

TOWN OF NEW LEBANON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2021



New Lebanon Comprehensive Plan Update 2021

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DEDICATION:

This Comprehensive Plan Update is dedicated to the memory of John Leonard (Jack) Yurish, who passed away during this past year. Jack "led the charge" in the development and adoption of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan upon which this Plan Update is based.

VISION FOR NEW LEBANON'S FUTURE:

New Lebanon will be an attractive, well-maintained, cohesive and caring community that values its diverse population, rural character, scenic beauty, natural resources, and cultural and historic heritage. In response to the needs of the entire community, it will promote carefully thought out commercial and residential growth, responsible land use, efficient and effective public services, and social and recreational opportunities.

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I. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

I. VISION FOR NEW LEBANON'S FUTURE

New Lebanon will be an attractive, well-maintained, cohesive and caring community that values its diverse population, rural character, scenic beauty, natural resources, and cultural and historic heritage. In response to the needs of the entire community, it will promote carefully thought out commercial and residential growth, responsible land use, efficient and effective public services, and social and recreational opportunities.

II. INTRODUCTION

This document updates the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Town of New Lebanon Town Board in 2005 (2005 Plan). This Plan Update incorporates the 2017 Natural Resources Conservation Plan (NRCP), including its series of maps, and recommended goals and actions. The NRCP is available on the Town website. Hard copies of the NRCP may be purchased in the Town Clerk's office.

A Town's comprehensive plan identifies goals, policies, strategies and specific actions "for the immediate and long term protection, enhancement, growth and development of the Town" (Section 272-a NYS Town Law). Once a comprehensive plan is adopted, all Town land use regulations and decisions must be in accordance with it and plans for capital projects by other governmental agencies must take the comprehensive plan into account.

Obtaining public input is the most critical element of the plan update process. The Plan Update Committee (Committee) had a rich trove of data from past community input efforts. Rather than replicating these, the Committee focused on determining that the data remained relevant.

This Plan Update consists of a current profile of New Lebanon, including a: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis; goals and strategies and an action plan.

III. PROFILE OF NEW LEBANON IN 2020-21

Key findings:

There are fewer of us (by nearly 10% since 2000); we are older (on average 10 years older than in 2000); and there are fewer families with children.

Town residents continue to highly value the Town's rural character, its appearance and natural resources and its small Town character.

The Town's housing stock consists primarily of single homes; the median value is significantly less than the county average and housing costs are just a bit higher than what is considered "affordable" per standard index. Renters, however, pay proportionally more of household income on housing costs than the county average.

Once the home of a few large employers, the Town now consists largely of small businesses and single proprietor/single employee entities, including several home-based businesses.

The Route 20/22 corridor facilitates access into and out of Town; its attendant traffic and speed limit present a "mixed blessing" in terms of economic development and the Town's walkability.

Internet service in Town has significantly improved which facilitates home-based businesses. Affordability for high speed internet for all residents is a challenge. Cell service is sporadic.

Although the Town government and other organizations have enhanced the dissemination of public information, residents cite a need for more frequent information about community events, programs and services.

The Town adopted an updated zoning code in 2011 that implemented many of the recommendations in the 2005 Plan. The code is reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect the changing needs of its residents.

IV. GOALS FOR ACHIEVING THE VISION

Natural Resources:

The important natural resources that occur throughout New Lebanon will be responsibly and sensibly managed and protected.

Environmental Sustainability:

The Town will work to protect its environment and safeguard it for current and future generations.

Agriculture:

Encourage the preservation of existing farms, open farmlands and the creation of new sustainable and economically viable farms.

Community Appearance:

Protect and enhance the Town's natural scenic vistas and the publicly visible aspects of the man-made environment.

Economic Development:

Achieve the long-term economic vitality of the Town through constructive growth of existing businesses and attracting appropriate new businesses, consistent with preserving the Town's rural character and environment.

Housing:

Housing opportunities will be available for all economic levels and age groups.

Tourism:

Increase the utilization of local businesses, recreational resources and Town attractions, programs and events through an increase in awareness of these resources.

Traffic and Transportation:

Maintain and improve the safety and functionality of the roadway infrastructure and promote opportunities for alternative means of public and private transportation.

Community Facilities and Services:

Provide convenient, safe public facilities and maintain appropriate services that meet the needs of the community.

Historic Resources:

Preserve and promote New Lebanon's historic heritage as an integral part of the Town's culture, character, attractiveness and economic future.

Recreation:

Expand recreation opportunities in keeping with the Town's rural, small town character.

Land Use:

Land use patterns will promote reaching the goals and sub-goals set forth in this Plan Update.

II.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT SCOPE

This document updates the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Town of New Lebanon Town Board in 2005 (2005 Plan). The update process began in late 2018 with an exploration of what was entailed in the update process and formally began in mid-2019 with the formation of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (Committee) by the Town Board. In addition, the Town Board endorsed grant applications and appropriated \$10,000 in the 2020 Budget for the project.

Unfortunately, pandemic-related revenue losses resulted in a withdrawal of funding which prevented the planned hiring of a consultant. Plan development tasks during 2020 were undertaken entirely by the volunteer efforts of Committee members. The grant from the Hudson Valley Greenway was restored, effective March 2021, permitting the engagement of Community Planning & Environmental Associates to provide technical support in the completion of the plan and its formal adoption.

Given all of the uncertainties about the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, this Plan Update intentionally targets a short-term time horizon. It is strongly recommended that New Lebanon undertake a broader-scope planning process in the next 3-5 years when financial support is more likely to be available and pandemic-related trends and impacts might also be more apparent.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Town's comprehensive plan identifies goals, policies, strategies and specific actions "for the immediate and long term protection, enhancement, growth and development of the Town" (Section 272-a NYS Town Law). Based on community input, it reflects the community's values, priorities and needs; how to preserve what is best about a Town's present condition and how to address issues that might affect its vision for the future. Once a comprehensive plan is adopted, all Town land use regulations and decisions must be in accordance with it and plans for capital projects by other governmental agencies must take the comprehensive plan into account.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Since the purpose of a comprehensive plan is to reflect the concerns and values of Town residents and landowners, obtaining public input is the most critical element of developing a comprehensive plan. The Committee had a rich trove of data from past community input efforts available to it, including: the input that shaped the 2005 Plan; the Town of New Lebanon Hamlet Revitalization project conducted by Behan Planning and Design in 2014; and the New Lebanon Library Community Conversations project in 2017. Rather than replicating these efforts, the Committee instead sought to determine if their findings remained valid.

After reviewing the summaries of these past community participation efforts, the Committee developed twelve statements that captured what members determined were the most important concerns to the community. These “needs statements” formed the basis for the Comprehensive Plan Alignment Survey that was administered in the spring of 2020. Respondents were also able to add their own needs statement as well as offer comments. Hard copies were sent to each homestead and the survey was posted to the Town’s website and made available at Town Hall and the post offices. A total of 212 people responded. The survey and a tabulation of the results are presented in Appendix A.

To flesh out the survey results, committee members conducted seven focus groups during the summer of 2020. Twenty-two people participated. A summary of each focus group session is presented in Appendix B.

The Plan Update committee invited additional levels of community input after drafting the Plan Update by providing a “first look” to members of the Town Boards and committees and holding two community forums. (See Appendix C) As required by state law, both the Committee and the Town Board conducted public hearings (see Appendix D). In advance of the forums and hearings, copies of the Plan Update were posted to the Town website and copies were made available for review at Town Hall and the New Lebanon Public Library.

The Committee had hoped for a greater level of participation, notably in the focus groups. The level may have been affected by the pandemic. Nonetheless, valuable guidance was obtained. It is of note that following closely

behind the need to replace the lost grocery store, Town residents strongly validated the key 2005 Plan value of preserving the Town's *rural character* and protecting its natural resources. The committee determined that the twelve statements derived from past public participation efforts were a valid expression of resident needs and interests. (Note: terms that are bold and italicized are defined in the Glossary, Appendix F.)

PLAN UPDATE ORGANIZATION

The Profile of New Lebanon chapter begins with a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis that pulls together the data from the Profile and in turn informs the goals, strategies and action plan. The remainder of the Profile describes current conditions in New Lebanon with emphasis of what has changed since 2005. In addition, this update does not repeat information that is contained in the Natural Resource Conservation Plan (NCRP), including its series of maps and its wealth of information about the Town's physical and natural attributes. This Plan Update incorporates the NCRP. The NCRP is available on the Town website. Hard copies of the NCRP may be purchased in the Town Clerk's office.

The Goals and Strategies chapter briefly addresses the status of the goals contained in the 2005 Plan. In most instances, these goals have been carried forward, with minor changes. A new goal related to Environmental Sustainability has been added. Sub-goals further refine the goal statements followed by "indicators" that state benchmarks for tracking goal achievement. These are followed by strategies that set forth potential avenues to achieve the goals.

The Action Plan presents those items that are judged to be achievable in the immediate or near term. There are a far more modest number of action items than in the 2005 Plan in recognition of limited resources, much of it volunteer, available to work on them as well as a desire to focus on those that have been deemed most important. The status of action items from the 2005 Plan is contained in Appendix E.

Going Forward:

This Plan Update serves to reaffirm the ideas, hopes, and vision for shaping New Lebanon’s future expressed in the 2005 Plan while providing a framework for adapting to changing circumstances. It continues to reflect the public’s ideas and concerns while also taking cognizance of the “realities” of limited resources and the ongoing impact of the pandemic. It is, by design, intended to keep the Plan relevant with the strong recommendation that the Town revisit the Plan in the next 3-5 years. The Town should also regularly review this Plan Update’s goals and recommendations to ensure that they continue to be relevant to changing conditions. It is recommended that the Town Board, on a quarterly basis, address the continued relevance of and progress toward achieving goals/recommended actions in their respective areas of responsibility.

**III.
PROFILE OF
NEW LEBANON
IN 2020-21**

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

An important step in updating a comprehensive plan is to understand the Town's assets, challenges, and opportunities. This involves organizing the data obtained from the census and other sources into Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This analysis forms the basis for the development of the Plan Update's vision, goals and strategies and action plan.

Strengths are resources or capabilities that are assets that a community values. Weaknesses are issues, deficiencies, challenges or barriers facing a community. Opportunities are a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something that can be implemented over time to benefit a community. Threats are external or outside factors or situations that can affect a community and that are not easily solved locally. The overall mission of a comprehensive plan is to help a community maintain its strengths, improve upon its weaknesses, take advantage of its opportunities, and stem threats.

The following SWOTs are presented alphabetically and do not represent any prioritization. The data upon which they are based are presented in the sections that follow.

Strengths

- Activities for young and old can be found in Town
- Affordable homes (relative to other places in the County)
- Attractions within Town that benefit residents and help to support the economy
- Caring community where residents have a commitment to the area; sense of place and community and solid interrelationships
- Clean air, clean water
- Diversity of cultures and outlooks; ability to transcend differences
- High-speed internet is largely available
- History and historic-oriented resources as a foundation for economic development
- Locally-sourced food through CSAs and Farmers Market
- Natural resources
- New Lebanon Library; programs, activities, community room

- Nonprofit organizations to aid and enhance the community
- People power - commitment to volunteerism; the ability to quickly marshal resources to address problems; committees working towards the betterment of the community
- Proximity to cultural, recreational, and historic venues
- Rural and small town character; beautiful country roads and vistas; open space; relative peace and quiet
- Small schools where there is more individual attention given
- Town's commitment to maintain and enhance Shatford Memorial Park
- Transportation roadways for vehicular access to a variety of areas

Weaknesses

- High speed internet may not be affordable nor available for all Town residents
- County services are difficult to access
- Diversity along ethnic, racial lines is very limited
- Forest land held privately is not always available for public use
- Grocery store and pharmacy are not available in Town.
- Housing options for seniors and younger families (starter homes) are limited
- Information on services, programs and events not widely available
- Affordable rental housing for low income residents is limited
- Lack of water/sewer infrastructure may be a barrier to business development
- No big employer is located in Town
- No designated bike lanes along roads and trails
- Noise and traffic from the Speedway
- Public transportation is virtually non-existent
- Professional services (contractors) can be difficult to get.
- Resident population is decreasing and aging
- Services and amenities oriented to younger residents/families are not comparable to other Towns in the region

- Some seniors living alone are isolated
- Vacant lots that are small and affordable are scarce

Opportunities

- Alternative means of transportation may be available from a County program
- Communication infrastructure exists that provides a foundation for enhanced communication with residents
- Federal funding to offset COVID-related damage to individuals and businesses
- Independent, smaller grocery store/pharmacy may find the area attractive
- Interest/skills of Town residents, particularly in the tech and information sharing arenas
- Land (33 acres) off of Rte 20 recently donated to the Town
- Neighbors of Northern Columbia County is an untapped resource for seniors
- New residents moving into Town are a potential volunteer resource
- Shatford Memorial Park has more space to meet resident recreational/other needs
- Rutland Railroad bed and Shaker Swamp have significant potential
- Renewable energy, emerging technologies to meet consumer demand
- Vacant commercial spaces can be repurposed to meet resident needs
- Working-from-home may create demand for goods and services as an economic driver
- Wayfinding to identify historical or cultural sites

Threats

- Climate change and its myriad effects on agriculture, the environment, population changes, etc. See also the Natural Resource Conservation Plan for more details
- COVID pandemic has placed economic strain and personal hardship on residents
- Loss of school-aged children and an aging population; a trend that affects much of the Northeast

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

The Plan Update Committee is aware of the recent release of 2020 census data placing the Town's resident population at slightly above 2,500. The data in the following section is based on 2018 estimates from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Detailed 2020 data will not be available for several months. In addition, the Committee is concerned about the disparity between the significant reported growth of its resident population as compared with population loss in almost all other towns in the county.

