



**LEBANON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 25, 2024 - 4:00 PM
JOINT MEETING WITH DOWNTOWN LEBANON TIF
ADVISORY BOARD
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL OR
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM
LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE**

1. Call to Order

- A. The September 25, 2024 Joint Economic Development Commission and Downtown Lebanon TIF Advisory Board meeting is hereby called to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

- A. August 28, 2024 (Economic Development Commission)

3. New Business

- A. Update and Presentation on Downtown Parking Lot Redevelopment Study

4. Future Agenda Items

5. Next Meeting Date

- A. Wednesday, October 16, 2024 (Economic Development Commission)

6. Other Business

7. Adjournment

Meetings are open for in-person and remote attendance. Members of the public that wish to attend remotely may do so by going to LebanonNH.gov/Live where you will find instructions on how to enter the meeting. Members of the public will be able to participate and ask questions through the City's virtual platform or by phone. Please note: Should technical difficulties occur during the meeting that disrupts virtual or phone connection(s), the meeting will continue without remote access capabilities.

DRAFT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2024 – 4:00PM
Council Chambers – City Hall – or remote via Virtual Platform
MINUTES

EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: David Newlove (Chair), Dan Nash, Chip Brown, Andrew Key, Councilor Karen Liot Hill (Vice Chair) [4:08pm], and Dean Cashman

EDC MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Doug Whittlesey, Tracy Hutchins (Upper Valley Business Alliance)

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy City Manager David Brooks

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- The August 28, 2024, Economic Development Commission meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. July 24, 2024

Motion by Dan Nash to approve the minutes of July 24, 2024, as presented.

Second by Chip Brown.

** The Vote on the MOTION was approved (5-0-0).*

3. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Update on 20 Spencer Street Redevelopment Project

Councilor Liot Hill entered the meeting at 4:08pm.

Mr. Brooks stated that the applicant has already submitted an application to the Planning Board. The public hearing process will begin on September 9th, though it is unlikely the Board will get through the full review that night. The Planning Board will be asked to schedule a special meeting sometime before the end of September due to the October 1st deadline for submission for grant funding from New Hampshire Housing Finance. The goal is to have a conditional approval in hand by the end of September to facilitate the grant funding request. The applicant and his engineers have done a good job getting a complete application pulled together. There are some waivers requested but the application complies with the basic zoning requirements in terms of use, height, and setbacks, along with the requirements of the Lebanon Downtown District. It is not expected that the applicant will require additional conditional use or special exception approvals, and this project does not have to go before the Zoning Board. During the preapplication reviews, there was discussion regarding EV charging and parking requirements, as the Council previously approved some EV charging requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. The final application shows everything required under those items, but there was some discussion regarding the applicant pursuing a variance those items simultaneously or after-the-fact. There is value in pursuing the project with the EV-ready capability for future infrastructure, but this will be up to the applicant.

- B. Update on Downtown Parking Lot Redevelopment Study

Mr. Brooks explained that he attended the July Farmer's Market with three members of the consultant team. The consultant team also executed another round of the parking utilization study. Mr. Brooks stated that he is working to reach out to some local property managers and building owners to get a sense of their occupancy and vacancy rates, in order to determine how this would impact demand and utilization. The consultant team will be considering some allowed and plausible uses that could go into the spaces and how would that change the demand. The consultants have spent time reviewing the more than 200 survey responses received and comments from the Farmer's Market. The consultants will meet jointly with the EDC and Downtown TIF Committee on September 25th to present this information and there will then be a public meeting from 7:00-8:30pm for a similar presentation.

Mr. Newlove asked if business owners are being asked if they allow their employees to do hybrid work. Mr. Brooks stated that is a good question that has not yet been asked.

C. Master Plan, Chapter 6, Economic Development, Review and Update

The Commission reviewed Chapter 6 of the Master Plan.

4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

The next meeting will be a joint meeting with Downtown TIF regarding the Downtown Parking Lot Redevelopment Study. The Commission will continue to discuss Chapter 6 at a future meeting.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE:

A. September 25, 2024 (Joint Meeting with Downtown TIF)

B. October 16, 2024

The Commission discussed having a small business event as part of the October 16th meeting. The Commission agreed to not meet on the 4th Wednesdays of November and December, and to meet on December 11th instead.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

None at this time.

7. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Dean Cashman to adjourn the meeting at 5:05PM.

Second by Chip Brown.

