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### APPENDIX

Town Government Organizational Flowchart

### Planning and Zoning Commission

James Jahoda, Chair  
Robin Chesmer, Secretary  
Thomas Benoit  
Wayne Budney  
Keith LaPorte  
Francis Malozzi  
Thomas Meyer  
Julie Chalifoux, Alternate  
Allyn Miller, Alternate  
Ethan Stearns, Alternate

### Town Planner

Philip Chester, AICP

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Connecticut General Statute (CGS) Sec. 8-23 requires each municipality to complete a Plan of Conservation and Development (“POCD” or “Town Plan”) every 10 years in order to be eligible for discretionary State funds. Preparation of the POCD is delegated to a community’s Planning and Zoning Commission. Lebanon’s Planning and Zoning Commission has prepared a Town Plan four (4) times since its inception in 1961. The town’s first POCD was written in 1970, then in 2000, 2010, and now in 2020.

The 2020 POCD is the Town of Lebanon’s master plan or blueprint for future public and private conservation and development efforts for the 2021-2030 planning period. The 2020 Town Plan identifies land use and municipal service trends and sets goals and recommendations for conservation and development. CGS Sec. 8-23e(1) specifies that the “plan of conservation and development is a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality”. Therefore, the goals and recommendations in the POCD are the policies of the town, and all town Boards and Commissions are expected to read and follow the Plan.

In 2019, the Planning and Zoning Commission began the process of writing the 2020 POCD. It established Subcommittee’s made up of town commissions to draft various sections of the Plan; interviewed town employees and departments; conducted a statistically valid resident survey conducted by Siena College Research Institute; prepared a cost-of-community services study conducted by Stahl & Associates; engaged experts in the fields of agriculture, finance, and planning in order to more fully understand current and future issues facing the town; *[and will hold a public hearing to gain additional resident input]*. The result is a Town Plan that identifies specific goals and action items to help maintain, strengthen, and sustain Lebanon’s desirable small town, historic, and agricultural rural character.

This POCD, like the 2010 POCD, was adopted at a turning point in the State and U.S. economy. 2000-2007 saw a large economic expansion with a record building boom, lax mortgage practices, a housing bubble, low unemployment, and a bullish stock market. By 2007 the U.S. saw a dramatic downturn in each of these areas which led to the “Great Recession” from which Lebanon and Connecticut had not completely recovered by the winter of 2020 when the COVID-19 global pandemic struck.

As of September 2020, Connecticut has lost over 4,500 citizens to COVID-19 associated deaths, with over 56,000 cases reported. Residents have experienced high unemployment due to government mandated business shutdowns and stay-at-home orders, and in-school learning for many children and college students is in flux. The result has been emotional hardship and anxiety, health concerns, and economic uncertainty for many.

The specific goals in Lebanon's 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development are to:

- Preserve, promote, and enhance Lebanon's historical and agricultural roots;
- Strengthen the quality and diversity of Lebanon's housing stock by increasing opportunities for multi and senior housing for Millennials, Generation Z, and seniors to create a sustainable population mix of age and income groups;
- Market the town as the historically significant, education rich, affordable, safe, agricultural friendly, and abundant in natural resource community that it is;
- Encourage agricultural land use by promoting agriculture-based economic development opportunities and farmland preservation;
- Provide and fund community facilities and services necessary to meet current and future resident needs;
- Promote heritage tourism through identification and advertisement of available resources and attractions and by increasing visitor accommodations and services;
- Provide for permanent protection of open space tracts and corridors, giving priority to those that are most important to the community and hold important natural resources;
- Promote integrated business and residential development in the Town Center to meet the needs of residents;
- Promote commercial, industrial, and medium-density residential development in designated areas; and
- Encourage business and housing development proposals that meet the physical, social, economic, and environmental needs of the community, including rezoning when warranted.

As required by CGS, Lebanon's 2020 POCD was compared with the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments 2017 Regional Land Use Plan and the State of Connecticut's 2018-2023 Conservation and Development Policies Plan and found to be consistent with both documents.

**All Town Agencies, Boards, Commissions, and Staff are expected to read and follow Lebanon's Plan of Conservation and Development.**

*Lebanon should continuously strive to preserve, promote, and enhance its historical and agricultural roots.*

## I. TOWN HISTORY

The Town of Lebanon is steeped in history, agriculture, open space, and a diversity of natural landscapes. Lebanon's history is intrinsically connected to the American Revolution as well as the families, residents, governors, and farmsteads that have called Lebanon home for over 320 years. The town was incorporated by the General Assembly of the Connecticut Colony on October 10, 1700 and included what is now Columbia, CT until 1804 when the Town of Columbia was incorporated. Comprising 55.2 square miles (35,328 acres), Lebanon is one of the largest towns geographically in the State and contains the greatest amount of active and preserved farmland.



### Lebanon Green

In addition to over 18,000 acres of farm and forest land dispersed throughout Lebanon, which represents half of the town's landscape, the town's most prominent physical feature is Lebanon Green which spans a mile in length and contains 27 acres – making it the largest town green in Connecticut and one of the largest in the nation. Lebanon Green is used for agriculture (hay), passive recreation (walking trail and ice skating), municipal buildings (town hall and library), and for community events such as the Christmas tree lighting, dance fest, outdoor movies, concerts, and antique show. The Green has remained the civic and cultural center of town since Lebanon's inception.

Surrounding Lebanon Green are historically significant sites and some of the most important buildings connected with Connecticut's role in the American Revolution when Lebanon was home of "war governor" Johnathan Trumbull and the focal point of the State's contribution as "the heartbeat of the Revolution". Because of the significance of Lebanon Green and the number of state and national historic buildings and sites, the Green was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.





## LEBANON GREEN

Lebanon Green is unique because of its large size (27 acres), its association with the American Revolution, and its unspoiled example as an early town settlement. The continued agricultural use of the Green and working farms adjacent to it are important examples of the historical nature of open spaces in Lebanon. Preservation of these farming activities benefit the town by maintaining the agricultural heritage and open space of the Green and land-based farming that continues to be a vital part of the town's economy.

Realizing the historic, civic, and scenic value of the Green, in 2013 the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted Village District Zoning that includes design review guidelines to help assure that infill development will not detract from the unique character of Lebanon's most unique and historic asset. Village District regulations permit limited business development around the Green, including opportunities for redevelopment of historic homes into businesses around Town Hall. The town is in the process of expanding Jonathan Trumbull Library and parking on the Green to promote expanded visitation of this historic resource.

#### Lebanon's Connecticut Governors

During the first hundred years of our nation, Lebanon had five (5) residents or natives in the position of Governor of the State of Connecticut.

- Jonathan Trumbull served as governor from 1769-1784 -- first under British colonial rule and then as the first Governor of the State of Connecticut. He was the only British colonial governor to support the war effort and side with rebel forces against the British. As Commander in Chief of Connecticut's state militia and small navy, he was responsible for provisioning and arming these forces as well as providing provisions to General George Washington's Continental Army. He convened a Council of Safety to manage the affairs of the Continental Army. They met over 500 times in his home and "war" office located on Lebanon Green - both of which are now museums and open to the public.



Gov. Jonathan Trumbull



Jonathan Trumbull House  
(owned by DAR)



Trumbull War Office  
(owned by SAR)



- Jonathan Trumbull Jr. was the son of Connecticut's Revolutionary War Governor Trumbull. He served as a Lebanon Selectman and member of Connecticut's General Assembly before becoming military secretary to General George Washington during the war. After the war he served as Connecticut's Speaker of the House of Representatives and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives serving in the first, second (as Speaker), and third congress. He became a U.S. Senator before becoming the fifth (and longest serving) State Governor from 1797-1809 -- dying in office.



Governor Jonathan Trumbull Junior



Gov. Trumbull Jr. House Museum (owned by Lebanon Historical Society)

- Joseph Trumbull was grandson of Connecticut's Revolutionary War Governor Trumbull and grew up on Lebanon Green in Redwood House. He served in Connecticut's House of Representatives and in the U.S. Congress before becoming State Governor from 1849-50, succeeding Lebanon-native Clark Bissell.



Joseph Trumbull



Redwood House (Private home/Lebanon Green Vineyards)

- William Buckingham was a Lebanon native who grew up on Lebanon Green. He served as Norwich mayor before becoming Connecticut's "Civil War" Governor from 1858-66.

### Hugh (and Mary) Trumbull Adams

Hugh Trumbull Adams never lived in Lebanon or Connecticut but chose to carry on the philanthropic legacy begun by his mother Mary Trumbull Adams who helped fund the rebuilding of Lebanon's First Congregational Church following the 1938 hurricane. The Church was designed by John Trumbull in 1804 who also painted revolutionary war images that are displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.