Please note that for the 2018 estimates, there can be significant margins of error for each data element, meaning the actual number may be higher or lower than what is reported for the element. The data reported for the years 2000 and 2010 are from the actual census for those years.

1. Population

As of 2018, the Town of New Lebanon had an estimated 2221 permanent residents, 233 (9.5%) fewer than its population in 2000 and 3.6% fewer than in 2010. This decrease is a reversal of the upward trend noted and forecast in the 2005 Plan. It is also a trend seen throughout the Northeast and in the surrounding area. Columbia County saw an estimated 5% population decrease between 2010 and 2018.

The average age of Town residents increased by 10 years, from nearly 40 in 2000 to 50 in 2018, The proportion of residents who are 65 years of age or older nearly doubled since 2000 while the proportion of those under 18 years of age nearly halved in the same period.

Pandemic impact: At this point, we do not know if the reported pandemic-induced uptick in home sales in Town will affect the current total and mix of permanent residents.

Population and Age Characteristics for New Lebanon and Columbia County

Characteristic	2000	2010	2018	Columbia Co. 2010	Columbia Co. 2018
Total Population	2,454	2,305	2,221	63,096	59,916
Median Age in years	39.8	46.8	50.0	47.8	48.3
% Under 18 Years	26.1	17.5	15.2	20.3	17.5
% 18-64 Years	61.0	65.8	63.5	61.5	59.1
% 65 Years and older	12.9	16.7	21.3	18.2	23.4
% Male	48.9	51.4	48.0	50.3	49.8
% Female	51.1	48.6	52.0	49.7	50.1

2. Households

Household size continues to decrease as noted in the 2005 Plan. There was a slight decrease in the proportion of family households to total households but a more substantial decrease in the proportion of family households with children (from 36% to 29%). Fewer than 20% of New Lebanon households include persons 18 years or younger while nearly half include persons 65 years or older (10% include a person 65 or older living alone). The majority of households are owner-occupied, while 30% are renter-occupied.

Pandemic impact: It remains to be seen whether household makeup will change with more people moving into Town or if more young adults have chosen to live together or move in with their parents.

Summary of New Lebanon Households

Households	2000	2010	2018
No. of Households	983	1013	997
Persons per Household	2.38	2.30	2.14
Family Households	NA	602	576
% Family Households with children <18	NA	36%	29%

Characteristics of 2018 New Lebanon Households n=997

- Families - Married 79%; male headed 6%; female headed 15%
- HHs with one or more children <18 years old 17%
- HHs with one or more persons 65 years or older 48%
- Householder living alone 31%; 65 years or older 10%
- Owner Occupied 71%; Renter Occupied 29%

ISSUES:

1. The Town's aging population affects the services and amenities desired by Town residents, including

- medical services and a conveniently accessible grocery/pharmacy.
2. Focus group members noted such senior-oriented concerns as isolation of some seniors living alone, transportation for basics, and the need for more information about services and events.
 3. If the Town wishes to attract younger residents, services and amenities oriented to this age group may need to be addressed as well. Housing options may also need to be considered (see below).

B. HOUSING

The number of housing units grew by 12% since 2000 (from 1,201 to an estimated 1,347 in 2018). Since the number of households is only 997, this leaves an estimated 350 units unoccupied full-time by permanent residents. These may be second homes or ones that were for sale. The Town’s housing stock consists primarily of single units (73%); 12% are mobile homes. The remaining 15% are spread fairly evenly between 2 units; 3-4 units and 5+ units.

Approximately half of the Town’s housing units were built before 1960 and only 18 new housing units have been built in the community since 2015.

Age of Units

1939 or earlier	1940 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009
42%	6%	13%	7%	11%	7%	9%

The median value of a New Lebanon home (\$194,000) is significantly below the County average (\$248,901). The affordability index - the ratio of median home value to median household income (\$84,724) - for New Lebanon is 2.3; just a bit higher than what is considered “affordable” at 2.0, according to the Federal government. The relative affordability of New Lebanon homes was seen by some focus group members as an asset to draw younger families. The median homeowner cost per month for housing in 2018 was an estimated \$960, representing 19% of household income. Fully 54% of renters pay in excess of 30% of their monthly household income on rent, (24% of renters pay more than 50% of their income toward rent).

Dollar Value of Owner Occupied Homes (in \$000s)

Location	< \$50	\$50 - \$100	\$100 - \$200	\$200 - \$300	\$300 - \$500	>\$500
New Lebanon	6%	6%	42%	31%	7%	9%
Columbia Co.	7%	6%	23%	28%	22%	14%

Monthly Housing Costs (Own or Rent)

\$300 to \$499	\$500 to \$699	\$700 to \$999	\$1000 to \$1,499	\$1500 to \$1,999	\$2000 to \$2,999	\$3000 or more
8%	10%	36%	17%	11%	8%	4%

**Gross Rent as a % of Household Income
(Median Gross rent = \$946)**

<20%	20% - 29%	30% - 39%	40%- 49%	>50%
23%	8%	22%	8%	24%

The Town zoning code provides for incentive zoning. This mechanism affords potential developers up to 30% more units than would otherwise be permitted on a given property provided they keep 50% of the land involved as open space. To date, there has been no occasion to take advantage of this provision.

Pandemic impact: The local housing market is hot, with many homes and properties purchased by city and suburban dwellers, either as full-time or part-time residence, putting upward pressure on the price of houses and property.

ISSUES:

1. A Housing Study conducted for the Town in 2009 by the Laberge Group and Community Planning Environmental Associates noted:
 - a. decreasing affordability of home ownership for low-to moderate-income residents
 - b. lack of and high cost of rentals
 - c. lack of housing options for seniors to “downsize”
 - d. need to address deteriorating conditions of a number of homes
2. Housing costs and lack of rental units may be barriers to attracting/retaining young families.
3. The Town’s existing housing stock consists primarily of older, larger homes which may be unattractive to a generation more conscious of smaller, energy efficient

housing.

4. There are relatively few small and affordable empty lots.

C. THE ECONOMY

1. Business Activity

New Lebanon was once the home of a few large employers, such as a manufacturing firm, however, today the Town consists largely of small businesses and a significant number of single proprietor/single employee entities. Many of the brick and mortar commercial establishments are located along the Routes 20/22 corridor, which has been considered the “center of Town” for the last few decades. These roads provide excellent north/south and east/west transportation arteries for both commercial and leisure travel. As a result, a number of the commercial establishments in Town (restaurants, lodging, and gas stations) are in a position to serve and benefit from this “crossroads” effect.

In addition to the transportation arteries, there are a number of larger attractions that bring people to New Lebanon. These attractions, apart from employing local people, are a potential source of customers for other commercial establishments in New Lebanon.

New Lebanon’s proximity to important attractions in the Berkshires and Capitol District is also an important economic factor evidenced by the Town’s growing short-term rental sector. The 2005 Plan placed significant emphasis on the promotion of tourism as an economic driver. This view is not universally shared. Survey respondents saw attracting outside visitors as a relatively low Town need and some community members have expressed concern about traffic and other perceived problems associated with increased visitors. The 2005 Plan also envisioned the expansion of the Shaker Museum as a major driver for economic activity, however, this has not occurred and the Museum opted to develop space in Chatham, NY.

The Town’s grocery store has been lost since the 2005 Plan. The Family Dollar, Stewart’s Shops and Dave’s Market (Stephentown) have taken up some of the slack, offering essential groceries that can be picked up in between visits to neighboring New York towns and Pittsfield, MA. Survey respondents and focus group members identified a grocery store as the single most important need for the Town. Despite

considerable efforts over several years, it has not been possible to attract a store.

Perhaps the most positive factor affecting business activity in Town in recent years is the development and improvement of high speed internet. Previously seen as a barrier to growth, the effort by state, county and Town government to improve service provides the Town with greater options on the types of business activity it may attract as well as enabling more work-at-home options

The New Lebanon Business and Economic Development Committee (BEDC), formed in 2020, compiled a list of all known business entities operating in New Lebanon and came up with 107 businesses currently in operation. Several businesses contacted by the committee had ceased business during the pandemic and were not included on this list. This list is a work in progress. The breakdown, by business type, is as follows:

Retail	16	Entertainment	2
Restaurants/Bars/Alcohol	11	Financial	2
Home Services	15	Marketing & Promotion	2
Construction	10	Media	2
Farms	9	Personal Care	2
Lodging	9	Sport & Recreation	2
Automotive	5	Storage	2
Antiques/Used Goods	4	Miscellaneous	3
Food Distribution	5	(daycare, travel, data security)	
Consultants	3	TOTAL:	107
Animals/Animal Care	3		

To increase New Lebanon business, the BEDC has already produced a business directory and has distributed a coupon book, a list of events and available public lands for recreational use. It has also worked on the development of a Town logo and Town slogan in its efforts to create branding for the Town. Regular emails are sent out to Town businesses advising them of grants and other business opportunities of interest. There is also a subgroup of the BEDC working with the building department to update publications and make it easier for people to apply for permits and access the proper procedures.

Pandemic impact: The pandemic will most likely increase the range of businesses working out of New Lebanon, especially those that can be run from home offices. The list of business categories (above) has already started to change in comparison

to 2005, with less emphasis on manufacturing and more on home-based businesses. The increased numbers of persons working from or out of their home as well as the influx of new residents may create a demand for services that are currently unavailable.

ISSUES:

1. Reportedly, various potential grocery owners saw an insufficient population size and other logistical problems as barriers to opening a store here. Focus group members envisioned a smaller, independent grocery as a more likely possibility. It is generally agreed that a grocery/pharmacy would serve as an "anchor" to attract other businesses.
2. It is not widely understood that the most productive way to increase the Town's tax base (and reduce the property tax burden on residents) is the development of new structures:
 - a. Sales tax revenue is based on the proportion of Town population to the County population and not on actual sales generated by local merchants.
 - b. Vacant properties pay the same property tax as occupied ones
 - c. Therefore, new development expands the tax base
3. Any new development must be consistent with the very high priority on preserving the Town's rural character.
4. There is a need to determine the best location(s) to focus economic development, the types of development to attract and infrastructure, if any, needed:
 - a. A Hamlet Revitalization study conducted by Behan Planning and Design in 2014 suggested development should be concentrated in a relatively small area
 - b. A walkable Town center was ranked as a relatively low need on the survey
 - c. There is need to determine if water infrastructure can cost effectively support growth consistent with the Town character
 - d. Focus group members noted that the siting of non-water intensive businesses, such as professional offices, along the 20/22 corridor may reduce this need for water infrastructure

- e. Lesson learned from 2005 Plan is avoid over reliance on any single factor, e.g., Shaker Museum, for economic growth
- 5. More targeted strategies may be needed to overcome resistance to specific proposals as was the case for sidewalks.
- 6. Focus group members noted a need to better support people working from home such as better access to transportation hubs (railroad, airport).

2. Agriculture

As noted in the 2005 Plan, large-scale dairy and other farms have given way to smaller, family-centered farms that do not employ many, if any, non-family members. Many of the current farms use less acreage than most typical commercial farms, on owned or rented land. Some can produce eight types of greens, tilled by a team of horses. Others may profitably keep 100 laying hens in electric net fencing or raise hogs in the woods rooting for acorns, all on less than 20 acres. Many farms sell their products through local CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and some export their products to nearby cities and towns. In 2018, the Town published a farm brochure that highlighted the Town's rich, agricultural past as well as current farm operations. The Town has a vibrant Outdoor Farmers Market, established in 2008. The market runs "in person" operations in the summer and fall and now offers online purchase and in-store purchases in an Indoor Farmers Market.

3. Employment/Unemployment

As noted in the 2005 Plan, the proportion of females in the workforce has grown over the years, and now is equal to their proportion of the population in New Lebanon. As of 2018, females had a much lower unemployment rate than males.

In 2018, about 8% of the total workforce worked out of their homes while the majority used their vehicles to get to work. Of those commuters, about half work locally, while the other half commute in excess of 30 minutes a day.