** The Vote on the MOTION was approved 6-0.*

Respectfully submitted,

Kristan Patenaude

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT REPORT



City of Lebanon

Downtown Parking Lots Redevelopment Study

REVISED 9.17.2024



Placework

Project Team



City of Lebanon Steering Committee:

Beth Beraldi, Public Relations Coordinator
David Brooks, Deputy City Manager / Project Manager
Shaun Mulholland, City Manager

Downtown Lebanon TIF Advisory Board

George Sykes, City Council Representative
Barry Schuster, Chair
Victoria Smith, Property Owner/Occupant
Chris Haidari, Property Owner/Occupant
Peter Owens, Property Owner/Occupant
Shaun Mulholland, District Administrator
Tracy Hutchins, Lebanon Chamber of Commerce

Lebanon Economic Development Commission

Karen Liot Hill, Vice Chair / City Council Representative
Douglas Whittlesey, City Council Representative
Dean Cashman, Citizen Representative
Dan Nash, Citizen Representative
David Newlove, Chair
Andy Key, Citizen Representative
Shaun Mulholland, City Manager
Tracy Hutchins, Upper Valley Business Alliance
David Brooks, Deputy City Manager

Special thanks to Nicole Ford Burley, Lebanon Historical Society / City Historian for providing historic images used in this report..

Placework

Architecture & Project Lead:

Alyssa Manypenny Murphy, Principal
Josh Lacasse, Project Manager
Sara Mountford, Designer

Agency Landscape + Planning

Planning & Landscape Architecture:

Kate Tooke, Principal/Landscape Architect
Rhiannon Sinclair, Principal/Planner
Kari Roynesdal, Associate Urban Planner
Graham Moitoso, Intern



Economic Development Consulting:

Jon Tremontozzi, Principal
Amy Fater, Project Manager
Anjali Katore, Planner, Analyst



Civil / Traffic Engineering:

Eric Gerade, Director of Land Development
Jason Plourde, Traffic Engineer



FB Environmental:

Forrest Bell, Principal
Mindee Goodrum, Project Manager
Lauren Caffé, Asst. Project Manager / Planner

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background



MAP OF DOWNTOWN LEBANON

Placework was retained by the City of Lebanon, NH (the City) in spring 2024 to propose development scenarios for the area known as the “Downtown Parking Lots”, highlighted on the illustration above. The project is a continuation of the City’s 2016 Downtown Vision Plan, which identified the area as an opportunity zone for further consideration. Currently, the site is used as a parking area for approximately 330 vehicles, and connects the existing Mascoma River Greenway extending to the West to the Northern Rail Trail to the East. The site also features approximately 410 feet of riverfront along the Mascoma River, hosts community events, and is the access point to several area buildings.

This report summarizes the study team’s Preliminary Findings Report for the study. The findings in this report are intended to inform planning scenarios to be developed in the next phase of the study, which will be provided in a future revision to this report.

The study will be rooted in research and assessment of the technical, economic, social, regulatory, and other factors impacting potential development of the site. Up to four proposed scenarios will be developed and presented to the City council as options, to inform future planning and development. The City’s stated goals for the project include:

- Strengthen ‘downtown’ experience
- Increase connection to the Mascoma River
- Demonstrate economic viability
- Increase housing
- Enhance bike & pedestrian connectivity

How to Use this Document

The electronic version of this report is provided with “Bookmarks”; readers are encouraged to utilize these bookmarks to aid in navigating the various sections. Additional relevant project documentation is contained in the Appendix to this report (provided under separate cover).



AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE (W/ CITY HALL / LEBANON OPERA HOUSE SHOWN AT RIGHT)



PICTORIAL MAP OF THE PROJECT SITE (PURPLE) AND SURROUNDINGS

Project Scope & Schedule

Key objectives of the study are to evaluate the existing site, engage the public and City officials to develop an understanding of challenges and opportunities, and propose planning scenarios for the area.

The project scope includes site assessment and development of proposed planning scenarios. Assessment scope includes detailed technical, regulatory, environmental, economic, parking and planning assessment of the existing site. Legal review and a detailed technical survey are not in the scope of work, however these tasks will be performed by others and coordinated with the study.

Following the assessment phase, the project team will develop up to (4) development scenarios for the existing site, and these will be evaluated based on the criteria identified above. They may include:

- Development of a riverfront park along the Mascoma River
- Intermediate redevelopment scenario of the study area (may include a riverfront park)
- Full redevelopment scenario of the study area (may include a riverfront park)
- Parking lot reconfiguration and repair

The scope of work also includes development of a public outreach approach, and analysis of public feedback on the project and proposed scenarios.