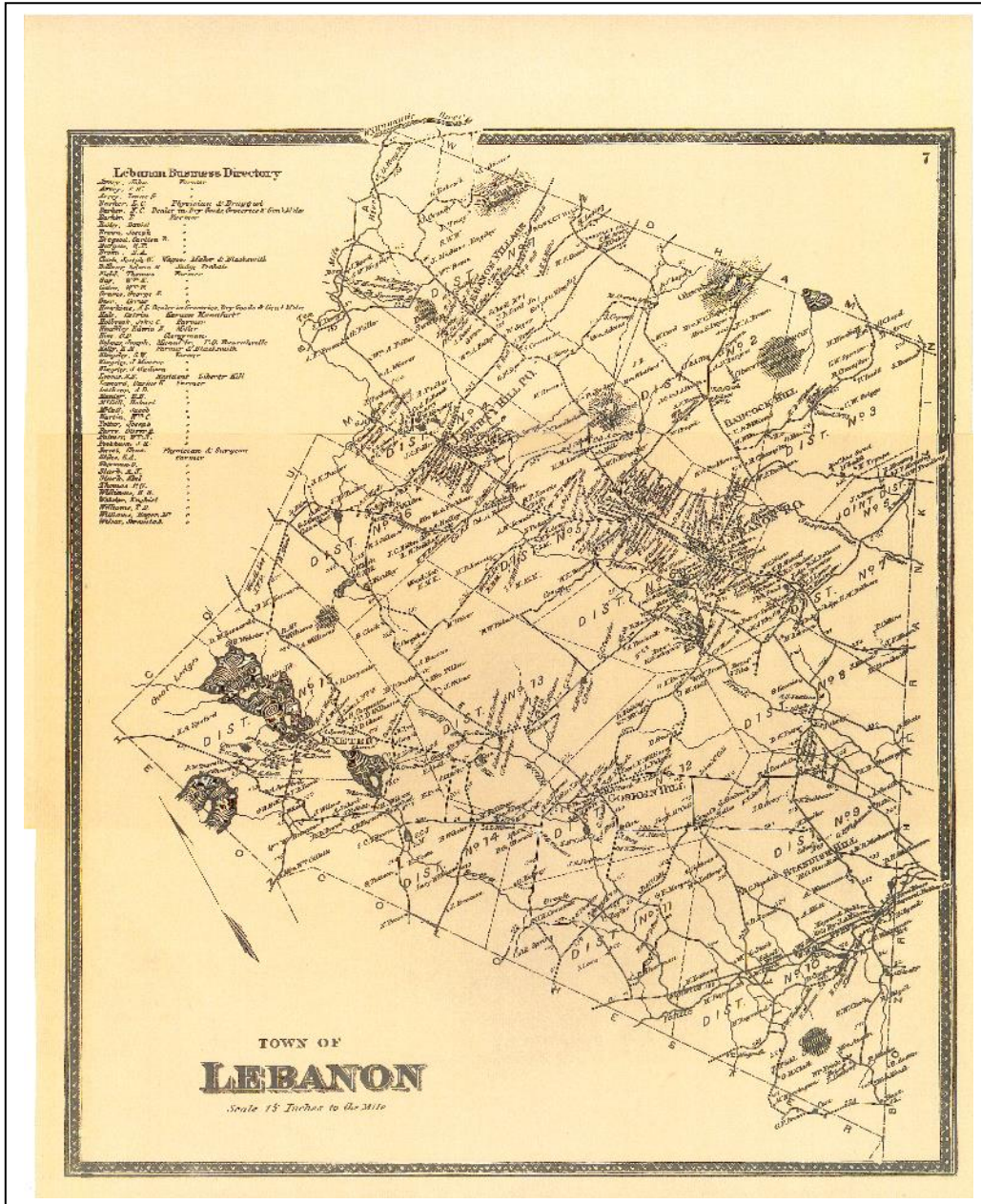
Realizing the important role the Trumbull family played in the history of Lebanon and the founding of our nation, beginning in the 1960s, Mr. Adams donated millions to help construct the Jonathan Trumbull Library, Town Hall, Community Center and Pool, Historical Society Museum, and Senior Center. He left endowments to help maintain some of these facilities and further preserve the Green.



Lebanon First Congregational Church

Lebanon's Historic Byways

Multiple historic byways traverse the Town of Lebanon, including 15-miles of dirt or unimproved roads – many of which date back to the 1700's. These unimproved roads are examples of the historic nature of travel and glimpses into the breadth of the town's natural and agricultural resources. Beaumont Highway, Exeter Road, Norwich Avenue, and Trumbull Highway are the main historic thoroughfares which showcase many of the town's stellar historic homes and farms. Many of the roads shown on the 1868 map below are recommended to be designated as *scenic roads*. These road are listed on page 24.



*In addition to preserving its historical assets, Lebanon is New England's leader in farmland preservation with over 5,600 acres preserved.*



*Strengthen the quality and diversity of Lebanon’s housing stock by providing housing opportunities for Millennials, Gen. Z, and seniors.*

## II. POPULATION AND HOUSING in Lebanon

### Population

Lebanon contains roughly 7,165 year-round residents plus and additional 1,000+/- seasonal residents who occupy the 250 seasonal homes at Amston Lake, Red Cedar Lake, and Lake Williams and 150 campsites on Lake Williams. Lebanon’s 2020 population is projected to have dropped by 145 people since 2010, which is in stark contrast to the population growth experienced by the town between 1960-2010 when the population grew on average of 975 people per decade.

#### Population and Housing Stock 1960 – 2020

*Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and UCONN State Data Center*

Year	Population	Population Change by Decade	Population Percent Change	Median Age	Total Housing Units	Housing Percent Change	Average Household Size in Persons
1960	2,434	780	47.2%	28.8	-	-	3.6
1970	3,804	1,370	56.3%	-	1,269	-	3.4
1980	4,762	958	25.2%	-	1,907	50.3%	3.1
1990	6,041	1,279	26.9%	33.8	2,422	27.0%	2.9
2000	6,907	866	14.3%	37.4	2,811	16.1%	2.8
2010	7,308	401	5.8%	42.7	3,125	11.2%	2.7
2020 est.	7,163	-145	-2.0%	46.2	3,195	0.2%	2.5
2030 est.	6,808	-355	-5.0%	-	-	-	-
2040 est.	6,317	-491	-7.2%	-	-	-	-

Lebanon’s population decline can be attributed to factors affecting most rural communities in Connecticut and elsewhere in the Unites States, including:

- people having fewer children;
- an increase in single-parent households;
- a desire by Millennials (those born between 1981-1996) to live in urbanized areas;
- people living longer and healthier and aging in place; and
- fewer residents moving into our State.

Seniors

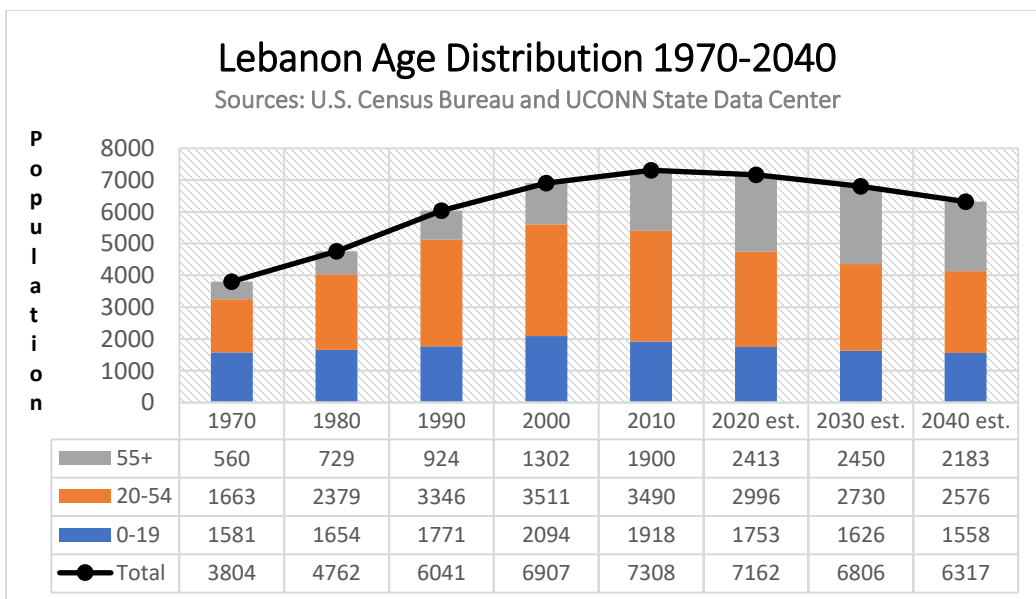
While the total number of people in Lebanon has reduced slightly over the past decade, there have been significant changes in resident age distribution. This is most evident in the number of seniors which has increased significantly in the past decade according to the US Census Bureau. Seniors, age 65 and older, represented 11.5% of Lebanon’s population in 2010 or 838 seniors. The Census Bureau currently estimates that 17.2% or 1,229 seniors are age 65 and older. This represents a 46.7% increase in seniors since 2010.

Based on recent population trends and a maturing “baby boomer generation” (those born between 1946-1964), it is estimated that seniors will represent a growing percentage of Lebanon’s population in the coming decade. The result will be a need for increased senior housing and town services.

Children

While Lebanon saw an almost 47% increase in the number of seniors over the past decade, the number of children under the age of 18 has decreased. In 2010, children under the age of 18 represented 24% or 1,761 of Lebanon’s population. The US Census Bureau currently estimates that the number of children under the age of 18 has decreased by 20% since that time to 1,444. This contrasts somewhat with the UCONN State Data Center which projects 1,538 children under the age of 18 by 2020 for a 9.7% decrease. Only the results of the 2020 Census, anticipated in 2021, will set this number straight.

Nevertheless, the decrease in school-age children is not exclusive to Lebanon, as Connecticut and the U.S. have seen drops in birthrate due to life-style changes resulting in people having fewer children, later in life, or none at all. According to Lebanon’s Board of Education estimates, the current number of school-age children is expected to remain stable over the 10-year planning period.



### Educational Attainment

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey, 96.3% of Lebanon residents have completed high school, which is higher than the 90.3% that have completed high school in the State. The number of residents that have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher was 38.3% which is similar to the State number of 38.9%.

### Political Affiliation

Lebanon has approximately 4,700 registered voters out of 5,500+/- eligible to vote. The largest voter share is made up of unaffiliated voters (2,017 or 42.9%), followed by Republicans (1,344 or 28.6%) and Democrats (1,265 or 26.9%). Lebanon's voter participation rate has been high with 85% of registered voters participating in the 2016 Presidential election and 43% in the 2019 local election.

### Racial Composition

According to the Census Bureau, most Lebanon residents (94.4%) identify themselves as "White". Other race cohorts identified by Lebanon residents are 2.3% "Hispanic or Latino", 1.6% "Asian", and 0.4% "Black or African American". Since 2000, the Census Bureau has allowed residents to identify themselves as more than one race, which accounts for 1.3% of town residents. In terms of race or ethnicity, Lebanon is the least diverse community in New London County.

### Income Characteristics

The median household income<sup>1</sup> in Lebanon has increased since 1989 when adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index<sup>2</sup>. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Lebanon had an estimated median household income of \$93,351 in 2017, which was equal to or higher when adjusted for inflation to its median household income in 2000. Lebanon's median household income has historically been higher than the estimated (2017) State average of \$73,781 and New London county average of \$68,411. The number of Lebanon residents living in poverty<sup>3</sup> was estimated by the Census Bureau to be 4.4% or 300+/- persons in 2018. This is one of the lowest poverty rates in New London County.

### Population Projections

It is difficult to predict population growth beyond a 5 or 10 year period; however, current state and local trends suggest that Lebanon's population will continue to decrease over the 10-year planning period and beyond. This is particularly true without growth in

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<sup>1</sup> Household median income is defined by U.S. Census Bureau as "the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount."

<sup>2</sup> A consumer or cost-of-living index measures changes over time in the amount consumers need to spend to reach a certain worth or standard of living.

<sup>3</sup> The amount of income needed to meet basic household needs.



Eastern Connecticut's economy or unless the current pandemic or continued increase climate change pushes people from more urbanized to rural environments to the north.

According to UCONN's State Data Center, Lebanon's population is expected to decrease from an estimated 7,163 persons in 2020 to 6,806 persons in 2030 and 6,317 persons in 2040. However, the same data source projects substantial population increases for neighboring Windham (46%) and nearby Norwich (30%) through 2040. Should these neighboring communities experience tremendous growth, Lebanon may experience some positive population impact.

