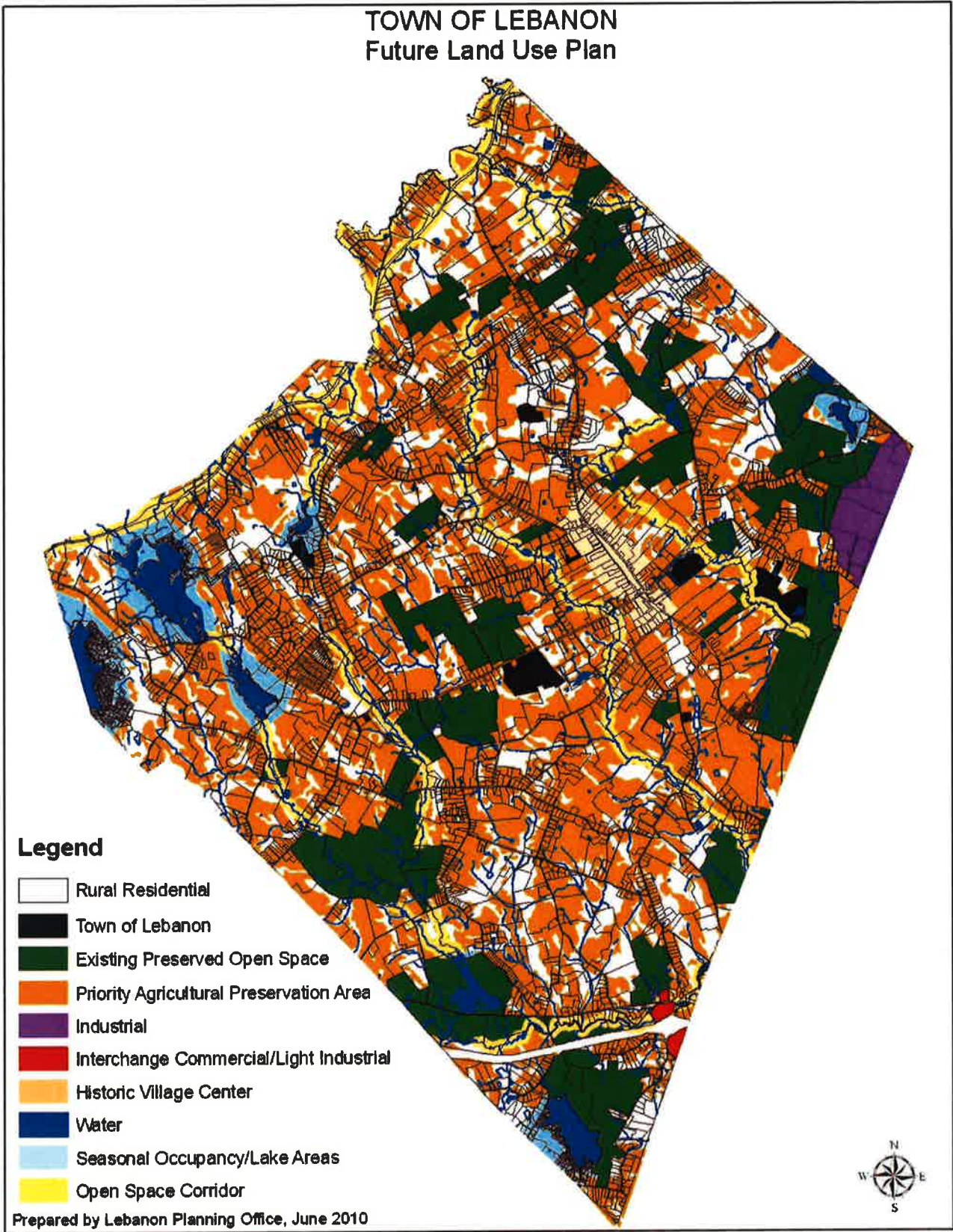
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2. **Walking Paths.** Walking paths connecting to the Green, public buildings and businesses should be installed throughout the village center. Connect or loop the walking path around the Town Green in the vicinity of the Library and incorporate an east/west crosswalk to link the Historical Society Museum and Alden Tavern Parking Lot with the Town Green, Library and other museums. Posts or bollards may be useful in visually slowing traffic and enhancing pedestrian safety. Special attention should be made to materials used. *Board of Selectmen*
3. **Street Furniture, Signage and Lighting.** A coordinated plan should be developed for benches, interpretative signage and lighting in the VRA and TCV districts. Public knowledge of the history of the Green is essential to all preservation efforts. At a minimum, signs should be erected at the entrances to the National Register District and an appropriate plaque on the historical use of the Green placed at the walkway entrance near the Library. Exterior lighting should be of a design and intensity that harmonizes with existing uses. *Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission*
4. **Web Site.** Utilize Town web site “VISITOR” section to include a list of and link to museums, historic sites, annual events, etc. Prepare and include a town map that locates these features. *Economic Development Commission*
5. **Economic Development Commission.** Maintain Economic Development Commission focus on promoting heritage tourism and agriculture. *Economic Development Commission, Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission*

## **Section 7: Future Land Use Plan**

The Future Land Use Plan is a graphical representation of Lebanon's *2010 Plan of Conservation and Development* recommendations. As with the 2000 POCD, the current plan focus is to maintain Lebanon's rural agricultural character while accommodating growth.