Pandemic impact: There is no solid data, however, it is generally acknowledged that many more people were unemployed or working fewer hours during the pandemic. It is also likely that more Town residents are working from home.

Employment Data - 2000, 2018

Employment Status:	2000		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 16 and over	1,930	100.0	1,917	100
In Labor Force	1,265	65.5	1,343	70.1
Male in Labor Force	647	51.1	681	50.7
Female in Labor Force	618	48.9	662	49.3
Employed	1,200	92.2	1,241	92.4
Unemployed	65	5.1	102	7.6
Male unemployed	N/A	N/A	74	10.9
Female unemployed	N/A	N/A	28	4.2

Travel to Work Patterns - 2018

Persons 16 years and older n=1223

Means of Transportation to Work	Percent	Commute Time	Percent
Car, truck, van	83%	< 15 minutes	30%
Public transportation	2%	15-29 minutes	18%
Walk	7%	30 - 44 minutes	34%
Work at home	8%	45-59 minutes	13%
		60 minutes or more	6%

Employment by Industry Type

Industry Type	2000	2010	2018
Civilian Employed Population 16 years and older	1200	1457	1241
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	1%	1%	4%
Construction	6%	5%	11%
Manufacturing	15%	10%	9%
Wholesale trade	2%	3%	5%
Retail trade	12%	13%	5%
Transportation & warehousing, utilities	4%	5%	2%
Information	1%	1%	2%
Finance, insurance, real estate	4%	4%	6%
Professional, scientific, management	8%	6%	10%
Educational, health, social service	29%	34%	23%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	9%	13%	15%
Other services	4%	3%	3%
Public administration	7%	1%	5%

4. Income and Poverty Levels

New Lebanon's median household income, at \$58,618, is lower than the median for Columbia County. Since 2000, the number of families living below the poverty level has fallen significantly, but nearly one in ten individuals live below the poverty line. Those who are more likely than average to be living in poverty in 2018 include females living alone, families with young children and persons 25 years or older who have

no high school degree. Very few of the Town’s seniors live in poverty.

Pandemic impact: It is likely that those with poverty-level incomes were adversely affected by the pandemic, particularly those who do not live on retirement incomes.

Income and Poverty Data - 2000 to 2018 Comparison

Incomes Past 12 Months (in \$\$s)	2000	2018
Median Household Income	44,805	58,618
Mean Household Income	51,246	84,724
Per Capita Income	20,529	39,372
Source of Mean Income (# of Households)		
Mean Household Earnings	48,657 (802)	70,090 (800)
Mean wage or salary	47,409 (762)	64,383 (745)
Mean non-farm self-employment	18,455 (157)	51,963 (156)
Mean Social Security	11,444 (270)	22,421 (359)
Mean Public Assistance	1,400 (11)	0 (0)
Mean Retirement	14,157 (207)	30,113 (255)
Poverty Levels: Number (percent of category)		
Families	44 (6.8%)	20 (3.6%)
Married couple	18 (N/A)	10 (2.2%)
Female headed households	19 (18.1%)	11 (12.5%)
Individuals	211 (9.0%)	208 (9.4%)
Children under 18 years old	96 (N/A)	44 (13.2%)
People 65 and over	26 (12%)	5 (1.1%)

Poverty Levels - 2018 Estimates

Population for whom Poverty Level Determined	Total	Below poverty line
Individuals	2216	208 (9.4%)
Male	1066	91 (8.5%)
Female	1150	117 (10.2%)
Unrelated male living alone	324	54 (16.7%)
Unrelated female living alone	344	79 (23.0%)
Children under 5 years old	57	11 (19.3%)
Children under 18 years old	333	44 (13.2%)
18-64 year olds	1410	159 (11.3%)
65 and older	473	5 (1.1%)
Age 25+ w/o HS, GED	166	43 (25.9%)
Age 25+ with HS, GED	402	27 (6.7%)
Age 25+ with some college, AA	605	37 (6.1%)
Age 25+ with Bachelors or more	591	26 (4.4%)

5. Assessments and Taxes The Town has been on a full-value assessment since 2013 resulting in a *100% equalization rate*. (see Appendix F for definitions)

2020 Final Assessment Roll Grand Totals in Dollars
(source: New Lebanon Town Assessor)

Description	Total Parcels	Assessed Value-Land	Assessed Value-Total	Taxable County	Taxable Town	School After STAR
Taxable	1,420	89,214,599	290,571,500	275,855,861	276,171,711	279,428,881
State Owned Land	11	4,342,300	4,439,530	239,500	4,374,710	4,374,710
Special Franchise	19	0	6,320,822	6,320,822	6,320,822	6,320,822
Utilities & NC	15	149,600	20,660,164	20,660,164	20,660,164	20,660,164
Wholly Exempt	59	6,516,000	32,971,200	0	0	0
Total Taxes	1,524	100,222,499	354,963,216	303,076,347	307,527,407	310,784,577

New Lebanon Tax Rates Per \$1,000 Valuation from 2016-2020
(Source: Columbia County Tax Tables)

	2015 Roll	2016 Roll	2017 Roll	2018 Roll	2018 Roll
County	6.527	6.365	6.157	5.963	5.729
Town	2.329	2.703	2.843	2.568	2.419
Lebanon Valley Fire Protection Association	0.712	0.348	0.216	0.510	0.502
New Lebanon Library	0.457	0.456	0.456	0.433	0.446
NL Central Schools	13.786	13.596	13.363	13.045	12.648
Chatham Central Schools	15.564	15.791	15.911	15.246	14.977

Of every dollar in taxes collected in New Lebanon in 2020, \$.58 goes to the school district, \$.26 to the county, \$.12 to the Town (split \$.09 highway and \$.03 general), \$.02 to fire protection and \$.02 to the library.

ISSUES:

1. There is widespread belief that New Lebanon residents do not get their fair share of County services.
2. See Section C in regard to Increasing the Town's tax base via economic and other development.

D. TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Focus group participants see the two major highways (US20, NY22) that traverse the Town and resultant traffic flow as a "mixed blessing." While facilitating resident commuting and access to area attractions, the 40 mph speed limit and traffic volume are seen as impeding the "walkability" in the central business corridor as well as deterring travelers from

stopping in Town. Despite efforts by Town officials over the past several years, the state Department of Transportation has not been receptive to lowering the speed limit. The Town has tried such “traffic calming” strategies as tree plantings. Additional measures may need to be considered. In 2015, Town residents rejected an effort to install sidewalks along the west side of the 20/22 corridor. Focus group members reflected the split views on this matter.

In addition to the state highways, five County roads cover 23 miles, facilitating travel within the Town. (See Section E for Town roads.)

Most residents depend on their vehicles while some use bicycles or walk to get around. There is no bus service in Town and virtually no taxis. Uber and Lyft do not operate in New Lebanon though residents can use them when coming from other areas, but at a high cost. Without a car, it is very difficult to get to nearby cities.

Pandemic impact: During the early stages of the pandemic, the Town facilitated grocery shopping for more vulnerable residents.

ISSUE:

The 40 mph speed limit along the 20/22 corridor is widely seen by residents as a barrier to economic activity and walking/biking in that area.

E. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. Town Resources

a. Town Buildings and Properties

The Town Hall, on the corner of Old Post Road and NY Rte. 22, contains all municipal offices except the Highway Dept. which is located in a separate building across the parking lot. The inability to hold Town meetings in Town Hall was addressed by the addition of the meeting room in 2014, although the Town rejected a more substantial renovation/expansion program. Other building improvements have been made over the years. Town Hall is an old building, with many limitations for future growth of municipal offices, and presents some current use problems, including a lack of official record storage space and the lack of access to the

second floor for stair-challenged persons.

Shatford Memorial Park is located between the New Lebanon High School campus and the New Lebanon Town Hall on Route 22. In recent years, the Town has made significant investments in the facilities located there. (See also: Section G.)

The Town has recently accepted a donation of 33 acres from Ceramaseal with the intent of creating a recreation area in the western part of Town.

In recent years, the Town has held Town Clean-up Days behind the Town Hall through which residents may discard larger trash at only the cost of a small food donation to Charlie's Pantry. This service has helped improve community appearance. Efforts also have been made to ensure the Town residents are protected from point source pollution from the former Town dump through regular water testing.

Pandemic impact: It was not possible to conduct public meetings or court appearances in Town Hall for many months. The public was able to "attend" meetings via the internet and several boards held meetings at the park pavilion or the New Lebanon Firehouse, both of which had wireless installed to facilitate remote attendance. The Town needed to suspend Town Clean-up Day in 2020, however, this widely popular service took place again in late summer 2021.

b. Town Roads

Town roads cover 47 miles throughout the Town of which 13.5 are paved. The Town Highway Superintendent decides which unpaved roads will be paved based on maintenance requirements and resident wishes. The Town is currently in the process of developing an inventory replacement schedule for highway equipment to spread replacement costs over time, instead of shocks to any given budget year.

c. Services, Infrastructure

There is no public sewer or water service within the Town. Solid waste/recycling is done on a county level. A county recycling facility is located at the County Highway Department Garage on West Street. Solid waste must be transported to transfer stations in adjacent Towns at least 20 minutes away from most residents. Residents have the option of engaging private carting services. Town-sponsored recycling activities such as

the Free Store, Bike Recycling Program, and Repair Cafe can help reduce costs for residents.

d. Emergency Services

Many of the concerns presented in the 2005 Plan regarding Town emergency services persist. Also of note, the Lebanon Valley Protective Association (LVPA) discontinued ambulance services which are now provided by Chatham Rescue. In recent years, the Town and the LVPA have worked to resolve issues concerning the cost of fire protection, including the amount of “set-asides” for equipment and possible building replacement.

e. Health Services

There are no health services in Town, emergency or otherwise, which means that residents must travel at least 25-30 minutes for any possible health emergency. There are a few stores which provide basic first aid supplies, but there is no pharmacy for prescription and many other routine health items. Most residents get prescriptions via mail or through neighboring Towns in both New York and Massachusetts.

Mental Health facilities and practitioners are virtually non-existent in New Lebanon. Those that do practice in neighboring Towns are usually booked up and most do not accept insurance.

Residents mention a large problem in Town with both alcohol and substance abuse but very little is available locally to address this. There is an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting held weekly at the local church. Treatment facilities are available in Massachusetts and other local Towns, but there is nothing in New Lebanon or its immediate surrounds.

f. Budgets

In recent years, the Town budget and the amount to be raised by the property tax has remained fairly stable, and Town budgets have adhered to the state tax caps throughout.

Town of New Lebanon Annual Budgets (in dollars)

Year	2018	2019	2020*	2021
General Funds	900,378	864,128	1,148,592	874,078
Highway Funds	720,166	711,819	948,934	686,742
LVPA	67,360	159,500	159,500	148,210
Library	135,000	135,000	135,000	135,000
Budgeted Revenue	659,550	673,300	976,186	514,743
\$ to be raised by taxes	1,042,854	1,058,497	1,026,638	1,028,849
Ambulance on County Tax Bill	168,000	173,439	151,769	130,100
Total Taxes	1,210,854	1,231,936	1,178,407	1,158,949

* includes outright purchase of a truck, rather than bonding.

ISSUES:

1. The age and limitations of the current Town Hall may require investments over time.
2. There is a need to reconcile divergent views about Town road paving and whether to adopt rural road standards.
3. Should the LVPA be unable to sustain itself, due to lack of volunteers, the Town will need to explore other fire protection options, for instance, contracting with neighboring companies.
4. There is possible alignment between economic development and the need for locally-based medical services.
5. See also: Issues under Economic Development regarding water infrastructure.

2. Educational and Library Resources**a. New Lebanon Central School District (NLCSD)**

According to the Public School Review (publicschoolreview.com), NLCSD enrollment as of November, 2020 was 426 students, with 219 Pre-k-6th attending Walter B. Howard Elementary School and 207 at the Junior/Senior High School. The most recent official data from the NYS Education Department is for the 2018-19 school year which follows:

New Lebanon Central School District Information, 2018-19 School Year

Source: NYS Education Dept.

- Total elementary enrollment: 207
- Jr/Sr School enrollment: 207
- Elementary attendance rate: 94%
- High School attendance rate: 91%
- High School suspension rate: 11%
- Graduation rate: 93%

- Average class size: < 20 (with elementary classes 8-15)
- School-lunch eligible: 69
- Teachers: 28

Enrollment by Grade - 2014 - 2019

Yr/Grade	PreK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2016	12	31	24	27	17	29	27	36	34	40	36	35	30	38
2017	13	26	30	27	28	16	31	30	32	35	39	31	38	28
2018	16	28	30	35	29	28	30	33	31	35	36	41	27	37
2019	18	24	27	36	29	38	32	21	35	30	42	29	41	27

Ungraded: 2018=4; 2019=3

Non-Public School Attendance by Residents in NLCSD 2013 vs 2018-2019

School Name	2013	2018-19
Academy of Holy Names	5	1
Darrow School	6	3
Hawthorne Valley	3	2
Mountain Road School*	9	3
Woodlawn Montessori	2	3
Other	4	8
Total	29	20

Note: Mountain Road School has since closed

Graduation Rates by Year

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
% Graduation Rate	95	100	89	95	94	90

Pandemic Impact: School enrollment for 2020-21 has been affected by the pandemic. Several parents have opted to home school or make other education arrangements. The school primarily maintained in-class learning during the year.