## Housing

Lebanon is one of the nation's earliest settled communities. It contains 300+/- classic 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century homes, with several predating the American Revolution. Architecturally, many homes are fine examples of center entrance colonials, Greek revivals, Victorian, New Victorians, New England Saltboxes, and revival farmhouses. In 2013, the town completed an historical and architectural resources inventory of homes in Lebanon.

Lebanon has roughly 3,200 dwelling units -- the vast majority of which (94%) are made up of single-family dwellings. Other dwellings include 46 two-family, seven (7) three-family, three (3) four-family houses, and six (6) apartment complexes containing 66 units. There are also multiple accessory-living units attached to homes. The town changed its zoning in 2015 to allow accessory-living units by right versus by special permit.

The median price of a Lebanon home sold between October 2018 and September 2019 was \$255,000.



### New Housing Permits

Between 2010-2020, Lebanon has experienced the lowest number of new housing permits issued for any decade since World War II, with 70 new dwelling units constructed. This represents a 79% reduction in the number of new housing permits over the previous decade (2000-2010) when 330 new homes were constructed. Akin to the decreasing population, new home development is a direct factor of the 2007-09 Financial Crisis/Recession; a desire by Millennials to live in more urbanized areas; people living longer and aging in place; and people having fewer children.

### Affordable Housing

3.5% or 112 units out of 3,200 units of Lebanon housing are deemed “affordable” under CGS Sec 8-30g which defines “affordable housing” as: 1) government assist housing, 2) subject to deed restriction, and 3) financed by the CT Housing Finance Authority or the USDA. The threshold for most affordable housing programs is for persons making between 60-80% of the median household income. In Lebanon, this equates to \$50,000-\$62,800 for a two-person household and \$65,000-\$78,500 for a four-person household.

The State has set a goal that each community obtain 10% of its housing stock as “affordable”; however, only 30 of Connecticut’s 169 cities and towns have meet this goal. Because Lebanon has less than 10% “affordable” homes as defined by the State, it is not exempt from the State’s affordable housing appeal process which shifts the burden of proof to the town if it denies an affordable housing project.

Lebanon is working to gain additional affordable housing units both at the senior center and by partnering with the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area to help secure farmland to enable affordable farm housing as part of a new or beginner farmer initiative. The town is also in the process of preparing an affordable housing plan as required by CGS to encourage greater housing affordability.

### Senior Housing

To address the growth which has occurred among those age 65 and older in Lebanon, in 2014 the town identified and secured a developer to construct eight (8) units of age-restricted housing on town land adjacent to the Senior Center. Completed in 2016, these housing units have allowed Lebanon residents to downsize into homes that would not otherwise have been made available without direct municipal involvement. Also adjacent to the Senior Center lies the 24-unit Stone Ridge Estates that provides housing for income eligible seniors and disabled.

Additional age-restricted housing is currently in the planning phases adjacent to the Senior Center. However, this may not be enough housing stock to meet the needs for Lebanon’s and the region’s seniors who are looking for maintenance-free housing on a

single floor. In addition to providing housing that meets a current and growing population, age-restricted housing is a net positive in terms of local taxes for the town.

#### Housing at Lakes

Amston Lake, Red Cedar Lake, and Lake Williams were originally developed as seasonal or summer communities on lots of less than ¼-acre in size. Much of the development took place prior to modern health or zoning codes. In 1971, the Planning and Zoning Commission established minimum standards to allow year-round use of homes at the lakes, which required that they be on lots of at least one acre in size. Most homes developed after that time were limited to seasonal occupancy. By 2010, 558 homes or cottages were located at the lakes, two-thirds of which were zoned for seasonal use only.

Previous POCD's have called for the retention of a mix of seasonal and year-round occupancy at the lakes. However, in 2013, facing a federal lawsuit by lake residents to eliminated seasonal zoning, the town eliminated occupancy restrictions. The result has been that 100 of the former 350 seasonal properties at the lakes have been converted to year-round use.

With 250 lake homes still deemed seasonal, it is expected that another 100+/- will convert over the 10-year planning period. Another result of eliminating seasonal zoning has been an increase in development of empty lots and redevelopment of lake houses, particularly at Amston Lake. A significant portion of the town's development that has taken place over the past decade has occurred at the lakes.

#### Housing Analysis

The town has adopted policies consistent with the objectives of CGS Sec. 8-23 including but not limited to the use of cluster and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity; energy-efficient patterns of development; affordable housing; and the expansion of housing opportunities to accommodate a variety of households such as accessory apartments, multi-family housing, and elderly housing.

Nevertheless, there is an added need to provide additional housing opportunities, including affordable housing desirable for Baby Boomers who wish to remain in the community without house and yard maintenance and for Millennials and Generation Z who are looking for housing to meet their lifestyle as they move to Southeastern Connecticut to take advantage of a broadening labor market. Almost no housing of these types is available in Lebanon today.



## HOUSING recommendations

The following recommendations are made to strengthen the quality and diversity of Lebanon's housing stock to have a more diverse and sustainable population mix of age and income groups by increasing housing opportunities for Millennials, Generation Z, and seniors. Responsibility for implementation is shown in *italics*.

1. Work to attract a younger demographic by marketing Lebanon as historically significant, education rich, agricultural friendly, affordable, safe, and abundant in natural resource community. *All Town Boards and Commissions, including Planning and Zoning Commission by allowing greater and alternative housing opportunities, Board of Education by promoting Lebanon's School System to the rest of Eastern Connecticut, and Board of Finance by funding school initiatives.*
2. Provide additional housing opportunities for multiple age and demographic (income) groups by permitting workforce housing, multi-family housing, senior housing, and affordable housing. This includes working with developers to help secure land, and rezoning and offering tax incentives when deemed desirable. *Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Commission, Town Meeting.*
3. Prepare and implement an Affordable Housing Plan as required by CGS. *Planning and Zoning Commission.*

*The town should work to permit and promote development of affordable housing, multi-family housing, and senior housing to meet the current and future needs of Lebanon residents.*

*Encourage agricultural land uses by promoting agricultural-based economic development opportunities.*



### **III. AGRICULTURE in Lebanon**

For over 300 years AGRICULTURE has been Lebanon's predominant land use! The town's 140 farms today comprise 8,000+/- acres and continue to provide food and fiber necessary to support the masses -- just as it did at the time of our nation's founding! For Lebanon, agriculture is the predominate economic activity.

Few property owners understand their land and its natural resources more than farmers who rely on clean water and soil to operate. Agricultural development provides less potential for loss of habitat, flooding, impervious surface coverage, diminished air quality and climate change than residential, commercial or industrial land uses.

Local agriculture helps reduce carbon emissions by providing local food and horticultural sources versus a dependence on products shipped across regional, state and continental divides. It also provides a positive tax base as evidenced by a cost-of-community services study completed for town in 2019 that showed farmland in Lebanon pays more than its fair share in taxes compared to residential development. For each tax dollar raised, \$0.20 is used to provide services for agricultural uses as compared to \$1.15 used for services for residential uses.

Lebanon is one of the largest farming communities in Connecticut and contains the greatest amount of preserved farmland of any town in New England. Over 5,600 acres of farmland is preserved in town -- representing 1 out of every 8 acres of preserved farmland in our State or 13% of all preserved farmland in Connecticut. These prime and important farmland soils are preserved for agriculture forever!

According to the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, 23,928 acres or two-thirds of Lebanon contains prime, statewide, and locally important farmland soils. These soils have the best combination of chemical and physical characteristics for producing food, feed, and fiber, and are important for the production of the region's food supply.

Town government has tried to take a proactive approach to promote, preserve, and grow agriculture by supporting farmers, funding farmland preservation, and conducting educational outreach to residents. Lebanon's right-to-farm ordinance and zoning regulations are emulated across the State, and were recognized in 2015 when the town received the "Community of the Year" award from the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association for its "on-going efforts to preserve its agricultural-based economy and town character."

Steps Lebanon has taken to promote, preserve, and grow agriculture are to:

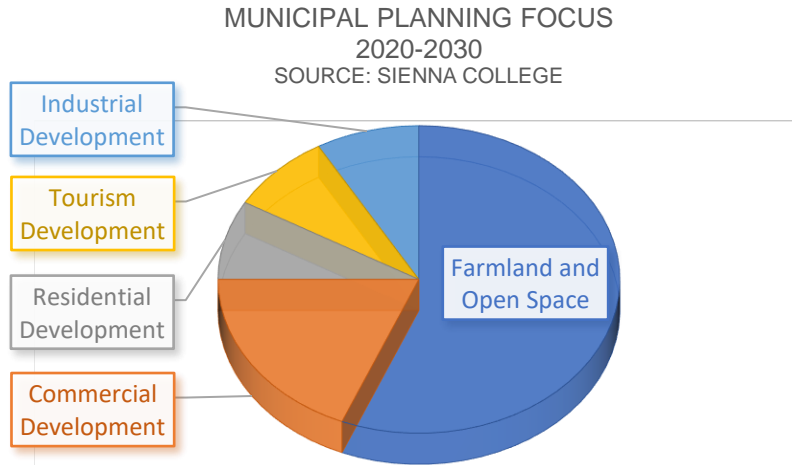
- run a weekly summer farmers market since 2007 and a monthly winter farmers market since 2017;
- set aside funds to secure and match farmland preservation dollars from Federal, State, and non-profit sources;
- mail out an annual newsletter to residents describing the benefits of farmland;
- identify "the promotion and protection of agricultural uses and prime and important farmland soils" as its number one purpose of zoning;
- define "open space" synonymously with "farmland preservation";
- mandate cluster or conservation subdivision development to help protect farmland;
- require agricultural buffers for new development that abuts a farm;
- identify locally important farmland soils;
- exempt horses and ponies from taxation;
- conduct advertising on behalf of farm businesses;
- regulate setbacks for farm building versus choosing to regulate the number of animals per lot;
- designate a point person in Town Hall to work with farmers; and
- embrace agriculture as community character and economic development!

In preparation of Lebanon's 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development, the town received a grant from the Department of Agriculture to commission the Sienna College Research Institute to conduct a statically valid resident survey to gauge resident attitudes toward farming and farmland preservation. Survey results determined that:

- 87% believe Lebanon should continue to fund farmland and open space preservation over the coming decade;
- 78% believe that having working farms and open space to be very important - with another 16% saying it was somewhat important and 3% respectively saying not too important or not at all important;



These results were not unlike those found in Lebanon’s 2008 resident survey conducted by UCONN. When residents were asked to choose Lebanon’s main planning focus over the 10-year planning period, the majority chose farmland and open space preservation.



### Agricultural Economy

Lebanon farms represent a variety of large-and-small scale agriculture including poultry/eggs (1.5 million chickens), dairy (several thousand cows), nursery stock (largest wholesaler in New England), beef cattle, vegetables, llamas, sheep, goats, equine, maple syrup, honey, wine, CSAs, and other agrarian endeavors.