	2024												2025							
	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	July	Aug			
Meetings		1	2			3/4		5	6				7							
TASK 1: STARTUP/VISIONING																				
Project Kickoff/Visioning																				
Data Gathering & Analysis			A																	
TASK 2: EVALUATION & ANALYSIS																				
Site Evaluation																				
Economic Analysis																				
Outreach / Survey																				
Traffic/Parking/Environmental																				
Prelim. Findings Report						B														
Client Review & Comment																				
TASK 3: SCENARIO PLANNING																				
Visioning																				
Scenario Development																				
Budgeting																				
TASK 4: FINAL REPORT																				
Final Report													C		D					
Client Review & Comment																				
Final Presentations																				

Meetings & Presentations:

1. Kickoff & Visioning
2. Site Evaluation & Interviews
3. Public Forum - Farmer's Market?
4. Community Workshop #1
5. Community Workshop #2
6. Public Forum #2 - Venue TBD
7. City Council Presentation

Deliverables:

- A. Revised Project Schedule, Goals & Vision
- B. Preliminary Findings Report
- C. Draft Final Report
- D. Final Report

Process



INITIAL MEETING WITH DOWNTOWN BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES

The project is led from the City of Lebanon by a 'steering committee' consisting of the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, and Public Relations Coordinator. Additionally, two City Committees - the Downtown TIF Advisory Board and Economic Development Commission - have been engaged to assist as the project develops.

The study began with a Project Kickoff meeting to establish project goals and expectations. Placework and the study team visited the project site on June 11th, 2024 to review existing conditions, meet with the City's project team, and introduce the project to members of the downtown business community. Additional field work, including traffic and parking field observation, as well as boundary and topographic survey and legal work undertaken separately by the City of Lebanon, followed during the summer of 2024.

The combined result of these efforts form Placework and the study team's preliminary findings, and are summarized in this report. They include:

- General site evaluation by planning, architectural, landscape, development, environmental, traffic and civil engineering disciplines.
- Zoning analysis.
- Preliminary analysis of existing geotechnical information provided by the City, and identification of further studies required.
- Traffic and Parking analysis to establish site baseline.
- Market conditions and economic baseline assessment.
- Preliminary environmental assessment memo.

Based on the findings, the City's stated goals, and the outcome of a public engagement process (discussed on the following pages) Placework developed a series of guiding principles; criteria by which eventual planning scenarios will be measured.

Planning scenarios will be further developed during the fall / winter of 2024 and presented to the public and City leadership in early 2025.

Public Engagement

A key element of the planning process includes communicating project information to, and gathering feedback from, the general public. The public engagement for the project consists of a number of separate strategies, summarized below:

Strategy #1: Project Website

Placework is coordinating with the City's Public Relations Coordinator to post project updates, news, and information as it develops to the City of Lebanon website. This includes the link to a Visioning Survey, described below, as well as an option to sign up to receive email or phone alerts specific to the project.

<https://lebanonnh.gov/1772/Downtown-Parking-Lots-Redevelopment>

Lebanon Downtown Parking Lots Redevelopment Study
Public Visioning Kickoff

In partnership with the City of Lebanon, Placework and Agency Landscape + Planning are seeking public feedback regarding the upcoming Downtown Parking Lot Redevelopment Study.

We are requesting assistance from downtown businesses willing to host comment cards in their place of business to solicit and collect input from the public.

Here's how it works:

- **June 11th:** Meet the team, learn about the project, and collect blank comment cards
- **June-July:** Display and collect cards in your place of business
- **Late July:** Placework to collect cards from participating businesses
- **Mid-September:** City to host a public visioning session to present the findings
- **Fall-Winter 2024/25:** Project team will use the findings to develop concept scenarios for Downtown Parking Lots

Thank you for your interest in our project!

Placework
<https://placework.studio>

Agency Landscape + Planning
<https://agencylp.com>

Share your ideas on the Downtown Parking Lots Redevelopment Study!

The City is working on a plan that will envision different scenarios for the parking lot in Downtown Lebanon.

What do you think its future should address?

What are your dreams for Lebanon's Downtown riverfront?

What does the future Downtown riverfront need to address?