ISSUES:

1. Low enrollment relative to capacity is a source of concern to several residents. That said, school budgets, including an extensive renovation project, have passed without difficulty in recent years.
2. Students without access to high-speed internet/Wi-Fi were at a disadvantage during the pandemic.

b. Library

Since 2003, the Library has received most of its annual operating funds from Town tax revenues, under Section 414 of the NYS Education Law. Passed by referendum in 2003 and again in 2007. It is of note that the current level

of funding (\$135,000) is not subject to change by the Town budget process. This funding has allowed the Library to hire a full-time librarian; provide full-time operation; expand/improve facilities, including a community room and children's room; provide more programming; and expand research assistance. The Library has and will continue to rely on an active group of volunteers for daily operations.

Pandemic impact: The Library's ability to serve as a de facto community center was reduced during the worst of the pandemic. Live concerts and programs that had been suspended have begun to return, though resident participation for on-site programs is greatly reduced. Initially fully suspended, in-person library searching and computer use has now returned but may be suspended again if the situation warrants it. Adaptations to the situation include online events and enabling music or art projects by pick-up of individual kits.

3. Utilities

The Town is served by NYSEG (New York State Electric & Gas Corporation) for electricity. About 5% of the Town residents have solar panels. Residents use several ways to heat their homes: electric, gas, propane, oil, coal, or wood-burning stoves/fireplaces. The Town recently updated its Zoning Code to permit large-scale solar in certain commercial districts (see also Section F). The Town has endorsed a community solar program to which residents are subscribing. The program can reduce electricity costs for residents up to 10%. There is also a "Solar for All" program available for lower income residents for additional savings.

Cable/broadband service is provided by two services: Consolidated and Spectrum - both of which now offer high-speed internet. There are still some small pockets of New Lebanon that do not get good internet service, but the vast majority of New Lebanon does. This has allowed more people to work from home. Public Wi-Fi has limited availability around Town. Cell service is sporadic and there are many pockets of Town where cell service is practically impossible. The small number of cell towers in the area limits the ability to improve services.

Pandemic impact: There was more demand for high-speed internet while so many were working/quarantining at home, and this may have caused delayed or slower speeds. Affordability of high-speed internet for all Town residents is reported to be the core issue concerning this service.

ISSUES:

1. The remaining pockets of poor broadband coverage are perhaps the most difficult to resolve. The pandemic reduction of access to the Library's computer resources adversely affected those perhaps most in need. This in turn affected online schooling and support for persons looking for work.
2. There is a need to adopt policy and regulations regarding other sustainable energy sources, such as battery storage and wind power.
3. There is a need to increase cell service throughout New Lebanon.

4. County Services and Challenges

There are 38 departments of Columbia County that offer services to New Lebanon. The Town is at the extreme north of the county which makes it far from the hub of most County services. A drive to Hudson for major services is a 90-minute round trip. Many of these services are not readily accessible or even available to New Lebanon. Examples include:

- The Public Transportation office claims residents can "take Public Transportation to travel to shopping areas, County services and Albany." It currently offers five bus routes: none of which service New Lebanon.
- Senior transportation, which is supposed to provide transportation for seniors aged 60+ is rarely, if ever, spotted here.

5. Volunteers

Volunteers play a critical role in the delivery of Town services; including participation on boards and committees, operation of the Free Store as well as, most recently, organized food drives. In addition, there are countless other opportunities for volunteer services through local organizations, churches and schools. In a small, rural community, the quality of life cannot be maintained without this all-important resource.

6. Communication

In recent years, the Town has made a concerted effort to increase communication with Town residents. The Town Newsletter, issued four times a year, is sent to all residents as well as electronically to a few hundred residents. Various updates and notices are also emailed to that distribution list on a regular basis. In 2020, the Town Board authorized a Town Facebook page. The not-for-profit Grow the Valley puts out a monthly electronic newsletter with items of general interest, including events and other happenings in Town. It also disseminates information through its Facebook page. The New Lebanon Library keeps its patrons and others in the community informed on Library activities via email blasts as well as newsletters.

ISSUES:

The Town recently received a legal opinion that it could not include information about non-tax supported entities in the Town Newsletter. Survey and focus group input indicates a need for more and more frequent information about programs, events and services beyond tax-funded entities. The Town has come up with a way to communicate with residents about local businesses, programs, events and services through two annual BEDC business mailers per year, however a more comprehensive strategy seems to be needed.

F. THE LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Since adoption of the 2005 Plan, the Town has taken several steps to implement the goals and strategies devoted to protecting the Town's rich natural resources and the land, most notably, the creation of the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) by the Town Board in 2009, publication of the Town's first ever Open Space Inventory by the CAC in 2014, and the completion of the Natural Resource Conservation Plan for the Town of New Lebanon (NRCP) by the CAC in 2017. CAC members attend meetings of the Planning and Zoning boards to offer guidance on matters pertaining to the protection of land and natural resources.

The NRCP describes in detail the physical setting of New Lebanon and its land use history before delving into all aspects of the Town's natural resources: mineral, water, biological, farmland, scenic, recreation, and other enduring features. The plan then elaborates on the threats these resources may face before enumerating the protected lands and conservation areas

in Town. Finally, the plan addresses how the Town can achieve conservation goals and lays out action plans. The NRCP includes 22 new and original maps as well as voluminous tables that appear in both the 148-page text and additional appendices. Two of the maps, #21 Recreation Resources and #22 Protected Lands are being updated and are available in the online version of the NRCP.

Rather than recreate this wealth of information in this Plan Update, the NRCP should be viewed as an integral part of this Plan Update and is incorporated herein by reference. The resources, tools and maps contained in the NRCP serve to guide land use decision-making at both the project level by the Planning and Zoning boards as well as the planning and policy-making level by the Town Board toward contributing to the sound stewardship of the Town's resources.

Several of the actions contained in the NRCP's Action Plan are included in or otherwise referenced in this Plan Update's Goals and Strategies and Action Plan chapters. This is to ensure that they carry the same weight as the other goals, strategies and actions contained herein. The NRCP may be viewed on the CAC page on the Town website and a hard copy may be purchased at the Town Clerk's office. The plan is intended to be a living document that will undergo revisions when necessary.

In addition to the formation of the CAC and the creation of the NRCP, other developments since the 2005 Plan that pertain to the protection of natural resources include the Town's adoption of regulations for large scale and residential solar facilities, as well as an updated map of Scenic Resources, capturing additional viewsheds in the Western Hills section of Town and scenic roads throughout Town (which has been incorporated in the online NRCP). A summary of other developments follows:

- 2012: Shaker Swamp Conservancy founded as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization seeking permission from landowners to allow public access to the swamp for education and recreation.
- 2012: The Forest Legacy Program of the U.S. Forest Service identifies parcels on Mt. Lebanon spanning more than 1,000 acres in New Lebanon and Canaan as eligible for conservation easements.
- 2013: New York State recognizes the Wyomanock Creek as a "designated inland waterway." The designation makes New Lebanon eligible for waterway improvement grants.
- 2014: NYSDEC creates Hand Hollow State Forest on 518

acres bordering Hand Hollow Road. The forest encompasses Spiegelberg Lake at its summit.

- 2016: Open Space Institute (OSI) purchases a 483-acre parcel bordering Hand Hollow Road.
- 2017: New York Rural Water Association begins a study of privately owned wells throughout Town, at no charge to the Town, to form the basis of a Source Water Protection Plan.
- 2017: OSI purchases a 60-acre parcel on Hand Hollow Road abutting the 483- acre parcel.
- 2018: New Lebanon 200 celebrates the Town's founding in 1818 with a series of events throughout the year.
- 2018: Water and the Word, an outgrowth of BEHOLD! New Lebanon, debuts as a free computer application offering driving tours and audio chapters that highlight New Lebanon's early history.
- 2019: The Corkscrew Rail Trail, a non-profit grassroots organization incorporated in 2015, purchases at auction a 3.14-acre parcel on Lovers Lane with the abandoned bed of the Rutland Railroad running its length. Ownership of this parcel makes the organization eligible for an array of rail trail improvement grants.
- 2019: Farming in the Lebanon Valley pamphlet is published, funded by a state grant to support the NL 200 celebration
- 2019: NYSDEC purchases 543 acres from OSI bordering Hand Hollow Road, more than doubling the size of Hand Hollow State Forest to 1,061 acres. With the abutting Hand Hollow Community Conservation Area administered by the Columbia Land Conservancy, the public now has access to more than 1,500 acres of recreation land. Note that both NYSDEC and CLC pay local taxes.
- 2020: NYSDEC tests monitoring wells at the abandoned Town Landfill off Old Post Road, finds elevated PFOA levels and subsequently tests 10 privately owned wells downgradient from the landfill. None prove to have elevated PFOA levels.
- 2020: Town Board creates a Climate Smart Community Task Force (CSC). The CSC and CAC work in concert to advance forward-thinking strategies to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. ·
- 2020: The Town became recognized as a Clean Energy Community after completing four priority actions, including energy benchmarking and converting Town street lights to LED lights. The resulting savings from the LED conversion will help reduce the tax burden for residents.

- 2020: As a result of achieving CEC certification, the Town has received several grants for additional energy saving projects. The Town is currently pursuing a community solar program, which will further reduce energy costs for residents, and is also installing an EV charging station with a grant from the NYSDEC. As a result of its actions, New Lebanon is now one of the top three Clean Energy Communities in the Capital Region.
- 2020: Hudson River Estuary Program awards a Trees for Tribs project to a 68- acre parcel bordering County Route 9 and abutting Hand Hollow Community Conservation Area. Volunteers plant more than 200 seedlings in two phases, a first effort aimed at protecting a riparian corridor in Town.
- 2021: The Climate Smart Community Task Force submits achievements totaling 139 points towards being recognized with Bronze Status by New York State. The CSC accumulated these points in record time.
- 2021: The Town awarded a second Trees for Tribs for a project in Shatford Park with plantings of 525 seedlings to forestall erosion along the Wyomanock tributary that flows through the park.
- 2021: CAC administers a water study conducted by the NYS Department of Health that will test up to 20 private wells across the geological formations in Town at no charge. Sampling completed in April 2021 and the confidential results help the Town to determine the status of its drinking water. This pilot program was offered to only three Towns across the state.
- 2021: A Source Water Protection Plan for the Town will be produced by the New York Rural Water Association, at no charge to the Town. A completed plan is expected in 2021.

G. CULTURAL, RECREATION AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

1. Cultural Resources

Many of the cultural resources described in the 2005 Plan continue to exist today. Plans for the expansion of the Shaker Museum on Mt. Lebanon did not come to pass. In recent years, the Town government has sponsored a Music in the Park program.

Pandemic impact: Most of these resources had limited, if any, public events during 2020-early 2021, but are now becoming available.

2. Recreation Resources

a. Shatford Memorial Park

Shatford Park is the Town's municipal recreation facility, consisting of a playground, two tennis courts, a basketball court, three baseball/softball fields, and a seasonal ice skating rink. The Weisbuch Pavilion, with picnic tables, kitchen facilities and recently installed rest rooms, supports many public functions (including Town meetings during the pandemic) and is available for private functions at a nominal fee. Shatford Park has another building that contains restrooms and storage for park maintenance equipment. In recent years, the tennis and basketball courts have been refurbished and enhanced playground equipment added.

b. School Resources

New Lebanon Junior/Senior High School has a heated indoor swimming pool which is ordinarily available for public use year round. The Junior/Senior High School campus also includes a natural surface 400-meter running track, a baseball field, a basketball court and a lighted soccer field. The W.B. Howard Elementary School campus includes a playground, baseball diamond and three soccer fields. The school also has a gymnasium with a basketball court.

c. Speedway

The Lebanon Valley Speedway, Dragway, and Go Karts are located on Route 20 in West Lebanon. This facility is a major recreational draw and attracts thousands of visitors to the area. Survey respondents and focus group participants echoed concerns expressed in 2004-05 about noise and traffic and would like to see greater effort made to manage and control these issues.

d. Water-based Recreation Resources

For a fee, New Lebanon residents are permitted to use the Adams Point beach at Queechy Lake in Canaan, NY. Queechy Lake also has a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) boat launch for "carry-in" vessels only that is available to the general public. The NYSDEC stocks the lake annually with trout, and it is considered an excellent fishing resource, supporting brown and rainbow trout, bass, crappie, perch and other panfish species.