According to UCONN’s 2017 Economic Impact of Connecticut’s Agricultural Industry, agriculture contributes up to \$4 billion dollars annually to the State’s economy and employs over 20,000 people. Most farm production dollars are spent locally on labor and ancillary businesses. Every dollar in agricultural sales generates an additional two dollars to the State’s economy.

Lebanon’s 2019 cost of community services study showed that for every dollar collected in municipal taxes, \$1.15 was expended in municipal services for residential development whereas only \$0.20 was spent for farmland. These results are not surprising when considering that farmland, which represents about a quarter of Lebanon’s total land base, requires very limited municipal services.

### Analysis

Certain agricultural sectors have been hit hard as of late. This is certainly true for the dairy industry where Lebanon has lost dairy farms because of milk pricing that has become equal to or less than the cost to farm. Farming is a business and many farms are their owner’s principal financial asset. No farmer wants to sell their land for development even if they retire from farming. However, they, like others need financial resources and farmland preservation is an option.

At the same time there are those looking to enter farming, and the town is working with CT Resource Conservation and Development Area on a new small-farmer initiative to create a cooperative farm support center with affordable farmland and housing. It is hoped that these measures will help ensure that Lebanon's agricultural community has continued local support as the town works to preserve and celebrate its long-held agricultural heritage.

## **Recommendations for AGRICULTURE**

The following recommendations are made to protect, preserve, and grow agriculture. Responsibility for implementation shown in *italics*.

1. The town should set aside \$100,000 annually to build an open space account of \$500,000 to be used to preserve farmland and open space and to allow for matching funds to leverage state, federal, and nonprofit open space and agricultural preservation grants which require town contribution. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting.*
2. Lebanon ordinance, regulations, and policies should support the continuation of agricultural uses in town. *All town boards and commissions.*
3. Expand participation in the farm-to-school lunch program, senior lunches, and food-assistance program to support local agricultural businesses by utilizing local farm products. *Board of Education, Council on Aging, Town Meeting.*
4. Provide agricultural education curriculum at all grade levels. *Board of Education.*
5. Celebrate and support Lebanon agriculture businesses by promoting "buy local", leasing town-owned farmland, and running the Farmers Market. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Economic Development Commission, Board of Selectmen.*
6. Encourage and facilitate new farmer, small agricultural operations, and diverse agricultural products. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen.*
7. Encourage use of Lebanon for statewide agriculture initiatives, offices, and programs. *Board of Selectmen.*

***"Communities often focus their resources on developing land versus preserving and promoting agriculture. Both have their pluses; however, only agriculture provides sustainability in terms of food security, aesthetics, environment, and municipal finance." P. Chester***

*Provide adequate funding of community facilities and town services to meet current and future needs of residents.*

## IV. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND TOWN SERVICES

Lebanon's Town Government is conducted by 57 elected and 93 appointed officials, and approximately 240 full or part-time employees (80% school, 20% other). There are 24 standing Town boards, commissions, and committees. [See Lebanon Town Government Organizational Chart in Appendix.]

The following recommendations *shown in italic* are an outgrowth of discussions with town departments.

### Town Hall

Constructed in 1969, Lebanon Town Hall contains approximately 7,000 square feet and is maintained by the Board of Selectmen. Building uses include meeting rooms and offices for the Board of Selectmen, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Finance Department, Assessor, Registrars, Land Use Office, Town Planner, and Recreation Department. The Town Hall parking lot has been used for the Farmers Market since 2007.



*Consideration should be made to increase the capacity in the Town Hall downstairs meeting room by relocating the Recreation Department to the Community Center lower level or attic space.*

### Community Center and Town Pool

Constructed in 1970, the 4,000 square foot Community Center is used for civic and private functions by fee for residents. The Town Pool is located behind this facility and is managed by the Recreation Commission.



*Consideration should be made to provide overflow town offices in the lower level and/or attic space, including the Recreation Department and Sexton. Renovate pool and lavatories, and add showers.*

### Senior Center

Constructed in 2008, the 6,450 square foot Senior Center is operated by the Commission on Aging. The facility contains meeting rooms and activity spaces, a commercial kitchen, and other areas utilized by Lebanon's seniors. Programs offered include lunch, health screening, computers, exercise, games, and senior van service. 32 units of housing for seniors and the disabled is located adjacent to the Senior Center, with additional units in the planning stages.



*Develop additional private housing for seniors on excess land abutting the Senior Center.*

### Public Works Facility

Constructed in phases beginning around 1960, the town garage contains 6,600 square feet of buildings that house the highway garage office, and truck, material, and equipment storage. The site is located at a major focal point in the Town Center and contains a pond in poor health due to salt and sand storage left uncovered and exposed to the elements.

Facility buildings are in poor condition and inadequate to accommodate all equipment or salt and sand storage. Recent attempts to relocate the Public Works Facility were made to land east of the Middle School and land behind the Fire Safety Complex; however, both attempts failed at town referenda.

In 2013 the town hired a Public Works Director to manage the Department's Highway Foreman, mechanic, and six (6) maintainers. When the Director left the position it was not replaced, and the First Selectmen oversees the Department. Climate change and recent storm events have highlighted the need for new coping mechanisms that should include reorganizing the department and/or regionalization.

Consideration should be made to:

- construct a new Public Works Facility sized to accommodate current and future town needs at the Transfer Facility site or another acceptable to the community, with the current site redeveloped as a greenway entrance to the Town Center and/or leased for farming;*
- reorganize the Department by providing adequate staffing levels to maintain all town properties, including maintenance of recreation areas and cemeteries, and to operate the Transfer Facility; and,*
- prepare and implement a 10-year road maintenance, repaving, and drainage management plan.*



Jonathan Trumbull Library

Constructed in 1967, and with an addition in 1974, the Jonathan Trumbull Library contains 7,500 square feet. In 2015 residents overwhelmingly voted to provide funding to double the size of the Library. However, due to legal challenges with ownership of the Library parcel the town initiated legal action against the heirs of the Green which was settled in 2019. Construction of the addition is expected to occur in 2021, with completion anticipated in 2022.

*Implement 2015 referendum vote by expanding Library facility and parking, and expanding programs and services to meeting resident needs.*

Transfer Facility

Lebanon’s Transfer Station and former landfill occupy a portion of a 141-acre site on Exeter Road. 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. Waste is transferred from Lebanon to resource recovery plants in Lisbon and Preston. This property is also used for Public Works material storage, Fire Department training, and for corn and hay production.

*Consideration should be made to sponsor an annual hazardous material waste collection day(s) and construct a new Public Works Facility on this site.*

Fire Safety Complex

Constructed in 1988, the 17,000 square foot facility houses the Fire Department, Emergency Management Center, Fire Marshal, Police, Sexton, and function hall with commercial kitchen available to rent to residents. The function hall is also used as the town’s voting station and for meetings.



The 40-member all volunteer Fire Department was established in 1943 and responds to ambulance and fire calls, with mutual aid provided by abutting towns.

*Consideration should be made to create written mutual aid agreements with partners and fund emergency department personnel.*

Public Schools

Lebanon’s public school system is comprised of three (3) facilities, including an elementary, middle, and high school controlled by the Board of Education. During the 2019-20 school year there were a total of 1,005 students attending the public schools. This represents a 33% or 500-student decrease in the past decade when Lebanon had greater school-age children and a larger portion of out-of-town students attending its High School. The Board of Education projects that the number of public school students will remain stable over the 10-year planning period.

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.



Elementary School



Middle School

Lyman Memorial High School was constructed in 1992 to serve grades 9-12 and contains 117,000 square feet. In addition to educating Lebanon students, students from Bozrah, Franklin, and Sprague may attend Lyman. The High School is also one of the State’s 19 vocational-agricultural science centers, which in addition to serving Lebanon students, serves students from neighboring Andover, Bozrah, Chaplin, Colchester, Franklin, Hampton, Hebron Marlborough, Salem, Scotland, and Sprague.



High School

*Lebanon’s public schools possess capacity to handle an increased number of students over the next decade. Given this capacity and the need for minimum enrollment to efficiently offer a variety of classes, the Board of Education should deliberately market Lebanon Public Schools to Eastern Connecticut residents, with funding coming from the Board of Finance. Consider shared services and regionalization strategies.*

### Recreation Facilities

The Recreation Commission prepares an *Active Recreation Needs Analysis* every five (5) years. Last completed in 2018, the study identifies town recreation needs for current and projected populations. The Recreation Commission's goal is to: *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 recreation fields managed by the Board of Education located at the public schools, the Recreation Commission and its part-time Recreation Coordinator manage:

- Aspinall Recreation Complex (3 ballfields, 2 basketball, 1 soccer field, and pavilion);
- Community Center Pool; and
- Tyler Field (3 ballfields).

The Recreation Commission runs a variety of programs that serve up to 1,000 participants annually at the Fire Safety Complex and Lebanon Elementary and Middle Schools. Lebanon Little League and Lebanon Soccer Club, both private organizations, service 200+/- children each at town-owned facilities. The Active Recreation Needs Analysis recommends funding to:

- Repair 2 ballfields and basketball courts, and develop outdoor volleyball courts and a second soccer field at Aspinall Recreation Complex;*
- Install a playscape, irrigation, and restrooms at Tyler Field;*
- Replace the pool cement deck and fence, replace drainage drywell system, and install showers and restrooms at the Town Pool;*
- Provide a private, secure office space with storage for the Recreation Department;*
- Increase current part-time Recreation Coordinator position to fulltime (or share position with another municipality); and*
- Utilize the Public Works Department for field maintenance.*

### Cemeteries

The Cemetery Commission and part-time Sexton manage 19 town cemeteries. In 2014 the town purchased land on Synagogue Road for a new cemetery. The "North Lebanon Cemetery" opened in 2020 and accommodates resident needs for this planning period and beyond.

*Utilize the Public Works Department for cemetery maintenance.*

### Police Services

Police services are conducted by a Resident State Trooper, three (3) part-time Police Officers and a School Resource Officer with additional patrol coverage provided by State Police Troop K in Colchester. Lebanon has consistently had a low crime rate and has experienced 29% decline in calls for service since 2013.

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

### Old Fire House

The old fire house is located between Town Hall on Trumbull Highway and is used for storage. The ¼-acre site lacks parking, water, and septic.