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development



## **Section 8: Implementation**

As Lebanon's 2010 blueprint for development for the coming decade the *Plan of Conservation and Development* will be judged both on how it accurately grasped the pulse of the Town in 2010 and how well its recommendations are implemented by town agencies through 2020. Each of the recommendations made in the plan sections are illustrated on the following tables by subject and assigned town agency responsibility.

Lebanon's Plan of Conservation and Development was compared with WINCOG's Regional Land Use Plan and the 2005-2010 State Plan of Conservation and Development Locational Guide Map for Lebanon and was found to be consistent with both.



# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## HOUSING AND POPULATION Implementation Table

Item	Action	Agency Responsibility		
		PZC	BOS	TM
Affordable Housing	Establish inclusionary zoning so that at least 10% of proposed units or lots are affordable as defined by CGS Sec. 8-30g.	X		
Age-Restricted or Active-Adult Housing	Establish regulations to allow and encourage age-restricted or active-adult housing.	X		
Density	Maintain 2-acre zoning density for single-family dwellings and mandatory cluster developments, and allow 2-family dwellings on 4 acres.	X		
Lake Housing	Maintain existing mix of seasonal and year-round housing in Lake Zones.	X		
Passive Solar Design	Require developers to consider passive solar techniques when laying out new roads and homes.	X		
Senior Housing	Acquire land to encourage the private development of senior housing.	X	X	X

**PZC = Planning and Zoning Commission**

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# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES Implementation Table

Item	Action	Agency Responsibility					
		PZC	BOS	BOF	TM	CC	PRC
Active Recreation	Implement Tyler Field, Aspinall Recreation renovation, and West Town Street field construction projects. Hire full-time Recreation Coordinator.		X	X	X		X
Cemetery	Provide additional cemetery land.	X	X	X	X		
Community Center	Accommodate overflow municipal offices at lower level and/or attic space if needed.		X				
Form of Town Government	Establish Charter Study Committee.		X		X		
Library	Construct addition to existing facility and increase library hours.		X	X	X		
Public Works Facility	Construct new DPW facility and redvelop site. Provide satellite sand/salt shed facilities.	X	X		X		
Scenic Roads	Designate as Scenic Roads: Bogg Lane; North and West Town Streets; Bender Road, Goshen Hill Road and Tobacco Street Extensions; and, Babcock Hill, Barstow, Briggs, Church, Cook Hill, Fowler, Randall, Roger Foote, Sission, Taylor Bridge and Village Hill R	X				X	
Senior Center	Complete driveway loop to Dr. Manning Drive, and allow use of Center by other organizations.		X				
Town Hall	Relocate Recreation Department to Community or Senior Center should Town Hall space needs issues warrant.		X				
Volunteer Fire Services	Acquire land for future substation(s) and hire full-time staff to man stationhouse during day.	X	X	X	X		

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**TM = Town Meeting**  
**PRC = Parks and Recreation Commission**

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

## AGRICULTURE Implementation Table

Item	Action	Agency Responsibility							
		PZC	BOS	BOF	TM	CC	EDC	BOE	IWC
Promote and Preserve Lebanon's Agricultural Businesses and Land	Continue to utilize town funds, State and Federal grants, land trusts and other sources to preserve farmland and promote agriculture. Continue to support agricultural businesses and Farmers' Market.	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Agricultural Committee	Establish standing Agricultural Committee under auspices of Economic Development Commission to assist Town in promoting agriculture and reviewing existing and proposed ordinances and land use regulations.						X		
Agricultural Study, Education and Outreach	Continue to study and educate the public to benefits of agriculture; assist farmers interested in preservation and growing their business; and, provide agricultural and nutritional education curricula at all grade levels.	X				X	X	X	
Agricultural Zoning	Continue to zone preserved farmland "Agriculture".	X							
Earth Removal	Adopt earth removal regulations that assure prime and important farmland soil are permanently preserved.	X							
Farm Building Tax Exemption	Adopt a \$100,000 farm building tax exemption for buildings used exclusively in farming.		X		X				
Farm Property Tax Abatement	Adopt up to 50% property tax abatement for certain types of farms.		X		X				
Farmland Preservation	Pass bond referendum to provide multi-year funding for farmland and open space preservation, and consider linking referendum with other capital expenditure recommendations.		X		X				
Farm-To-School Program	Expand Lebanon's participation in Farm-To-School Program and promoting healthy eating.							X	
Town Land Leasing	Continue to lease town-owned land for farming.		X						
Town Ordinances, Regulations, Policies and Actions	Assure that all Town ordinance, regulations, policies and actions support continuation of agricultural uses.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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**EDC = Economic Development Commission**  
**BOE = Board of Education**  
**IWC = Inland Wetlands Commission**