The Wyomanock and Kinderhook Creeks traverse the Town. These waterways include NYSDEC access areas for fishing, swimming, tubing and canoeing. The NYSDEC stocks the streams with trout annually and considers them to be an excellent fishing resource.

e. Natural Resource-based Recreation Resources

The local forests and wood lots in and around New Lebanon abound with wildlife, including black bear, white-tailed deer, bobcat, fisher, fox, turkey, partridge, rabbits, squirrels and a host of other animals. There have been several recent moose sightings as these magnificent animals have wandered through the area. This is a resource that attracts visitors from near and far including hunters, wildlife photographers and artists. Bird watching is enjoyed year round and attracts many visitors, especially during the migration seasons. There are numerous hiking trails in the hills east of Town. Many people use local roads for recreational walking, jogging, and biking.

f. Corkscrew Rail Trail

Located on the abandoned Rutland RR bed, this trail is a resource for biking and hiking. The Corkscrew Rail Trail Association recently purchased property along the proposed trail route to, among other things, qualify it for certain grant opportunities. It is also working with property owners for necessary easements to expand the length of the trail.

g. Columbia Land Conservancy

The Hand Hollow Conservation Area is located near the intersection of Route 9 and Route 34 (Hand Hollow Road). These properties, owned and managed by the Columbia Land Conservancy, support hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

h. Hand Hollow State Forest

This resource is adjacent to the CLC property and was recently expanded. Its main trail leads up to Spiegelberg Pond, ideal for fishing.

ISSUES:

1. Many of the park's active recreation facilities are youth oriented. There is interest in adding more senior-oriented facilities, e.g., bocce ball, pickleball, etc.

2. Widespread knowledge of NLCSD recreation facilities is not available to the public.
3. While undoubtedly a critical resource, the Lebanon Valley Speedway may also adversely affect the Town's economic development, and particularly the real estate market.
4. Focus group participants pointed to several misconceptions about making available private land for public recreational enjoyment, including the portions of the rail bed that the Corkscrew Rail Trail does not own nor have access to, and urged coordinated information and communication to allay such concerns.
5. The lack of portage access to Spiegelberg Pond limits its use.

3. Historic

Many of the historic resources described in the 2005 Plan exist today. The Town's rich historical heritage was showcased in 2018 when it celebrated the 200th anniversary of its chartering (NL200). The Shaker Museum/Mount Lebanon, one of the most significant Shaker sites in the nation, is in the process of moving most of its operations to facilities out of New Lebanon.

H. LAND USE AND ZONING

1. Zoning

A major revision of the zoning code (Chapter 205) was adopted in 2011. The revision implemented several of the proposed actions contained in the 2005 Plan, including the creation of specific zoning districts that are displayed on the Town's Zoning Map. A standing Zoning Rewrite Committee has facilitated the adoption of several code updates in the intervening years.

The Town's zoning code is contained on the Town website. Several other Town code chapters address land use, including: Ch. 88: Campgrounds; Ch. 129: Junkyards; Ch. 145: Mobile Home Parks; Ch.179: Subdivisions; and Ch. 189: Telecommunications Facilities. These are also on the website.

2. Land-use Patterns

Land use patterns in the Town are largely determined by proximity to one of the two major highways or to one of New Lebanon's hamlets: West Lebanon, Lebanon Center, New

Lebanon and Lebanon Springs. The hamlets and the highway corridors are centers of commercial development and/or denser residential development.

Along the County and Town roads, land use is largely single-family residential on two- or five-acre lots. A few farms and businesses exist in these areas. Much of the land is undeveloped and some vacant land is in some stage of returning to a wooded state from previously cleared agricultural use.

The Town issued building permits for 18 new residences between 2015-2020.

From 2015-2020 there were 21 minor subdivisions approved and no major subdivisions requested.

New Residences and Subdivisions 2015-2020 - by Year

Year	New Residences	Subdivisions
2015	2	6
2016	2	2
2017	3	6
2018	4	2
2019	6	3
2020	1	3

3. Conservation Easements

Since 1987, the date of the first conservation easement, the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC) has participated in the establishment of 15 conservation easements for a total of 1,658 acres, representing 36% of the Town’s acreage. These easements preserve open space and help maintain the rural character of the community. The Dutchess Land Conservancy holds an additional 436-acre easement for the Hand Hollow Public Conservation Area (owned by CLC).

ISSUES:

1. The Town adopted incentive zoning as part of the 2011 update, however, to date, no developer has sought to take advantage of it. Increasing the availability of low/moderate cost housing within the Town may require a review of the current incentive structure.
2. A significant outcome of the 2005 Plan was the creation of site plan review. The Town has recently refined site plan review regulations in response to concerns that the zoning code applies this land use tool too widely.

**IV.
GOALS AND
STRATEGIES
FOR
ACHIEVING THE
VISION**

The goals, objectives and strategies set forth in the 2005 Plan serve as a baseline for what follows. Modifications from the 2005 set are based on changing circumstances and changed priorities articulated by residents, as reflected in the Profile. Many of the goals that follow are “asset based” that identify Town assets and planning to maintain them as well as to responsibly use the assets to meet other goals. The Plan Update Committee viewed what had been labeled “Objectives” in the 2005 Plan to be more as “sub-goals,” which amplify the goal statement. In place of “objectives,” this Update substitutes “Indicators.” These are specific and potentially measurable statements that are intended to help the community determine achievement toward the goals. The Strategies under each goal lay out avenues the Town could follow to achieve the goals. The Action Plan contained in Chapter V lays out specific tasks to implement the Strategies.

A. NATURAL RESOURCES

Residents continue to place a high value on the Town’s rural character and the protection of its natural resources. Of the 12 elements included in the Community Survey items, this item rated second most critical and focus group participants consistently echoed these sentiments. This Update carries forward the very high priority set forth in the 2005 Plan to ensure the preservation of the Town’s clean air, uncontaminated soils, fine water resources, and scenic viewsheds as central to the Town’s decisions about future growth and direction.

The Town adopted a Natural Resource Conservation Plan for the Town of New Lebanon 2017 (NRCP) in December 2017. The NRCP should be viewed as an integral part of this Plan Update and is incorporated to it by reference. The information, tools, resources and maps contained in that plan are not repeated in this Plan Update. Several elements of the NRCP Action Plan are reflected, however, in the Strategies below and in the Action Plan to ensure that they carry the same weight as the other strategies and actions contained in this Plan Update.

The 2020 Community Survey listed “renewable energy opportunities” as a separate survey element that ranked seventh of the 12 items. Given the complexity of this topic, a separate Environmental Sustainability section follows this section.

Goal:

The important natural resources that occur throughout New Lebanon will be responsibly and sensibly managed and protected.

Sub-goals:

- Maintain intact floodplain forests wherever possible, especially “ancient” forests.
- Protect pristine riparian corridors from erosion.
- Where possible in farm operations, adopt wildlife-friendly agricultural practices that protect water supplies, build living soils, support native pollinators, and accommodate ground-nesting birds while maintaining efficiency and profitability.
- Prevent degradation of steep slopes.
- Prevent disturbance of wetlands and development within the floodplain that would impact downstream properties and the natural functioning of stream systems.
- Protect sensitive wildlife habitats and migration corridors.
- Promote environmentally sensitive management and use of forest resources that will preserve woodlands and minimize forest fragmentation.
- Promote environmentally sensitive mining practices while preserving extraction of sand and gravel deposits in the floodplain as an allowed land use.

Indicators:

- Well water in Town is determined by testing to be safe.
- Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) are justified and ratified by the Town Board, including the following possibilities: cool ravines; the Warm Spring; Shaker Swamp; areas rich in unconsolidated aquifers; hedgerows in agricultural fields; ridgelines with steep slopes and ledges; riparian corridors threatened by erosion; unfragmented forest expanses; floodplain ancient forest patches; areas rich in intermittent streams and woodland pools.
- The Town’s Open Space Inventory remains current.
- Continued accessibility of sand and gravel resources is preserved.
- The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals consistently afford strong consideration to natural resource information in their decisions

- Hazardous substances such as PCBs and PFOAs are removed from the floodplain, replaced by resilient land uses such as forests, hayfields and pastures.
- Riparian corridors are maintained free from erosion.

Strategies for Town Management of Natural Resources

1. Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) must be justified to the Town Board and then ratified before they are listed on a registry maintained by NYSDEC.
 - a. The registry has no regulatory authority other than requiring that CEAs receive special attention during SEQR reviews in land use decisions.
 - b. Various Town officials received free training and technical assistance from Hudsonia and the Hudson River Estuary Program in identifying potential CEAs and proceeding with the justification process.
 - c. Assure landowner involvement: the Town will not proceed with identifying and then justifying a CEA without buy-in from the landowner(s).
2. The Town will review previously proposed overlay zones, update them as necessary, and adopt them as deemed appropriate. (See Section H, Land Use)
3. The CAC will take the lead to work with private landowners and the Town to apply for additional Trees for Tribs projects to prevent erosion along riparian corridors.
4. The Town will update the 2014 Open Space Inventory and create an Open Space Index with funding received from the Hudson River Estuary Program.
5. The Town will explore the creation of a Mining Overlay District in areas of glacial outwash deposits, requiring that continued accessibility to sand and gravel resources be considered during reviews of land development projects.
6. The Town will assess the results of the 2021 study by Cornell MPA students on the Town's climate vulnerability and, as deemed appropriate, implement their recommended revisions to the Hazard Mitigation Plan. This is expected to include a review of stormwater management approaches throughout Town, such as culvert upgrades, among other recommendations. The Climate Smart Communities Task Force, with

- CAC assistance, will promote resilience in all land use decisions.
7. The Town will study the need for and extend appropriate protection to small streams and isolated wetlands and buffer zones that are critically important to ecosystems and water supplies, but are not protected by state or federal regulation.
 8. Habitat Assessment Guidelines produced by the CAC will be adopted by the Town Board to help ensure that adequate natural resource information becomes part of the decision framework of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals with every land use proposal. Water resources, sensitive habitats, good farmland soils, and important scenic and recreational resources would be seriously considered in land use decisions.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Emphasis on sustainability is a critical component for the Town to survive and thrive as well as to improve its attractiveness for younger families and individuals to remain or settle here. Demonstrating that the Town is committed to leaving it as a better place for future generations will go a long way in this effort.

Environmental Sustainability has many aspects – keeping the natural environment and protecting it from negative impacts, using natural resources in a responsible way without depleting them, planning and implementing climate smart solutions and increasing the Towns’ resiliency with respect to already happening and future negative impacts of global warming.

In the survey, Town residents express strong interest in protecting the environment and the Town’s natural resources, including clean air and water. Survey results reflect a more moderate interest in the Town facilitating larger-scale solar, wind and other non-polluting, renewable energy. In recent years, the Town Board has shown leadership in the climate protection arena, such as through establishing a Climate Smart Communities Task Force (CSC) and authorizing the Town’s participation in the Climate Smart Communities program. The Town Board has also supported several of the specific climate smart planning initiatives, as noted in the Profile.

In 2017 the Town amended the zoning code to permit large-scale solar systems within specific commercial zones.

This Update carries forward the very high priority set forth in the 2005 Plan to ensure the preservation of the Town's clean air, fine water resources, and uncontaminated soils as central to the Town's decision about its future direction and growth.

Goal:

The Town will work to protect its environment and safeguard it for current and future generations.

Subgoals:

- Contribute to decreased dependence on fossil fuels and support energy efficiency and renewable energy production.
- Minimize solid waste, including strategies to promote recycling and composting or anaerobic digestion of organic materials.
- Adapt to climate change (including strategies for public education and engagement).
- Preserve the Town's clean air.
- Preserve the Town's relative quiet from excessive noise.
- Protect the Town's dark skies from glare.

Indicators:

- The Town actively takes energy efficiency and carbon minimization into consideration when purchasing new vehicles and equipment, and when building or maintaining Town buildings.
- Any large-scale renewable energy facilities in New Lebanon are sited and built consistent with the goals of the community and this Plan, especially related to environmental and viewshed protection.
- Charging stations for electric vehicles are available.
- The Town has a strategy to inform, encourage and update citizens about smart energy choices such as heat pumps, solar roofing, and other appropriate measures to minimize carbon emissions.
- Increase in use of warm-glow LED lighting on public and private properties.
- Zoning ensures reduction in light pollution through use of dark sky compliant lighting development standards.
- The Town has solutions in place to minimize solid waste, recycle all materials that can be recycled, and has a well-maintained composting site.