*The town should consider reuse of this property for public or private use that is in line with the Village Business zone.*

### Transportation

Lebanon is one of the largest communities in size in Connecticut. It has 120 miles of road, including 91 miles of Town roads (of which 15 is gravel or unpaved) and 29 miles of State road. Unpaved roads should be preserved to retain the town's historic, scenic, and rural character. To date only North Street and Smith Road have been classified under the Town's *Scenic Road* ordinance. The following roads are recommended for future Scenic Road designation:

- Bogg Lane;
- West Town Street and Tobacco Street Extension;
- Bender, Briggs, Chappell, Church, Cook Hill, Goshen Hill Extension, Fowler, Randall, Roger Foote, Sisson, Taylor Bridge, Village Hill, and York Roads; and
- State Route 207/Exeter Road.

*The Conservation and Agriculture Commission should assist property owners to complete the scenic road designation process. The Board of Selectmen should petition CT DOT to designate Rte. 207/Exeter Road as a State Scenic Road and to install bicycle lanes on Routes 87, 207 and 289. Improvements to town roads should maintain the rural character of the community.*

### Utilities, Water, and Sewer

Electricity reaches Lebanon's homes and businesses through either Eversource or Bozrah Light and Power Company. Eversource/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 include at Amston Lake, Frankel Acres, Carriage Drive, and Norwich's Deep River Reservoir which provides limited service to properties along Norwich Avenue.

The Town is the purveyor of water from the CT Department of Public Health and must approve any proposed public water supply, except south of Norwich Avenue. In 2013 the town installed sewers at Amston Lake (see 2020 Open Space and Sewer Service Area Map on page 32). The sewer system is maintained by the Water Pollution Control Authority and no additional sewer service areas are proposed.

*Additional sewers should only be considered to mitigate existing problem areas.*



### Social Services

A part-time Social Services Administrator provides services to Lebanon residents in need of assistance with SNAP, WIC, Husky Insurance, CT Energy Assistance Program, Food Pantry, Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Meals-on-Wheels, Medicare Savings Program, and other social service programs. The Administrator also runs the annual back-to-school supply drive and a holiday gift program.

*Consideration should be made to expand programs and services to meet resident needs, including increasing the part-time administrator position to fulltime or shared position with another municipality or town agency.*

### Town Governance

Lebanon adopted its first Town Charter in 2019 which expanded the Board of Selectmen from three (3) to five (5) members. It retained the First Selectman or Chief Elected Official position to run the town. Because the town is required to deal with an ever increasing array of local, state, and federal mandates, grants, and human resource issues, and in order to create long-term relationships with state partners, consideration should be given to amend the Town Charter to establish a professional town administrator or manager position governed by the Board of Selectmen.

*Establish a Charter Committee(s) to consider hiring a professional town administrator or manager under the direction of the Board of Selectmen. Communities much smaller in terms of area and population than Lebanon have determined that a professional administrator or manager is beneficial to their community.*

### Animal Control

Animal control is provided through the Northeast Council of Governments. The former Animal Control Facility is located behind the Fire Safety Complex and used for storage.

### Miscellaneous

In addition to the town's dedicated staff, town boards and commissions are made up of devoted volunteers. Experience dictates that the volunteer pool is shrinking, with some volunteers sitting on more than one board or commission.

*Strategies should be developed to encourage volunteerism. All town boards, commissions, and agencies should work to improve their effectiveness through professional training and should strive to conduct outreach to residents through publications and public education sessions.*



AIRLINE TRAIL



LAKE WILLIAMS STATE PARK



RED CEDAR LAKE

*Provide for permanent protection of open space tracts and corridors giving priority to those that are most important to the community and that hold important natural resources.*

## V. OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Lebanon's primary planning goal is the preservation of the town's character as a rural-agricultural community, which underlies the town's efforts to preserve natural resources and open space. The natural environment significantly influences the quality and character of life in Lebanon. Since 2010, the planet has experienced some of its warmest years on record, with the summer of 2020 being the warmest and one of the driest periods in State history. Natural resources and open spaces should be protected to support the integrity of the local ecosystem and help combat climate change and, and to safeguard land-based economic resources such as agriculture, tourism, and forest products.

In 2019, the town commissioned Siena College Research Institute to conduct a statistically valid survey of 333 residents (representing 1 in 10 households) to determine their attitudes toward farmland and open space preservation. The results showed that residents strongly favor the preservation of land in Lebanon. Key survey findings include:

- 94% believe that having working farms and open space is very or somewhat important;
- 87% believe that the town should continue to fund farmland and open space preservation in the coming decade; and
- 54% believed that farmland and open space preservation should be the main focus of Lebanon's planning efforts over the next 10 years versus commercial (18%), industrial (8%), residential (8%), and tourism (8%) development.

## Natural Resources Inventory

The Town of Lebanon is rich in natural resources. Wetlands, lakes, vernal pools, forests, wildlife, open space, and 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 the following benefits:

- act as a 'sponge' for precipitation;
- control runoff into rivers and streams;
- absorb contaminants and remove them from water;
- recharge groundwater;
- provide essential habitat for wildlife and plant communities; and,
- act as natural wildlife and plant corridors linking open tracts of upland habitat.

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

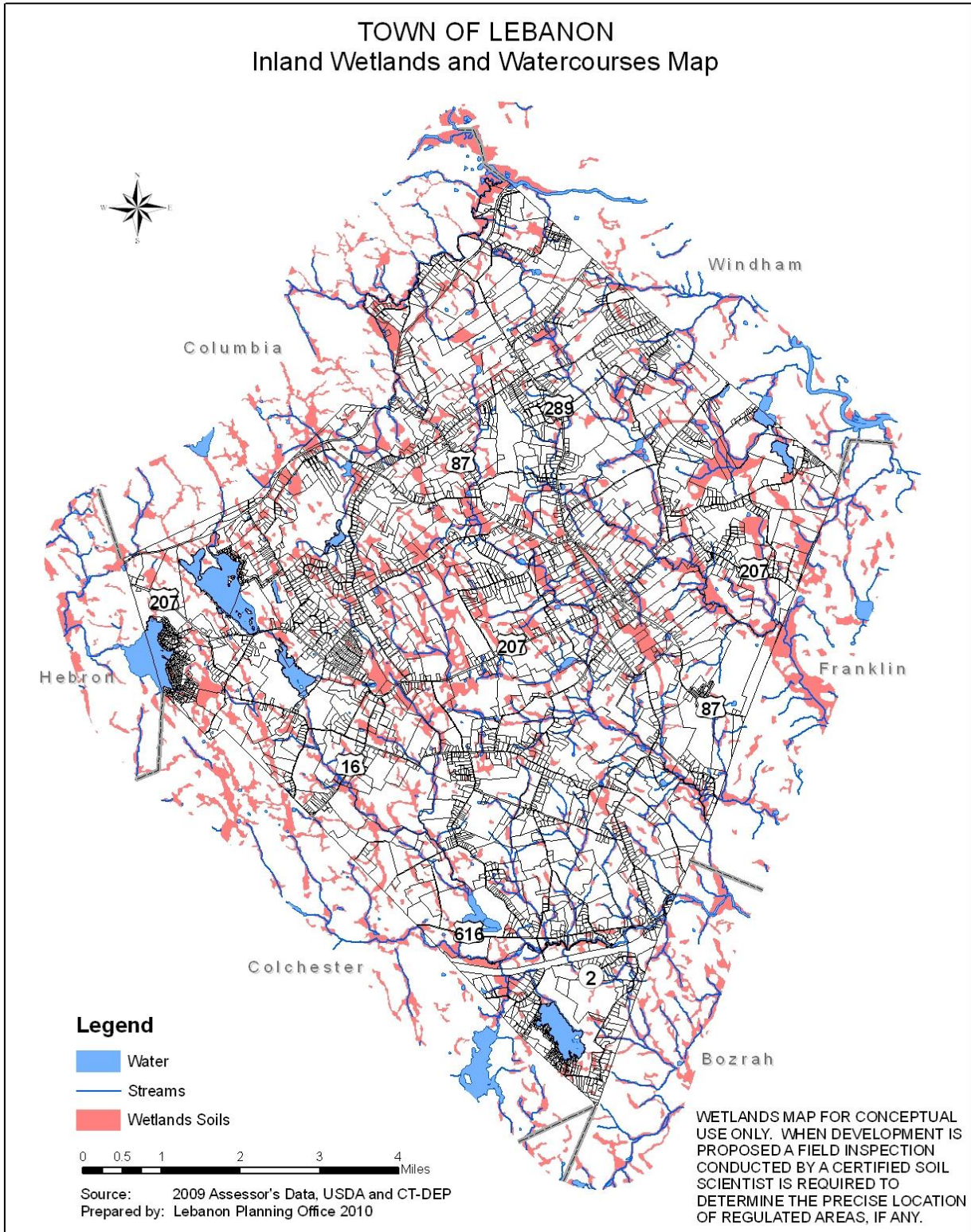
In addition to their importance as components of wetlands systems, lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams play an important role in supporting public water supply, fish, wildlife, and recreational activities. Several relatively large waterbodies lie within the Town of Lebanon encompassing 776+/- acres or 2% of town. In 2010, a dam was breached without state or town approval causing the draining of Spaulding Pond off Smith Road. Despite town efforts, this waterbody appears lost. However, the associated wetland that remains is valuable and should be protected.

### **Major Lakes, Ponds, Rivers and Streams**

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

Lebanon is unique in that it is home to many lakes, ponds and streams bordered by substantial tracts of undeveloped land. These waterbodies provide 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 to preserve undeveloped shorelines through conservation easements, and to allow public access.







Thanks to state and municipal efforts, protection and access are in place for many streams and lakes in Lebanon, with 3,000 acres of land open to the public. Most recently, the southern 176-acres of Lake Williams was preserved as a State Park.

Vernal pools are mostly self-contained seasonal water bodies that 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 are forest dependent and with their surrounding habitat are key to maintaining biodiversity. Nearby development, including active agriculture and some logging activities, can disrupt or destroy these fragile systems. Lebanon has no vernal pool inventory.

Lebanon's wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and vernal pools are regulated by the Inland Wetlands Commission, who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen and are responsible for assuring that land use and development in or within 100 feet of each of these aquatic features do not negatively impact the environment.

#### Open Space, Forest, and Wildlife

Lebanon's Conservation and Agriculture Commission (1) maintains an inventory of open space<sup>4</sup> and natural resources; (2) works to preserve additional important open space tracts (farmland, forest, open land, and wildlife corridors); (3) works to protect natural resources; and (4) assists in educating the public and managing conservation easements<sup>5</sup>. The coordination of open space and natural resource preservation is conducted through Lebanon's Planning Office, which also maps these resources as shown on page 32.

Approximately 9,200 acres or 26% of Lebanon is considered permanently preserved open space, with a third of these acres open to the public. The Conservation and Agriculture Commission utilizes a system for rating farmland and open space parcels to determine the value for each when considering future preservation projects. This does not include 500+/- acres of town road.