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Implementation Table

Item	Action	Agency Responsibility			
		PZC	BOS	TM	EDC
Agricultural Zoning	Rezone properties that have been permanently protected for agriculture.	X			
Agriculture Committee	Establish standing Agricultural Committee under auspices of Economic Development Commission.				X
Home Occupations	Continue to support growth of home occupations.	X			
Norwich Avenue Business Zone	Rezone portion of Business District on Norwich Avenue to Agriculture and Rural Agricultural Residence to reflect existing uses.	X			
Norwich Avenue Light Industry Zone	Rezone westerly portion of Light Industry District on Norwich Avenue to Rural Agricultural Residence to reflect existing uses.	X			
Planned Business Development	Rezone to allow business development master plan proposals that meet Lebanon's physical, social, economic and environmental needs.	X			
Tax Abatement for Businesses	Consider adoption of tax abatement ordinance to provide tax incentives for new or expanded businesses.		X	X	X
Town Center Zoning	Rezone portion of Village Rural Agricultural (VRA) Residence District to Town Center Village (TCV) District to allow non-owner-occupied business and services with architectural design review controls.	X			

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**TM = Town Meeting**

# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

## NATURAL RESOURCES Implementation Table

Item	Action	Agency Responsibility					
		PZC	BOS	BOF	TM	CC	IWC
Conservation Easements	Monitor town-held easements and work with property owners to ensure conservation restrictions are honored.					X	
Density	Maintain overall development densities at or below existing levels. Limit development in lake areas to ensure water quality is protected.	X				X	X
Groundwater Protection	Protect and improve quality of all surface waters, wetlands and groundwater.	X	X			X	X
Invasive Species	Implement town policy to limit or eradicate invasive species.	X	X			X	
Land Preservation	Preserve an additional 2,000 acres of land over 10-year planning period.	X	X	X	X	X	
Riparian Buffer Zones	Protect surface water by regulating activity within buffer and adopt a 150-foot regulated protection zone around streams and rivers.	X				X	X
Sewer Avoidance Program	Develop and implement town-wide sewer avoidance program to include septic system education.		X				X
State Environmental Review Team and Conservation Commission	Utilize Environmental Review Team and Conservation Commission for proposed environmentally sensitive development projects.	X	X			X	
Stormwater Protection	Limit impervious surface coverage; require that new development results in no net increase in stormwater discharge at lot line; and, incorporate DEP's 2002 Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control and 2004 Stormwater Quality Manual into Zonin	X					X
Subdivision Regulations	Continue to require donation of fee-in-lieu of open space and/or open space of significant value.	X				X	
Vernal Pools	Prepare vernal pool inventory and protection into the development and subdivision review process.	X				X	X

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# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES Implementation Table

Item	Action	Agency Responsibility					
		PZC	BOS	BOF	TM	CC	EDC
Architectural Design Regulations	Rezone southerly portion of Village Rural Agricultural Residence District to Town Center Village District to allow non-owner-occupied businesses and services with strict architectural design review controls.	X					
Conservation Easements	Continue to support and encourage property owners interested in land preservation, including funding the Town's Open Space Account.	X	X	X	X	X	
Demolition Delay Ordinance	Enact demolition-delay ordinance for buildings listed on local historical resources inventory or that meet criteria for eligibility for listing on State Register of Historic Places.		X		X		
Heritage Tourism	Focus economic development activities on promoting heritage tourism in and around the Town Green, and utilization of Town web site.	X	X			X	X
Lebanon Green	Prepare and implement a coordinated plan to develop walking paths, street furniture, signage and lighting.	X	X				X
Rehabilitation Incentives	Establish program to defer full cost of increased property assessments and taxes arising from rehabilitation of historically significant buildings.		X	X	X		
Scenic Roads	Designate as Scenic Roads: Bogg Lane; North and West Town Streets; Bender Road, Goshen Hill Road and Tobacco Street Extensions; and, Babcock Hill, Barstow, Briggs, Church, Cook Hill, Fowler, Randall, Roger Foote, Sission, Taylor Bridge and Village Hill R	X				X	

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# Town of Lebanon 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

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## Plan Resources

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*Amston Lake Build Out and Fiscal Analysis*, 2010  
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*Active Recreation Needs Analysis*, Recreation Commission, 2008  
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Cemetery Commission  
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*Draft Natural Resources and Open Space Plan*, Conservation Commission, 2007  
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*Value of Agriculture Study*, 2010, Paula Stahl, LLA, ASLA, AICP  
*Zoning Regulations and Map*, Planning and Zoning Commission, 2010
- United States of America:  
Census Bureau, Town of Lebanon, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000  
Department of Agriculture, Census of Agriculture, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007  
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- Windham Region Council of Governments, *Region Land Use Plan*, 2010