Strategies

- The Town gains an understanding of the aggregate energy needs of residents and businesses.
1. The Town Board will consider and approve requirements for an energy efficient and carbon footprint-reducing purchasing policy for vehicles and equipment, as well as similar requirements for Town-owned buildings and their maintenance.
 2. The Town will add to its website a web page that summarizes all desirable environmental solutions and options for energy-efficient private purchases such as heat pumps, solar roofing, and low glare LEDs. It also will list sources for available tax breaks and grants for such purchases.
 3. Town government will work with the State and private vendors to establish low or no-cost EV charging stations, preferably in the vicinity of existing businesses.
 4. Leverage Clean Energy Communities program to promote Electric Vehicle awareness and adoption.
 5. Town government will incorporate its already existing efforts of waste minimization, recycling and composting in a comprehensive policy. The policy will be reviewed and updated annually.
 6. The Town will continue to support projects and initiatives advanced by the Climate Smart Communities Task Force (CSC), in addition to those that require explicit Town Board approval. The Town will commit to the CSC attaining Silver status.
 7. The Town will review and strengthen the existing solar section of the Zoning Code to ensure impacts to the environment and rural character are eliminated or mitigated for large-scale renewable solar projects. Specifically, the code will address protection of prime farmland soils, sensitive environmental areas as identified in the Town's NRCP, and viewsheds.
 8. The Zoning code will be amended to fully address wind energy facilities and battery storage operations.
 9. The Town will explore the option of pursuing community solar as a Town-wide program, which would reduce energy costs for a majority of residents.

C. AGRICULTURE

New Lebanon’s agricultural heritage and farmland vistas are central to its rural identity and environment. Consistent with the strategies outlined in the 2005 Plan, several local farms, the Farmers Market and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) ventures contribute substantially to the Town’s local food security and in addition draw visitors. Town residents are supporting the Farmers Market/Winter Farmers Market and other “buy local” initiatives. Joint action by the Town, NLCSD, some CSA farmers and local residents have organized free food distribution by the NYS Food Access Program, thereby supporting food security for local residents during the time of COVID-19.

Agriculture has the potential to play a role in improved climate resiliency, as good soil management by way of limited and appropriate tillage methods, use of cover crops, and sustainable cropping systems contribute to soil carbon sequestration. Thus, saving farmland and managing it sustainably is a contributing factor in mitigating the effects of climate change. In addition, an emphasis on biodiversity and promotion of pollinator friendly plants can play an important role in the survival of bees, bumble bees and other pollinators crucial for the survival of agriculture and horticulture as we know it.

Goal:

Encourage the creation of new, sustainable and economically viable farms as well as the preservation of existing farms and open farmlands.

Sub-goals:

- Preserve prime agricultural lands.
- Promote environmentally sensitive farm management and cultivation methods according to organic and regenerative standards and other agroecological approaches.
- Increase the planting of easy-to-pollinate varieties on farms, private and public gardens, parks, and meadows.

Indicators:

- The number of acres being actively farmed in the Town will continue its upward trend.

- The Town actively promotes agroecological cultivation methods to increase environmental sustainability and soil carbon sequestration.
- The gross revenue of local farmers will continue to increase.
- A portion of the Town-owned Shatford Park is converted into an aesthetically pleasing pollinator-friendly meadow.

Strategies to Increase Sustainable Agricultural Activities

1. Educate farmers, would-be farmers and food processing facilities about the possibilities of the GROW-NY program, specifically the Grow New York Food & Agriculture Competition. The program consists of a New York state-funded, Cornell University-administered annual food & ag startup competition. It features pitches and judging and a symposium planned by the NYS Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture at Cornell AgriTech.
2. Disseminate information about the following programs:
 - a. NY Farm Viability Institute grants and tools, especially with respect to the use of data in agriculture, measures to improve soil health and productivity, and support for farmers with measures to increase resilience to climate change. The Institute is a nonprofit grant-making organization that runs a competitive grant program seeking to fund agricultural research and education projects that will create and share knowledge to improve the economic viability of New York's farmers.
 - b. NYS Agriculture and Markets' first time farmer and veterans to farmer programs.
 - c. Cornell University-administered Integrated Pest Management education.
3. The Town will develop a plan to transform a portion of Shatford Park into a pollinator-friendly meadow, including appropriate maintenance.
 - a. The Town will refer to the NYS Utility Corridor Pollinator Habitat Guidelines that addresses soil preparation, seed selection and a planting list.

D. COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

One aspect of the Town's rural character to which Town residents remain committed is its natural beauty, including open spaces and scenic resources as critical to maintaining its rural identity. In addition to a strong wish to protect these resources, Town residents also wish to avoid man-made structures that serve to degrade its appearance. Since the adoption of the 2005 Plan, the Town has made significant strides in implementing land use mechanisms that address community appearance as well as through improved enforcement.

Goal:

Protect and enhance the Town's natural scenic vistas and the publicly visible aspects of the man-made environment.

Sub-Goals:

- Preserve scenic vistas of the area's natural beauty including vistas of woodlands, fields, ridgelines, hillsides, hilltops and valleys, and open spaces.
- Preserve and/or improve scenic vistas that involve man-made structures.

Indicators:

- The amount of protected open space within the Town will continue to increase.
- Hilltops and ridgelines will remain in a natural state; undisturbed by man-made structures.
- Important viewsheds from public spaces, notably roads, will remain clear of obstruction.

Strategies to Protect Scenic Vistas From Degradation:

1. Prohibit development on hilltops and ridgelines and strictly regulate development within a specific distance of hilltops/ridgelines in the following ways:
 - a. Review and adopt the previously drafted hilltop/ridgeline overlay zone. A series of maps defining an overlay zone that incorporated prominent hilltops and ridgelines was developed, however, the zone was never adopted. Required standards for this overlay will need to define the elevations to which the standards will apply and could include careful siting of structures away from hilltops and ridgelines, structure

design to help buildings blend in with natural surroundings, control of exterior lighting, preservation of existing vegetation or provision of new vegetation for screening, burying of utilities, and preservation of open space.

- b. Establish a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) to designate the hilltops as areas, where the Planning Board must take a “hard look” at environmental impact before making a decision on a proposal. (See also the Natural Resources section.)
2. The Natural Resource Conservation Plan contains a viewshed analysis. The zoning code should be updated to include design standards that protect these viewsheds. These standards could cover the same items described above for the hilltop/ ridgeline overlay but should also include siting and design methods to ensure that buildings are carefully sited so that they are in the least obtrusive location and designed to fit in with the natural surroundings. The Town also needs to determine the extent to which these standards may be applied to structures installed by utilities.
3. Develop non-regulatory, voluntary techniques to protect scenic and rural landscapes, such as educational initiatives to assist landowners on how to preserve the character of their land.

Strategies to Improve the Appearance of Commercial and Other Developed Areas:

1. Continue and where possible, strengthen enforcement of Town and building code provisions related to junk and junk cars; storage of equipment, materials, junk, etc. in yards and local property maintenance.
2. Develop and publicize procedures related to site plan review that direct applicants’ attention to the design elements contained in the code.
3. Continue Town Clean-up Days.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic vitality, sustained over time, continues to be a high priority for Town residents, with especially strong emphasis on more ready access to “the basics” such as groceries and pharmacy items (the highest ranked “need” on the Community Survey). Given the high priority also placed on maintaining the Town’s rural, small Town character and the preservation of its natural resources, there continues to be a strong resident aversion to heavy industrial, highly polluting businesses and big-box stores. The lack of a “walkable” downtown is often cited as a deficit for the Town and was raised repeatedly in the focus groups, however, respondents to the Community Survey rated the need for a “Town center” as relatively low. As distinct from previous public input, respondents to the 2020 Community Survey considered the Town serving as a tourist destination as the least important of the 12 survey items; suggesting that tourism as an economic driver should be less of a focus than it was in the 2005 Plan. Perhaps accelerated by the pandemic, there appears to be a significant increase in home-based commercial activity. Participants in the business-oriented focus groups identified the need for greater support to this sector, notably broadband internet connectivity and linkage to transportation hubs.

The formation of the Business and Economic Development Committee (BEDC), directly under the auspices of the Town, is another significant development. Formed in 2020, its hope to focus on future planning gave way to helping to address the more immediate pandemic-influenced issues facing current local businesses. It consists of several sub-committees and is expected to be the main engine toward realizing the economic-related goals set forth in this Plan Update.

Goal:

Achieve the long-term economic vitality of the Town through constructive growth of existing businesses and attracting appropriate new businesses, consistent with preserving the Town’s rural character and environment.

Sub-goals:

- Increase the ready access to “basic” goods and services, including support of the Rolling Grocer and the Farmers Market.

- Increase non-motor vehicular access to Town businesses through their concentration within commercial districts.
- Promote additional commercial activity in West Lebanon.
- Achieve greater use of un- and under-utilized properties, in commercial zones as well as historical properties throughout Town.
- Assure environmentally appropriate economic development through continued prohibition of heavy industrial and highly polluting business and big box stores.
- Expand the home-based business sector by providing necessary infrastructure, notably high-speed internet throughout Town, and other support services.
- Improve water and sewer availability if this has proven to be a hindrance to business activity and is determined to be economically feasible.

Indicators:

- Town residents have more ready access to groceries and pharmacy items.
- A greater proportion of employed Town residents work locally.
- Existing retail businesses achieve increased revenue through “buy local” and other promotion initiatives.
- Vacant commercial space is repurposed and/or occupied.
- New businesses move to Town and thrive.
- More support services for businesses are available, such as a UPS drop-off, an Amazon Locker, and an establishment that provides copy or printing services.

Strategies to Enhance and Support Economic Development:

1. Continue to support and encourage the BEDC to act as an incubator of ideas and a resource for economic development.
2. Working with the BEDC, create an official entity (Development Corp.) to pro-actively pursue economic development.
 - a. The BEDC, in collaboration with business owners and other relevant parties, should develop a conceptual framework for this effort, which should include:
 - i. Emphasis on “nodal” rather than “strip” development;

- ii. Emphasis on light industry, commercial trades, professional, retail and hospitality business;
 - iii. Identification of infrastructure, communication, environmental and zoning issues;
 - iv. Identification of the types of potential businesses desired/appropriate in this area; and
 - v. Maintaining an accurate current list of businesses operating in New Lebanon.
 - b. Establish relationships at the County, State, and Federal levels with entities such as the Center for Economic Growth, Empire State Development Corp. and others to explore economic opportunities and to learn about new strategies for pursuing the Town's economic development goals.
 - c. Develop a multi-year strategic plan for the Town's economic development. Once plans are formulated, seek economic development and micro enterprise grants to pursue defined projects for supporting current businesses and attracting desirable new ones.
3. Continue current "buy local" initiatives such as the coupon program that encourage local residents to support local businesses. Consider expanding the "reach" of current efforts to the surrounding area.
4. The Town should consider the development of targeted marketing strategies directed at specific business sectors as well as prospective residents who may wish to work out of their homes.
 - a. Conduct focus groups with current residents who work out of their homes, either as a home occupation, home based business or remote working to determine their needs to help target marketing strategies.
 - b. To the extent possible, use in-person outreach to potential businesses.
 - c. Reach out to commercial realtors in an effort to steer prospective businesses to New Lebanon.
5. The Town will facilitate the entry of new businesses through improved information about regulatory requirements and public information.
 - a. Create welcome packets for new businesses.
 - b. Create a "user manual" to assist prospective new

- businesses, or current businesses that wish to expand, to navigate the Town's land use processes.
6. Identify new business opportunities and jobs that may be created by the transition to a greener economy, including green energy jobs and infrastructure development. Support training opportunities.
 - a. Compile and make available information and resources related to green energy career opportunities.

F. HOUSING

Town residents continue to identify a need for housing options for senior citizens and for younger individuals and families. Town codes (zoning, subdivisions) were revised to support incentive zoning and, as recommended in the 2005 Plan, the housing that has been created in Town has been single-unit and manufactured modular houses. The Town is more open to exploring such alternatives as multi-unit structures and "tiny homes."

Goal:

Housing opportunities will be available for all economic levels and age groups.

Sub-goals:

- Expand housing options for seniors with emphasis on safety, affordability and access to daily needs
- Expand housing options in order to retain and attract younger and low income individuals and families
- The location and density of homes matches the ability of the land to support them and the community's desire to preserve the Town's rural, small town character

Indicators:

The number of younger residents and families with children will increase.

Strategies:

1. Examine the feasibility and desirability of permitting/encouraging the placement of manufactured homes or other accessory dwellings (e.g., tiny homes) for caregivers on the properties of seniors, to enable seniors to remain safely in their own homes.

- a. Consult the County Department of Health on the potential need for additional septic, water or other infrastructure that would be required.
 - b. Examine where current zoning might require changes.
 - c. Conduct market surveys to determine if sufficient demand exists.
2. Form a working group to examine what other towns are doing to accommodate the needs of older residents and to retain/attract younger individuals and families.
 - a. The working group should interview local realtors to define what they consider to be barriers to attracting younger families to Town as well as the types of development options that may suit the Town's needs.
 - b. The working group should also develop welcome packets for new residents and local realtors.