The Commission has identified a 1,200+/- acre forested area in and around Randall Road as a priority preservation area. This area is the largest continuous forest block in Lebanon and shown on the Open Space Map on the following page. Because most of Lebanon's forest land is privately owned, as development pressures increase the forest continues to "fragment" into smaller individual parcels interspersed with housing and the ability of the forest to provide its many benefits declines. Wildlife habitat value also diminishes as forests fragment.

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<sup>4</sup> Open Space is defined by 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>5</sup> Conservation Easements are an 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.

Apart from actual economic use supported by open space such as agriculture, forest products, and tourism, 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, including stone walls;
- 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 limited municipal services.

**Open Space by Type, Ownership, Access, and Acres**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Ownership/ Public Access</u>	<u>Acres (+/-)</u>
Farmland Preservation	Private / No	5,600
State Parks: Airline Trail, Bartlett Brook WMA, Lake Williams, Mooween State Park, Pomeroy State Park, Savin Lake, Pease Brook WMA, Yantic River, Mono Pond/Wells Woods State Park	State / Yes	2,575
Conservation Subdivision Easements (non-farmland)	Private / No	552
Nature Conservancy, CT Forest & Parks, Joshua’s Trust	Private / Yes	332
Town-Owned Open Space (not including schools): Town Green, Aspinall Fields, Commons Hill, Tyler Field, Ten-Mile Preserve	Town / Yes	175
Total:		9,134

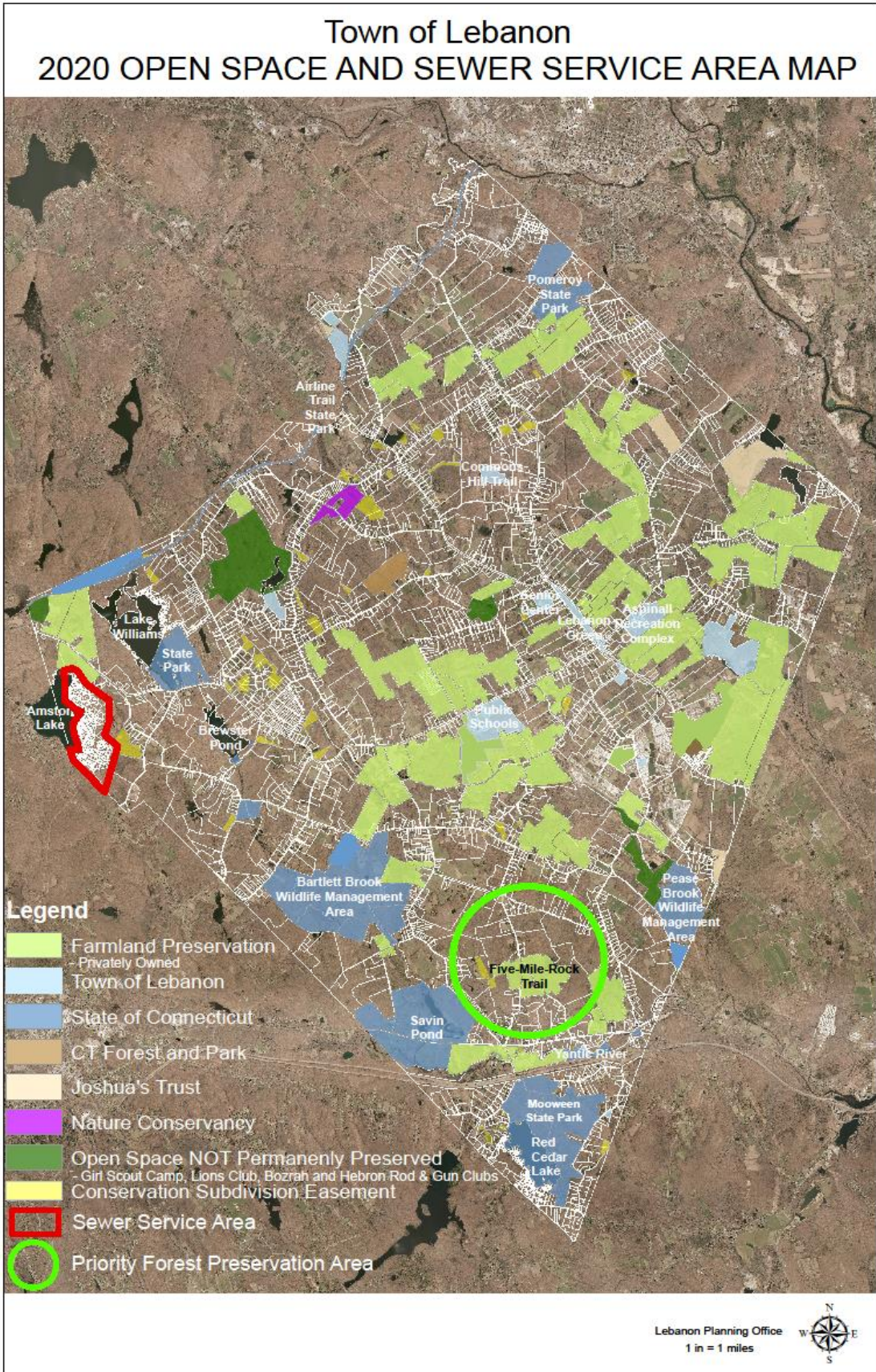
In addition, there are several large open parcels, totaling 565-acres, that provide private access but are not permanently preserved through a conservation restriction and may be developed. These include Camp Laurel owned by the Girl Scouts, Bozrah Fish and Game Club, Lebanon Lions Club, and Hebron Sportsman Club.

Trails

There are many ways to enjoy Lebanon’s diverse natural resources. The town is fortunate to have miles of walking trails open to the public where one can view and enjoy nature. One trail, which leads to 50+ miles of walking, biking, and horse trails, is the Airline Trail State Park. This trail has six (6) trailheads in Lebanon and make up the town’s northwest boundary. The state also maintains multiple wildlife management areas and parks in Lebanon that offer ample hiking, hunting, fishing, and boating opportunities.

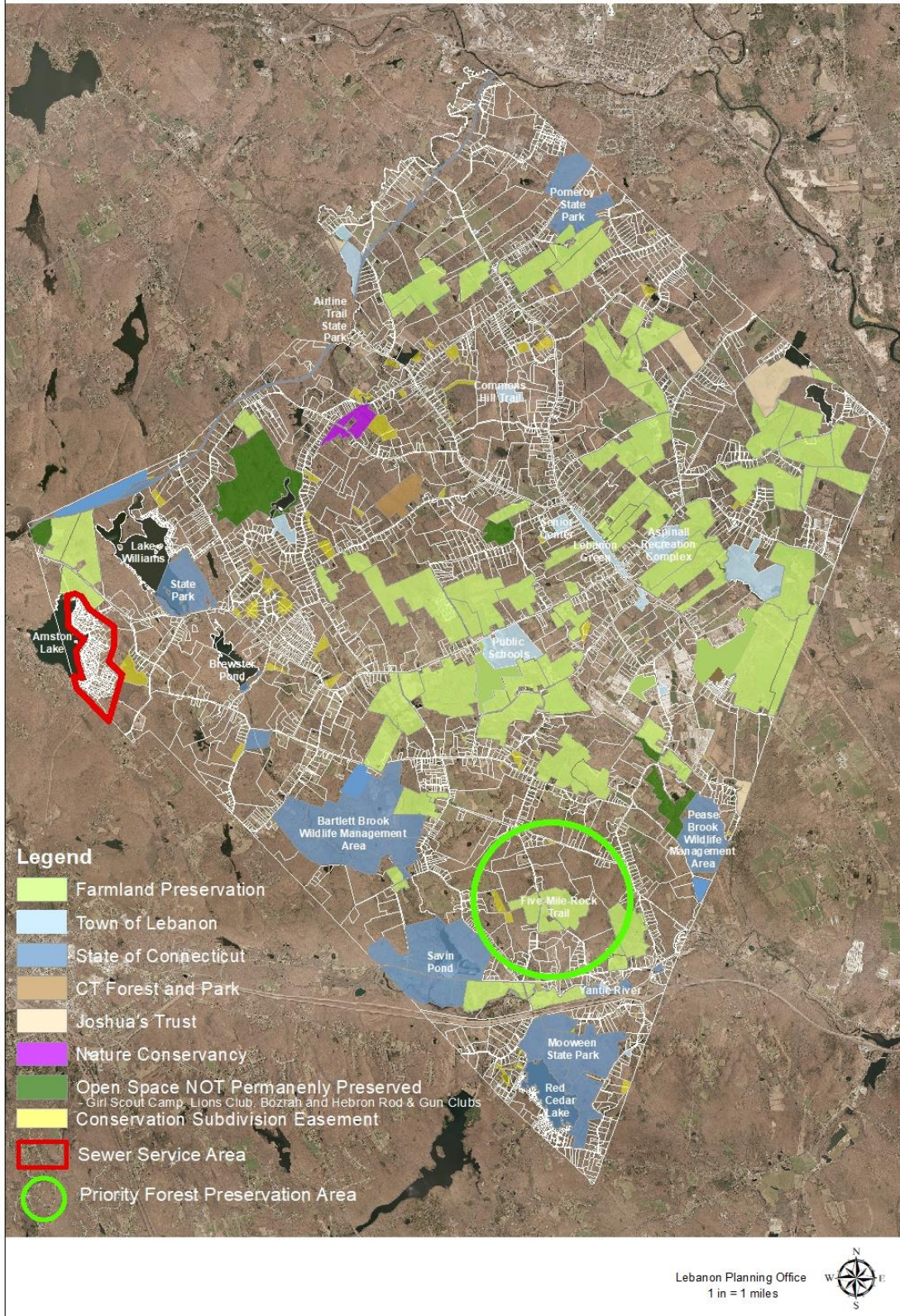
The Conservation and Agriculture Commission maintains the Commons Hill Trail which runs from Route 87 at the Liberty Hill Cemetery to Commons Hill, and the Five-Mile-Rock Trail which is accessed from Randall Road. The town also maintains the 1+ mile walking path that encircles historic Lebanon Green. Lastly, the town maintains 15+/- miles of scenic unimproved or dirt roads which wind through nature and provide walking or horseback riding opportunities.







## Town of Lebanon 2020 OPEN SPACE AND SEWER SERVICE AREA MAP





Since 2006, the town has assisted property owners in preserving 2,800+/- acres of open space. Most of this land is in the form of privately-owned farmland, while over 300+/- acres is accessible to the public. The local cost to the town to preserve this land has been roughly \$500,000 or \$175+/- an acre which has resulted in the preservation of \$13,000,000 worth of land. Approximately 96% of the preservation funds have come from the CT Department of Agriculture, USDA/NRCS, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and Connecticut Farmland Trust.

It is anticipated that as many as 250 new homes with additional town roads could have been developed on these properties, which would have resulted in additional and ongoing municipal service costs as well as the loss of viewsheds, farms, forests, open land, and natural resources.

In addition to preserving large swaths of land, the town adopted DEEP's 2002 Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control and 2004 Stormwater Quality Manual into its regulations in 2011. In 2013, the Yantic River was named a State Greenway, and in 2015 the town received the *Community of the Year Award* by the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association in recognition of its ongoing efforts to preserve its agricultural-based economy and town character.

In 2015, Eastern Connecticut State University in conjunction with the Departments of Health and Environmental Protection, sampled 100 Lebanon households to determine arsenic levels. High concentrations of arsenic were found in several wells in and around Hoxie Road causing residents to treat their water or use bottled water. It is assumed that the arsenic is naturally occurring and bleeds into these wells from bedrock, however, further study of this area has been recommended.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that subsurface penetration of pollutants on virtually any area of land in town can potentially contaminate water used for drinking. Pollutants in surface runoff can and have negatively affected water quality in surface waters. While protection of open space cannot ensure ground and surface water quality, woodlands and properly managed wetlands and agricultural lands carry the benefit that they are unlikely to be sources of groundwater pollution.

The health of surface waters can be affected by wastewater discharge, hazardous material mismanagement, water diversions, dredging, polluted stormwater runoff, and wetlands alteration. These 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 pollutants such as fertilizers, manure, pesticides, petroleum products, road salt, and sand.

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

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 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 and projected 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.*

## **Recommendations for OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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

1. The town should continue to set aside \$100,000 annually to build an open space fund of \$500,000 to be used to preserve open space and farmland and to allow for matching funds to leverage state, federal, and private-nonprofit open space and agricultural preservation grants which require town contribution. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting.*
2. Monitor town-held easements and work with property owners to ensure that conservation restrictions are honored. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission.*
3. Recommend that those developers donate a fee-in-lieu of open space unless the open space donation will be significant in size or high value in natural resources. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*

4. Continue to educate landowners about land preservation and development options and seek grants to preserve Lebanon's natural resources. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Meeting.*
5. Research available external funding for preservation of forest land not eligible for farmland preservation funding programs. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Board of Selectmen.*
6. Implement town policy to limit invasive species by discouraging the spread of invasive plants through road and landscape maintenance and dumping of fill. When feasible involve the Public Works Department to eradicate invasive species along roads and town property. *Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
7. Protect and improve surface waters, wetlands, and groundwater quality in Lebanon. Wetlands and undeveloped land abutting ponds, streams, and wetlands should receive high priority in open space protection. *Inland Wetlands Commission, Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
8. Limit development in lake areas to ensure water quality protection. Increase riparian buffer zones to protect all surface waters and their banks by regulating activity within buffers to discourage and prevent activity that involves soil disturbance, except generally accepted timber harvest, wildlife or agricultural management activities. Adopt permitting procedures to encourage the establishment of streamside vegetation where absent and adopt a 150-foot riparian buffer or regulated protection zone around rivers and streams. *Inland Wetlands Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
9. Prepare and adopt a potential vernal pool inventory map and incorporate vernal pool protection, establishing a mandatory buffer around vernal pools as part of the development review process. *Inland Wetlands Commission, Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
10. Ensure that stormwater management practices 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. Require that only "cape-cod" curbing be used for curbs to manage stormwater. For all land uses, place limits on amounts of impervious cover to protect water quality. *Inland Wetlands Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen.*

11. Sewers should only be introduced to solve existing, critical wastewater disposal problems. Provide septic system education. *Water Pollution Control Authority, Board of Selectmen, Health Department.*
12. Utilize State Environmental Review Team and Conservation and Agriculture Commission for town and private environmentally sensitive development projects. *Board of Selectmen, Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission.*
13. Require the Tree Warden post trees to be removed and work with Conservation and Agriculture Commission where trees of significant concern are considered. *Board of Selectman, Conservation and Agriculture Commission.*
14. Request that CT DOT designate entire length of length of Route 207 as a State Scenic Highway (from Hebron through Lebanon and Franklin to Sprague). *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Board of Selectmen.*
15. Consider additional opportunities to create trail networks that are open to the public through existing open space and road systems, when preserving new properties, and during development review process. *Conservation and Agriculture Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting.*





PRIDES CORNER FARM



LEBANON FARMERS  
MARKET



LEBANON GREEN  
VINEYARDS

*“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 POCD*

## VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The preceding statement is as true today as it was when written twenty years ago. Agriculture continues to be Lebanon’s greatest economic generator with substantial economic development at Prides Corner Farm, Hillandale Farms, Graywall Farm, and others. In addition, the town, in partnership with State and Federal government, has worked to preserve large swaths of agricultural land for current and future uses.

Besides Lebanon’s agricultural businesses, there are some commercial and personal service needs town residents desire, as well as a desire to promote heritage tourism to showcase the town’s stellar revolutionary sites along the Town Green and a growing demand for senior housing and housing for young persons – all of which should be the focus of future economic development efforts.

### *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS:*

- 1. Promote agricultural business development, including the addition of local farm products into the school lunch program to stimulate additional economic development.*
- 2. Promote heritage tourism through identification and advertisement of available resources and attractions and by increasing visitor accommodations and services.*
- 3. Allow for integrated business and residential development in the Town Center to meet the needs of residents.*
- 4. Promote development within designated areas.*
- 5. Encourage business and housing development proposals that meet the physical, social, economic, and environmental needs of town, including rezoning when warranted.*

### Existing Conditions

Because of Lebanon's proximity to adjacent commercial centers in Willimantic, Norwich, and Colchester, and its lack of a traditional commercial or employment center, for the most part residents travel outside of town for employment, shopping, and personal service needs.

Of the 92 parcels zoned for commercial or industrial use, 63% (or 58 parcels) are residentially developed, 21% (or 19 parcels) are commercially or industrially developed, 10% (or 9 parcels) contain governmental or non-profit facilities, and 7% (or 6 parcels) are vacant. Consequently, there are a limited number of 'traditional' commercial or industrial development opportunities in town.

Since 2010 the town has seen an expansion of electric (CT Light & Power) and gas (Algonquin) utility infrastructure which are the two highest taxpayers making up 10% of the town's taxable property. The town has also seen the expansion of the Scotts/Hyponex facility on Industrial Park Road, development of a senior-housing development adjacent to the Senior Center, additional home-based businesses, and expansion of Prides Corner Farm and other agricultural businesses.

Agriculture remains the dominant economic activity in town and consumes the largest amount of developable land. It is also the highest non-governmental employer. Approximately 9,000 acres or 25% of Lebanon is actively farmed which includes land-based field crop production and large commercial or industrial agricultural operations. Since 2010, over 2,000 acres of land has been permanently preserved for agriculture through CT Department of Agriculture, USDA, CT Farmland Trust, and town efforts.

In 2019, the Economic Development Commission adopted a tax abatement program to provide short-term (3-year) tax relief in order to attract new or expanded businesses, including agriculture and senior housing by offering a temporary relief to local property taxes as strategic and long-range economic growth. New investment must be greater than \$100,000 in annual assessment. Specific areas where the EDC has identified for new

development include properties at the Route 2 interchange, additional senior housing adjacent to the Senior Center, and redevelopment of the Grand Lake Spa at Lake Williams.

Economic Environment

Lebanon’s labor force consists of 4,066 residents, of which approximately 1 in 7 work within town. Like Lebanon’s overall population, its labor force has shrunk due to its aging population and lack of new housing. In 2010, Lebanon’s average unemployment rate was an all-time high of 8.6% due to the ‘Great Recession’, lowering to an average of 3.5% for 2019. Lebanon’s unemployment rate as of June 2020 stands at 8.4% due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In 2017, Lebanon’s median household income was reported at \$93,531 which is 35% higher than the New London County median household income of \$69,411 and 27% higher than the State median household income of \$73,781.

The largest employer of workers in Lebanon is the town itself with approximately 200 full-time employees (plus 50 part time employees) -- the vast majority of which are employed in the public schools. Most residents are employed outside of Lebanon in the communities of Windham, Norwich, Hartford, Groton, Colchester, Mansfield, Glastonbury, Manchester, and Killingly respectively.

Next to town government, the largest employment sector is in the field of agriculture. Of Lebanon’s top 10 taxpayers in 2019, half are agriculturally related operations. Agriculture makes up double the amount of commercial and industrial assessment in Lebanon’s grand list of taxable property, with residential property being the dominant taxable property in town.

**Town of Lebanon  
2019 Top 10 Taxpayers**

Source: Lebanon Assessor

<u>Name</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
Connecticut Light & Power Co. Inc.	\$47,142,190
Algonquin Gas Transmission Co.	15,396,060
Hyponex/Scotts Co.	8,336,430
Prides Corner Farms Incorporated	7,888,240
Hillandale Farms Connecticut LLC	7,254,700
Huntington National Bank	1,675,930
Green Gate LLC	1,671,580
Korten Brian L	1,091,290
Stone Ridge Estates LLC	897,870
Mitlitsky Chain & Ada	821,710

Agricultural Business Development

Agriculture adds to and is a major component of Lebanon’s and the region’s economic diversity. According to UCONN’s *Economic Impacts of Connecticut’s Agricultural Industry* study, Connecticut agricultural industry had a \$3.5 billion economic impact and generated 20,000+/- jobs in 2010. Most farm production dollars are spent locally and contribute to ancillary businesses such as machinery and operators, feed and fertilizer, and veterinary services.

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 2019 *Lebanon Fiscal Value of Land Use Cost of Community Service* study. This study is used to demonstrate the cost to provide town services on a land use basis. It compared the cost of town services for residential, commercial, and farmland or open space land uses, 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 almost equal to commercial development in terms of positive tax benefit.

**Town of Lebanon**  
**Cost to Provide Community Services per Local Dollar of Revenue Raised**

*Source: 2019 Lebanon Cost of Community Services Study*

Residential	\$1.15
Farmland/Open Space	\$0.20
Commercial/Industrial	\$0.17

The study showed that for every dollar (\$1.00) collected in municipal taxes for residential development \$1.15 was expended in municipal services, whereas for commercial/industrial and farmland/open space development \$0.20 and \$0.17 was spent on municipal services respectively.

Agricultural, Commercial, and Industrial Development Zoning

Lebanon’s Zoning Regulations designate five (5) zoning districts which permit non-residential development. These include the Agriculture, Agricultural Tourist Village District, Business, Light Industry, and Village Business District zones.

- ❑ **Agriculture Zone.** Established in 2008, the purpose of the Agriculture zone is to identify land permanently protected for agriculture which contains a permanent conservation restrictive easement. There are approximately 50 properties encompassing 5,500+/- acres currently in the Agriculture zone.