G. TOURISM

The 2020 survey suggested more ambivalence about promoting tourism than was articulated in the 2005 Plan. Residents ranked making New Lebanon a "tourist destination" as the Town's least important of the 12 needs. There is a significant business constituency that relies on visitors to Town and note is made of a significant growth in the short term rental sector and businesses that bring in visitors from the surrounding area. Several survey comments and focus group members cited a need for more information about programs, activities and events. Thus, there is a confluence of interests in providing information (marketing) about Town resources, programs and events to increase such public awareness on the part of residents and potential visitors alike.

Goal:

Increase the utilization of local businesses, historical, cultural, entertainment and recreational resources, programs and events through an increase in awareness of them.

Sub-goals:

- Leverage the Town's proximity to world-class cultural and recreational resources in the surrounding area in its informational campaigns.
- Create a distinctive, positive identity for the Town.

Indicators:

- Increased participation at recreational /cultural / social programs and events.
- Increased resident patronage of Town businesses.
- The number of persons on distribution lists of current informational outlets (Town newsletter, Grow the Valley newsletter, Library bulletins) continues to increase.
- The number of followers on social media sites related to Town businesses and organizations and businesses continues to grow.

Strategies:

1. Create or enhance media and other informational platforms that promote the Town's recreational, historical, cultural and entertainment resources, including:
 - a. Develop a task force of organizations (public and private) that maintain public information platforms to coordinate promotional and mutually supportive messaging. The task force should explore grant opportunities to obtain professional help in effective information dissemination and communication strategies.
 - b. The Town should expand its website, modelled after many other communities, that features Town and area attractions, provides links to the websites of these resources and maintains an event calendar.
 - c. Utilize the recently developed Town logo and slogan on the informational platforms discussed in the previous strategy as well as on correspondence and messages undertaken by public and private agencies.
2. Increase the public availability of digital resources, including access to high speed internet, to enable resident access to the aforementioned media outlets.
 - a. This strategy could include obtaining grants to provide those lacking digital resources to obtain them and learn how to use them. It could also include working with community organizations to create additional public access to computer equipment, such as that at the Library.
 - b. Provide technology training to seniors and others who will benefit.

H. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

In general, by virtue of the Town's location and the local road system, getting around via motor transport within and outside of Town is reasonably easy. Such access without private automobiles, much less so. There is virtually no support for non-motorized vehicular travel and public transportation is virtually non-existent. Focus group participants, especially those attending the business groups, reaffirmed the "mixed blessings" of the high traffic volume and speed limit along the Routes 20/22 corridor. Since the Town has been unable to convince the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) to lower the speed limit in the corridor, the Town needs to explore other traffic calming measures over which it has control.

Although not specifically addressed in the survey, there is strong anecdotal evidence of interest in more public transportation for both environmental and convenience reasons. There is also interest in providing better public transportation access to transportation hubs. The scenic beauty of the Town's rural roads, as noted in earlier sections, is of high value to residents.

Goal:

Maintain and improve the safety and functionality of the roadway infrastructure and promote opportunities for alternative means of public and private transportation.

Sub-goals:

- Improve safety in areas of high vehicle and pedestrian usage and ensure safe pedestrian access to areas of identified need.
- Plan for changing traffic patterns and volumes and promote traffic access management techniques to control traffic congestion when new development occurs.
- Ensure safe, adequate and accessible parking to meet commercial and public needs.
- Increase opportunities for public transportation and non-motor vehicular transportation within Town.
- Design, build and maintain roads and parking lots consistent with rural road standards and small town character.
- See also Environmental Sustainability regarding electric charging stations.

Indicators:

- Public transportation to important locations within and without Town is available and used.
- Increased opportunities for non-motor vehicular transportation within Town.
- Standards exist that assure consistency between rural road/small town character and Town road construction and maintenance.

Strategies to Improve Safety in Areas of High Vehicle and Pedestrian Usage

1. The Town will consider joining the Complete Streets program to make roads convenient, safe, and efficient for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.
2. Use traffic calming methods when new development occurs such as curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, chicanes and other road engineering solutions to slow traffic and increase pedestrian safety.
3. Work with DOT to evaluate the possibility of conducting a linkage study and/or a pedestrian safety action plan for the New Lebanon area.
4. Develop alternative methods of transportation and routes to promote multi-modal transportation. This should include development of an off-road bicycle/pedestrian corridor focused on the old railroad bed (see Recreation).
5. Encourage the placement of bicycle racks in commercial and recreational areas.

Strategies to Promote Opportunities for Public Transportation:

1. Conduct a local survey to determine commuting patterns of residents as the first step to identify a need, and possible routes that would be used.
2. Work with Columbia County agencies to explore options to extend/increase transportation service for the elderly and disabled in New Lebanon.
3. Identify flexible innovations to promote transportation for seniors.

Strategies to Promote Scenic Enhancement of Roads and Highways:

1. Use the Viewshed Map and information in the NRCP to create an interactive, online scenic inventory.
2. Formally adopt the local roads identified as scenic in order to elevate the importance of viewsheds when projects in those areas are subject to SEQ. R.

- a. Make DOT and the County aware that the Town has identified scenic vistas along their roads and then work with them to ensure vegetation control in those locations is appropriate to maintain such vistas.
3. Identify scenic locations in the various media and communications promoting the Town.
4. Review and update as deemed necessary zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that viewsheds are adequately addressed and protected.

I. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Although public input for the 2005 Plan reflected interest in creating/expanding public facilities (community center, sidewalks, etc.), several initiatives during the ensuing years such as Town hall expansion, sidewalks and a new firehouse have not received sufficient support to be implemented. On the other hand, Town residents have supported “414” funding for the Library, improvements at Shatford Park and a significant capital program for the school district. It is difficult to reconcile such diverse reactions to projects although both the Library and the NLCSD have large and devoted constituencies.

Investment in public facilities is an avenue to achieve other goals such as economic development and recreation. In addition, it is critical for a variety of economic, social and educational reasons that all areas of the Town have access to high quality, high speed internet service.

Volunteers represent perhaps the most significant resource available to support public services, however, of particular concern is the shortage of volunteers for the Lebanon Valley Protective Association.

Goal:

Provide convenient, safe public facilities and maintain appropriate services that meet the needs of the community.

Sub-goals:

- Maximize use of existing public facilities to meet needs of residents, notably, seniors and youth.
- Provide well-designed facilities for local government, with adequate space for staff and public meetings and security for records and judicial proceedings.

- Continue a safe and well maintained Town road system (see also Traffic and Transportation).
- Provide affordable high speed internet service throughout Town.
- Continue effective emergency services and public safety
- Evaluate the need for municipal water and sewers in appropriate locations, and address, if deemed necessary.
- Improve the availability of and dissemination of information regarding both mental and physical health services, including alcohol and drug-abuse services.

Indicators:

- Sufficient space is available to meet the recreation, social and entertainment needs of residents of all ages.
- Town government has sufficient space to operate efficiently and effectively
- All Town residents are able to access internet speeds of at least 100 mb/s.
- The LVPA is staffed and equipped to meet the community's fire safety needs.
- The water in the Lebanon Warm Mineral Spring is potable and available for public use.
- The Town has determined whether the provision for public water in specified areas of the Town is cost effective and otherwise desirable.
- The Shaker Swamp Conservancy makes strides in opening the swamp to the public for educational and recreational purposes.
- Prescription drugs can be accessed in Town through a satellite office or other conveniently located facility.
- Information is readily available to residents in need of either mental or physical health services.
- More outreach to residents from the Town is conducted in order to get people the treatment or services they need.

Strategies to Enhance Public Facilities and Services

1. Promote opportunities for building community and increasing volunteerism within the Town.
2. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan to plan and budget for updates needed to ensure Town facilities adequately meet resident needs. The Capital Improvement Plan should address Town roads, including capital investments in equipment and buildings, as well as staff in order to

- ensure high maintenance of Town roads.
3. Continue to invest in, support, and evolve fire, police, and emergency medical services to meet current and future needs.
 - a. The Climate Smart Communities Task Force (CSC) will take the lead in drafting a Hazard Mitigation Plan to address the potential challenges of climate change for adoption by the Town Board.
 - b. This Plan will consider the findings and recommendations of the CSC Climate Vulnerability Analysis conducted by Cornell graduate school students in 2021, along with input from the Conservation Advisory Council.
 - c. Identify potentially vulnerable populations, such as seniors, or residents living in flood and drought areas, and develop mitigation strategies. Develop cooling center plans.
 4. Continue to make all public facilities and services accessible to all.
 5. Evaluate the need for municipal water and sewer in certain areas of the Town. Such evaluation must include: a needs analysis then a cost/benefit analysis as an initial stage. If determined to be feasible and cost effective, such evaluation should also explore a wide range of technological alternatives for the provision of these services.
 6. The New Lebanon Broadband Committee will continue to monitor the progress of designated providers of high-speed internet services (broadband) to improve internet service in our area.
 - a. Pursue the state goal of 100 Mbps service for the entire state, including rural areas like New Lebanon.
 - b. Continue to assist residents to work with providers to increase the speed, quality and affordability of service delivered to them.
 7. The Town should work with cell providers to increase the number of cell towers or come up with some other solution to increase the availability of cell service.
 8. A Health and wellness committee is formed, whose purpose is to improve information disbursement to residents.
 9. Continue to support food insecure residents through the farmers market support programs.

J. HISTORIC RESOURCES

Although not specifically addressed in the Community Survey and focus groups, by its actions over the past years, the Town remains committed to recognizing and preserving its historic resources. The celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Town's chartering, the rehabilitation of and signage for the Tilden monument and the restoration of significant buildings in Town are examples of this commitment. The Town is currently exploring the creation of one or more historic overlay zones to encourage access to and the effective use of the Town's rich historical resources.

Goal:

Preserve and promote New Lebanon's historic heritage as an integral part of the Town's culture, character, attractiveness and economic future.

Sub-goals:

- Preserve, make accessible and if appropriate, adaptively reuse historic resources, properties and structures within the Town, in particular those associated with the Town's Shaker heritage.
- Assure that any new development is protective of and consistent with any surrounding historic resources.
- Document historic sites.
- Continue the suitable, permanent display and storage of artifacts of Town history.

Indicators:

- Existing un- or under-utilized historic buildings or sites are constructively and creatively used to enable their appreciation by the public.
- The zoning code provides for one or more historic overlay zone(s).

Strategies to Identify, Preserve and Re-Purpose Historic Resources:

1. The Town Historian and Lebanon Valley Historical Society (LVHS) will continue to catalogue, preserve, and display known artifacts of Town history.
2. Provide technical support to residents who wish to identify homes, structures, sites or districts for listing on the State and Federal Register of Historic Places,

- including the production of a step-by-step instructional material.
3. Explore historic overlay zones. Areas to consider include the Shaker Museum, the original Mount Lebanon Shaker settlement, the Warm Mineral Spring and its surrounding area and the Mill Road area, among others.
 4. Determine if the newly created overlay zone(s) qualifies for designation under the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This, potentially, could open up funding and technical help from SHPO to the Town for further protection of historic buildings.
 5. Provide land use boards with the information and tools to ensure that environmental review of matters before them includes consideration of its impact on historic resources. This would include:
 - a. The cataloguing of historically significant buildings and sites by the Town Historian and LVHS.
 - b. Training the boards on NYS CRIS (Cultural Resource Information System, cris.parks.ny.gov) so that they can easily access maps and other information about historic resources as an aid in project review.
 6. To the extent possible, provide technical assistance to residents wishing to access Federal and State grants and other incentives to support the re-use of historic buildings. The Town should consider establishing a revolving loan fund to provide mini-grants and loans to those who are adaptively reusing and rehabilitating historic buildings.
 7. Seek grants and other sources of funding to promote rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings.
 8. The Town Historian will work with the Columbia County Historians group, with assistance from the County, in creating an online map of historic places that will serve as a gateway for tourism and for those interested in a historical tour of New Lebanon.

K. RECREATION

While not seen as “critical” by most survey respondents, an “enriched lifestyle” that included recreational, social and cultural activities received the highest number of “important” ratings of the 12 survey items. The Outdoors focus group reflected a strong interest of many Town residents in recreational outlets. As noted previously, the Town has made sizable investments in the resources directly within its control, notably at Shatford Memorial Park. Note is also made of the demonstrable interest of many Town residents in the Corkscrew Rail Trail.

Goal:

Expand recreation opportunities in keeping with the Town’s rural, small town character.