- ❑ **Agricultural Tourist Village District Zone.** Established in 2018, the purpose of the Agricultural Tourist Village District Zone is to allow for permanent agricultural-event business development by special permit to help preserve and promote Lebanon’s agricultural, cultural, and scenic landscapes; and to maintain the long-term viability and sustainability of farmland and agriculture as a principle use, by permitting economic development that combines agriculture with tourism. No parcels are currently zoned Agricultural Tourist Village District.
  
- ❑ **Business District Zone.** Established in 1970, the purpose of the Business District zone is to allow for business development by special permit intermixed with residential properties. Three (3) areas are currently zoned Business. Residential development is permitted in the Business zone.

*Norwich Avenue.* The largest area zoned Business is along Norwich Avenue (Route 616). Prior to construction of Route 2, Norwich Avenue was the main thoroughfare from Hartford to New London and the Rhode Island shore. Since construction of Route 2, Norwich Avenue contains only limited through traffic and new development has been almost exclusively in the form of single-family residential development. Of the 32 parcels zoned Business on Norwich Avenue, only three (3) are developed for business and one is undeveloped. All other parcels contain single-family homes, for which redevelopment of these sites into business could be potentially incompatible with existing residential uses.

*Other.* The remaining areas zoned Business are located at the intersection of Trumbull Highway and Tobacco Street occupied by the Log Cabin restaurant and a vacant parcel; on Beaumont Highway occupied by Country Commons Plaza; and on Camp Mooween Road occupied by the Southeast Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.

- ❑ **Light Industry Zone.** Established in the 1970, 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 impact on natural resources. Three (3) areas are zoned Light Industry.  
*Industrial Park Road.* The largest Light Industry Zone is located on Exeter Road at the Franklin town line. This area is served by rail but lacks public water or sewer. Of the 16 parcels zoned Light Industry in this area, eight (8) are developed for industry, seven (7) contain single-family homes, and one is undeveloped.

*Other.* The remaining Light Industry Zones are located on Norwich Avenue and Scott Hill Road. On Norwich Avenue there are four (4) parcels, two (2) of which have been industrially developed and two (2) contain single family homes. On Scott Hill Road is an undeveloped parcel located at the Route 2 interchange. Apart from this parcel, there is limited potential for future industrial growth in Lebanon.

- ❑ **Village Business District Zone.** Established in 2013, there are two (2) areas zoned Village Business District – the larger of which is in and around Town Hall. This area contains 34 parcels which primarily contain historic residences, as well as the Green Store and Lebanon Green Vineyards. The purpose of the Village Business District Zone is to allow for integrated residential and business development in residential-style structures, including the conversion of residential dwellings to businesses that meets local shopping and service needs. The other Village Business District zone is located on Exeter Road and includes the Mobil Gas Station/general store adjacent to Lyman Memorial High School and a vacant residential property across the street.

#### Business Development in Residential Zones

Lebanon contains multiple home occupation and business uses that are operated from residences. This is due to the allowance of home occupations within all zones except for the Lake zones. In addition, the Zoning Regulations allow residential business uses in residential zones by special permit that afford self-employed contractors, and professional, personal, and retail services. The town should continue to allow home occupations by right and residential business uses by special permit in order to allow greater use of property and provide greater local services for residents when it is compatible with the neighborhood.

#### Heritage Tourism

The preservation and promotion of Lebanon’s superb historic assets should be a central theme of any economic development within the Town Center. Apart from the Historical Society Museum, Governor Jonathan Trumbull House, Governor Jonathan Trumbull Jr. House Museum, and War Office, there are few if any complementary businesses that assist in promoting Lebanon’s heritage tourism. The need for restaurants, public restrooms, and safe pedestrian circulation are all necessary to increase visitation.

#### Housing for Seniors and Younger Persons

Significant changes in demographics and housing needs have taken place over the past several decades. People are marrying later, having fewer children, and choosing to rent long before they consider home ownership. At the same time, older residents are living longer and looking to downsize in their community to be near family and friends. Both groups desire housing that requires no maintenance or yardwork -- of which there is very little housing of this type in Lebanon. This may help explain, in part, why Lebanon’s median age has risen from 42.7 in 2010 to an estimated 47 today, which is older than the estimated 41-year median age in Connecticut or 41.5 median age for New London County.

There is a need to attract young professionals to town who are drawn to the area because of increased defense-related employment in Hartford and New London counties, and provide housing opportunities for seniors.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Recommendations

Due to a lack of public sewer and water, proximity to neighboring commercial centers, limited vacant commercial and industrial zoned land, and resident sentiment, it is unlikely that large-scale commercial or industrial growth will occur in Lebanon over the coming decade. Therefore, the focus of economic development should be on agriculture, home-based business, senior housing, and heritage tourism development.

A. Regulatory Actions. The following recommendations require regulatory action by the *Planning and Zoning Commission*.

1. Continue to rezone properties that become permanently preserved for agriculture through conservation easement as “Agriculture”.
2. Rezone portions of the Business District on Norwich Avenue to Rural Agricultural Residence to mirror the current residential development pattern and to reduce the potential for future land use conflict.
3. Continue to encourage the growth of home occupations and residential business use at a scale and intensity appropriate for existing neighborhoods. Proposed uses must not alter the residential appearance of a property or create negative off-site impacts.
4. Encourage business and housing development proposals that meet the physical, social, economic, and environmental needs of the community, including rezoning when warranted.

B. Non-Regulatory Actions. The following recommendations are non-regulatory in nature and require administrative action. (Implementation responsibility is shown in *italic*.)

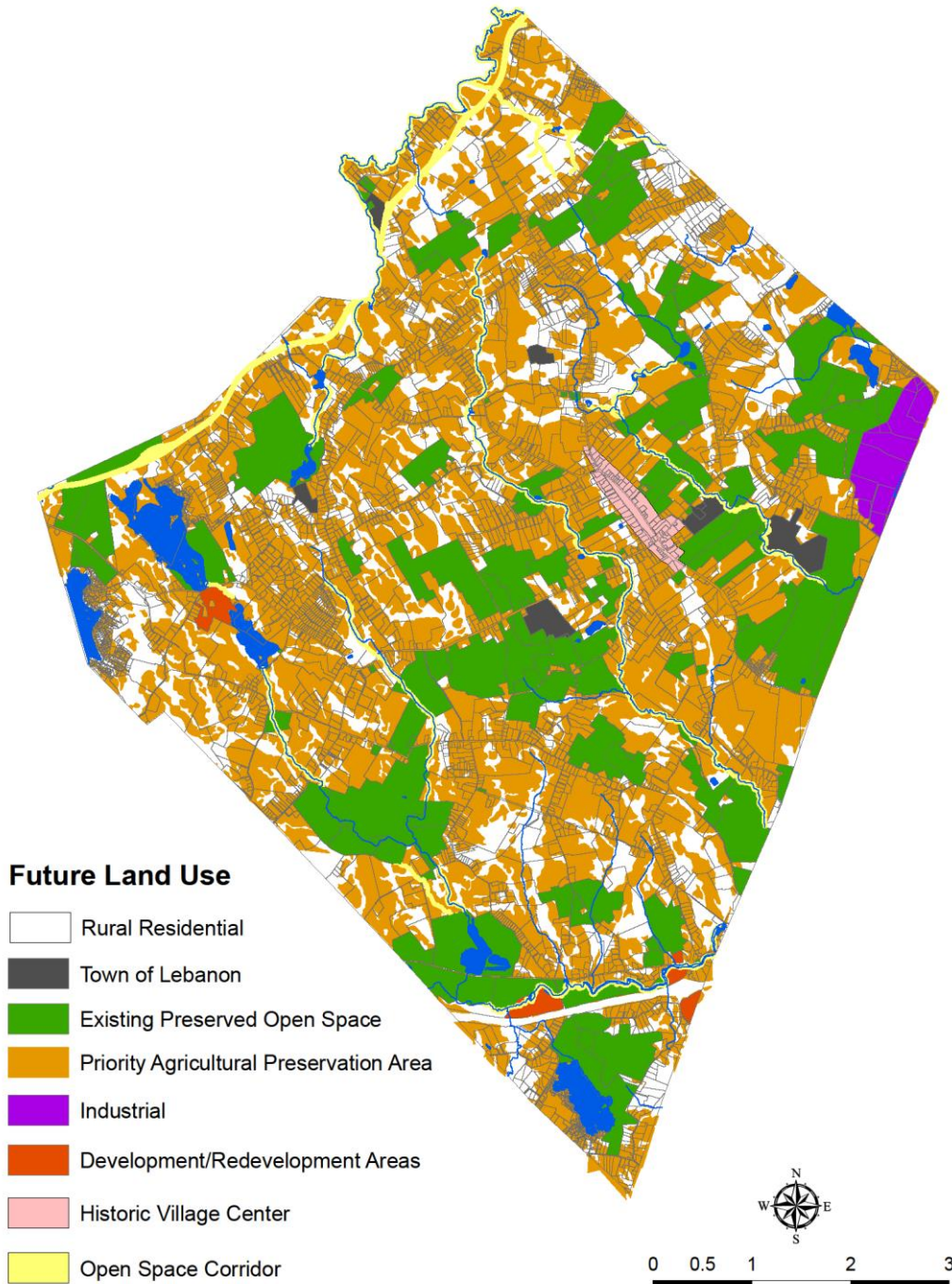
1. Assure that town ordinances, regulations, policies, and actions support the continuation of agricultural use and small businesses. *All Town Boards, Commissions, and Departments*.
2. Connect or loop the walking path around Town Green in the vicinity of the Library, provide additional parking at the Library site for use of those utilizing Lebanon Green, and provide greater utilization of Lebanon Green for community events. *Board of Selectmen*.



3. Utilize town web site to include a list of and links to museums, annual events, agriculture, recreation, and businesses, and prepare and include a town map that locates these features. *Economic Development Commission, Board of Selectmen.*
4. Continue to secure town and grant funding for the Farmer's Market and land preservation. *Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting.*
5. Maintain Economic Development Commission focus on establishing relationships with business property owners and promoting heritage tourism, agriculture, home-based and new businesses. *Economic Development Commission, Board of Selectmen.*
6. Utilize tax abatement program to provide tax incentives to attract new or expanded businesses, senior housing, and targeted development at the Route 2 interchange by offering temporary relief of local property taxes as strategic and long-range economic growth. *Economic Development Commission, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting.*

*The town should consider business and housing development proposals that meet the physical, social, economic, and environmental needs of the community, including rezoning when warranted.*

# Town of Lebanon Future Land Use Plan



Draft Sept 17, 2020