Sub-goals:

- Increase availability, with appropriate conditions, of multi-use trails for activities such as walking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and horseback riding.
- Protect and expand public access to fishing and boating resources of the Kinderhook and Wyomanock Creeks and Spiegelberg Pond in the State Forest.
- Continue to expand/enhance Town Park facilities to broaden the range of passive and active activities it is able to support.
- Encourage the development of indoor community facilities and programs for recreational activities (see also Community Facilities and Services).
- Provide safe and adequate parking and pedestrian access to recreational facilities.

Indicators:

- The Corkscrew Rail Trail extends further along stretches of the Wyomanock creek with a particular focus on accessibility to the business district.
- Shatford Memorial Park supports additional active recreation such as bocce ball, pickleball.
- Blazed hiking trails within Town continue to increase.
- Snowmobilers have access to increased trail mileage designated for that purpose.
- Portage access to Spiegelberg Pond is available to the public.

Strategies to Enhance Recreation Opportunities in the Town

1. The Town Recreation Commission should develop a community recreation plan to enhance and expand municipal recreational opportunities as well as coordinate with other public and private organizations. The Commission will:
 - a. Develop a plan for the use of the newly-acquired property in West Lebanon.
 - b. Identify funding sources to support development of a recreation needs and facilities plan. Possible sources to explore are local legislative representatives, NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) grants, the Governors' Office for Small Cities and the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.
 - c. Evaluate the cost/benefit and potential usage of a multi-purpose/ multi-age recreation center. Such evaluation, at a minimum, should include the experiences of other communities that have developed such centers in terms of cost and usage.
 - d. Work with the school district to find ways to expand and build on programs using existing school district resources to benefit the broader community.
 - e. Examine the creation of larger-scale events/ activities that will engage a significant number of residents and non-residents (e.g., tournaments). Recruit volunteers to help organize and supervise activities. Outreach to the Lebanon Valley Speedway to explore use of its facilities for such events/activities.
2. Create a map that details public and private recreational sites within the Town that includes key access points from public roads. Identify and map other appropriate recreational corridors, such as abandoned Town roads, for multi-use and hiking-only trails.
3. Assist and support the Corkscrew Rail Trail to pursue State and Federal grants to acquire easements to continue expansion of the trail.
4. Work with OPRHP to identify potential corridors to

link New Lebanon into the statewide snowmobile trail network. Seek designation of any existing local snowmobile trails to ensure eligibility for snowmobile grant programs.

5. In cooperation with neighboring residents and landowners, acquire and develop one or two parking/trailhead areas that provide hiking access to the Pittsfield State Forest (MA) trail system and Taconic Crest Trail from New Lebanon.
6. Use examples of Red Hook and Kinderhook in identifying and developing local bicycle routes along safe and inviting Town and County roads. (See Transportation Section). Investigate creating a link to the Hudson Valley Bikeway. Working with the Columbia County and Town Highway Departments, use local land use planning tools and roads policies to maintain these routes as attractive, low volume/low speed corridors.
7. Work with DOT to maintain the quality of the biking experience along Route 20, which is designated as State Bike Route 5 and connects to Bike Route 9/ Greenway Bike Trail; provide appropriate signage so designating.
8. Assist and support the Shaker Swamp Conservancy to pursue grants and other funding to enable public access to the swamp.
9. Work with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to identify potential additions to fishing easement corridors along the Wyomanock and Kinderhook Creeks and ensure adequate parking and access.
 - a. Identify and acquire land or easements for potential links between fishing access corridors and the old rail bed.
 - b. Identify areas of Kinderhook Creek with sufficient summer flow to allow potential canoe/kayak use and identify parking, access, and launch points.

L. LAND USE

Land use patterns are largely determined through various Town codes (zoning, subdivisions, etc.) and the administration and enforcement of them. This framework must reflect the integration of goals and objectives contained in this Plan

Update. They must balance the public's overarching desire to maintain New Lebanon's rural, small Town character with economic development, increased housing options, and environmental sustainability. This Plan Update reaffirms the most fundamental resident values and interests reflected in the 2005 Plan while also taking into account changing circumstances, technology and community needs. Accordingly, land use tools are subject to an ongoing process of evaluation and updating. The Town has also committed significant resources to the uniform and equitable enforcement of the land use and building codes as was strongly supported by the public as necessary to ensure the implementation of this land use planning framework.

Goal:

Land use patterns will promote reaching the goals and sub-goals set forth in this Plan Update.

Sub-goals:

- Continue to evaluate and revise as necessary, land use codes for compatibility with the Plan Update's goals and objectives.
- Ensure that land use codes and processes are easily understood by the public in general and potential applicants in particular.
- Ensure the uniform and efficient administration and enforcement of land use codes.

Indicators:

- Town codes that affect economic viability, the environment and community character are reviewed on an ongoing basis and updated as deemed appropriate.
- User guides to various land use related application processes are available.

Strategies:

1. Ensure compatibility of current land use codes with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
 - a. Evaluate the existing zoning, subdivision and related regulations and amend as deemed appropriate to achieve consistency.
 - b. Evaluate future amendments to the codes for consistency.

2. Evaluate the zoning overlays that were proposed in the 2005 Plan for which maps were prepared, but never adopted:
 - a. Flood Zone Overlay (adopted, but needs updating)
 - b. Hamlet Overlay
 - c. Ridgeline and Hilltop Overlay
 - d. Historical Overlay
 - e. Agricultural Overlay (may be moot based on state designated overlay)
 - f. Scenic Overlay
3. Evaluate the need to update/revise the current incentive zoning provision in the Zoning Code which has not been used since its adoption in 2011. Consider how the concept of densities (dwellings per acre) for each residential zoning district, as a substitute for minimum lot size can be more creatively applied to make the incentive zoning provision more attractive to developers.
4. Evaluate the re-introduction of Planned Unit Developments (PUD) into the Zoning Code.
5. Continue the equitable and consistent enforcement of land use regulations and policies through the Zoning Enforcement Officer and land use boards to support the goals and strategies of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

V: ACTION PLAN

PRELIMINARY IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

This section outlines steps that can be taken to identify and implement priority recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan. The Town Board can take the following steps to help ensure this Plan can become a reality:

A. Inform the Public About the Plan

Make copies of this Plan available at Town Hall, the local library, and on the Town website.

B. Inform Local Boards and Committees

Distribute this Plan to members of all boards and committees working on behalf of the Town..

C. Set Annual Implementation Goals and Priorities and Hold Annual Community Meetings

Review implementation goals and set priorities on a quarterly basis and provide direction to the various boards and committees assigned to work on specific projects related to the Action Plan. Develop an annual work plan to keep projects on track. Require implementing committees and boards to submit an annual report on their progress and indicate issues, challenges, and potential funding needs for their project(s). In turn, the Town Board should report on this progress to the community through the website, Town Board meetings, and other methods.

D. Keep the Comprehensive Plan Current

This Plan was designed for a 3-5 year lifespan. The Town Board should direct the update of this Plan in the 2-4 year range. The Town Board should also define the maximum intervals at which the adopted plan shall be reviewed.

E. Keep in Close Contact with the boards

Continue periodic Quad Board meetings (Town Board, Planning Board, ZBA, CAC) to address issues and define priorities.

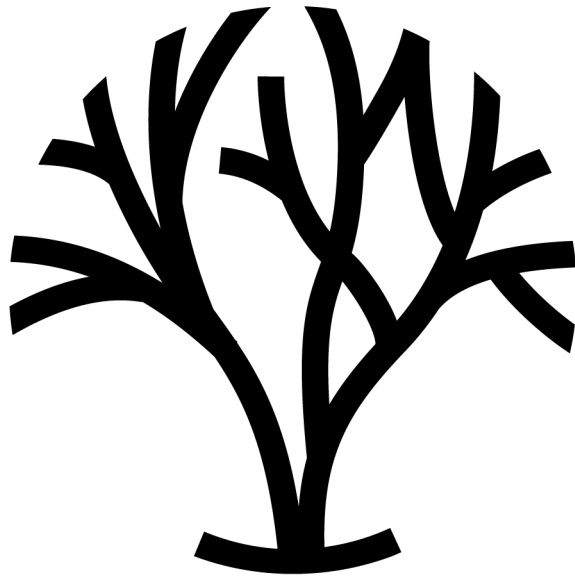
Priority Projects in New Lebanon

This Plan calls for a variety of policy decisions, program initiations, regulatory updates, coordination with regional organizations and agencies. Of the many strategies included in this Plan, the Plan Update Committee identified several as being critical and achievable within a three year time frame. The following charts list those high priority actions, identifies the time frame for completing the action and a reference for strategy(ies) to which the action relates.

ACTION	Time to Complete	Strategy/Reference
<p>The Town Board will direct the CAC to propose Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs)</p> <p>The CAC will submit a proposal for the adoption of CEAs to the Town Board</p>	<p>3/22, proposal by 12/22</p>	<p>Natural Resources-1, Community Appearance-1</p>
<p>The Town Board will direct the ZRC to review previously proposed overlay zones, update them as necessary, and propose accompanying standards</p> <p>The ZRC will submit a proposal for the adoption of overlay zones to the Town Board.</p>	<p>3/22, proposal by 6/23</p>	<p>Natural Resources-2, Community Appearance-1, Historic Resources-3, Land Use-2</p>
<p>The CAC will update the 2014 Open Space Inventory and create an Open Space Index</p>	<p>12/23</p>	<p>Natural Resources-4</p>
<p>The Town will direct the CSC, with CAC assistance, to update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan, taking into consideration the 2021 climate vulnerability study.</p> <p>The CSC will submit a draft updated Hazard Mitigation Plan to the Town Board.</p>	<p>3/22, uipdated plan by 12/22</p>	<p>Natural Resources-6, Community Facilities-3a</p>
<p>The Town Board will direct the ZRC to strengthen existing large scale solar regulations to mitigate potential impacts to the environment and the Town's rural character as well as develop zoning regulations for wind energy and battery storage facilities.</p> <p>The ZRC will submit a proposal for these regulations.</p>	<p>2/22, proposal by 9/22</p>	<p>Environmental Sustainability-7, 8</p>

ACTION	Time to Complete	Strategy/Reference
<p>The Town Board will direct the BEDC to work toward development of an official entity (e.g., Development Corp) to pro-actively pursue economic development.</p> <p>The BEDC will develop a conceptual framework for this effort and submit it for approval to the Town Board.</p>	4/22, framework by 6/23	Economic Development-2
<p>The Town Board will direct the BEDC to develop a targeted marketing strategy to attract businesses to the Town.</p> <p>The BEDC will submit a plan to the Town Board for approval.</p>	2/22, plan by 9/22	Economic Development-4
<p>The Town Board will form a working group to examine what other towns are doing to accommodate the needs of older residents and to retain/attract younger individuals and families.</p> <p>The working group will submit an action plan and conceptual framework to the Town Board for approval.</p>	4/22, plan and framework by 12/22	Housing-2
<p>The BEDC will expand the Town website to feature Town attractions and resources and maintain an event calendar.”</p>	4/22, website online by 9/22	Tourism-1
<p>The Town will consider joining the Complete Streets program to make roads convenient, safe, and efficient for all users.</p>	6/23	Traffic & Transportation-1
<p>The Town Board will direct the CSC to develop a plan for alternative methods of transportation and routes to promote multi-modal transportation throughout Town, with a focus on the old railroad bed.</p>	6/22, plan by 12/22	Traffic & Transportation-4, Recreation-4
<p>The CSC will develop a strategy to encourage the placement of bicycle racks in commercial and recreational areas.</p>	9/22	Traffic & Transportation-5
<p>The Town Board will designate a member to work with Columbia County agencies to extend/increase transportation service for the elderly and disabled in New Lebanon, including flexible innovations.</p>	2/22	Traffic & Transportation/Public Transportation-2, 3

ACTION	Time to Complete	Strategy/Reference
The Town Board will develop a Capital Improvement Plan to plan and budget for updates needed to ensure that Town facilities and roads adequately meet resident needs.	9/22	Community Facilities-2
The BEDC will arrange for a needs analysis, and, if a need is determined, an initial cost benefit analysis. If warranted, the BEDC will take the lead to conduct a feasibility study for municipal water and sewer in certain areas of the Town.	6/23	Community Facilities-5
The Town Board will form a Health and Wellness committee whose purpose is to improve information disbursement to residents.	4/23	Community Facilities-7
The Town Historian will work with the Columbia County Historians group to create an online map of historic places.	TBD	Historic Resources-8
<p>The Town Board will direct the Recreation Commission to develop a community recreation plan</p> <p>The Commission will develop the plan that at a minimum will address the use of the newly-acquired property in West Lebanon; identify potential funding sources; evaluate the cost/benefit and potential usage of a multi-purpose/ multi-age recreation center; assess the benefit of forming a Friends of Shatford Park; and the potential to better utilize NLCSD resources.</p>	2/22, plan by 9/22	Recreation-1
The Town Board will form a Committee to update this Comprehensive Plan in the form of an addendum	9/24	



New Lebanon



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