Scan here to learn more about the project, take our survey and sign up for project emails:

Strategy #2: Public Visioning Survey

During the initial visit, the team kicked off a public visioning survey via online survey and by engaging the assistance of local businesses. Information flyers with QR codes linked to the City's project website and a virtual were posted in public buildings and select downtown businesses.

Additionally, physical visioning cards were distributed and collected by downtown businesses and public buildings including City Hall, the Public Library, the Carter Community Building Association, and several others.

Both the online and physical version of the survey asked participants to describe their dreams and vision for the future of Lebanon's Downtown Riverfront. The survey produced 283 responses, which were collated and analyzed during the month of August, and summarized within this report. Preliminary review of these responses revealed general support for riverfront park/river access, affordable housing, connections to trail infrastructure and preserving parking availability, as well as the need to host outdoor events.

A complete version of the survey responses has been appended to this report.



Strategy #3: Tabling at Farmer's Market

On June 27th, team members from Placework, Agency Landscape and Planning attended the Lebanon Farmer's Market, along with David Brooks from the City of Lebanon. The purpose of the visit was to build public awareness of the project, discuss the project with interested members of the public, and solicit additional feedback via public visioning cards.

Strategy #4: Harnessing Local Planning, Real Estate & Development Expertise

Team members connected with Goody Clancy, authors of the Downtown Vision Plan (2016) to learn more about the process, goals, and considerations for the downtown parking lots. Additionally, Landwise reached out to several local brokers and developers to inform the market analysis and better understand potential demand for residential and commercial uses on site.

Strategy #5: Public Forums

Placework will conduct two public forums during the course of the project, to inform the development of planning proposals:

- September 2024: Placework will present preliminary assessment findings, review and confirm guiding principles, collect additional feedback, and preview the concept development process.
- January/February 2025: Placework will present the four planning scenarios developed in the fall/winter and solicit feedback in advance of finalizing.

Strategy #6: Present to City Council

The project will conclude with a public presentation to the Lebanon City Council to present the findings and recommendations - these meetings are free and open to the public, and typically live-streamed on the web.

Key Findings

The results of the study team's site evaluation are presented in detail in this report. This section summarizes the key findings, which are grouped into several categories:



Grounding in site

Ecology, History, Water & Land

Findings pertaining to the physical site, its history and surroundings.

It's all Connected

Infrastructure, Connectivity & Regulation

Findings pertaining to site's connection to it's surroundings, utility networks, and regulatory considerations.



Upper Valley Vibes

Demographics, Market Analysis & Public Feedback

Findings pertaining to the project's cultural, social and economic environment.

Grounding in Site

Ecology, history, water & land

1. Train line easement bisects the site.

Train infrastructure no longer exists, but use rights and restrictions may remain. Further legal and title opinions are necessary.

2. Property ownership for portions of the site to be verified.

The boundary survey did not recover evidence of City ownership of select portions of the site, though the City may still be able to claim ownership through further research.

3. River is virtually invisible from parking lot.

Historic conditions reflect a 'working' riverbank with mill buildings, rail yards and industry. Area overgrown with native and invasive species.

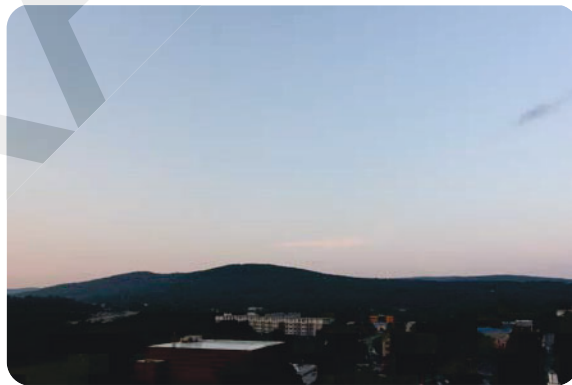
4. Lower parking lot is within the 100-year flood plain.

No recent significant flooding reported.

5. Several eras in history have been removed or destroyed.

Natural state, pre-industrial conditions and industrial conditions.

6. Stormwater discharges directly into the river.



It's All Connected

Infrastructure, connectivity & regulation

1. Concern over parking availability & management.

Worst-case parking demand occurs during special events 3-5 times per year.

2. Pedestrian connectivity & accessibility limited by parking lot & grade changes.

Currently there is poor control and limited separation of vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

3. Heavily engineered site and surroundings.

Retaining walls divide the site and channelize the Mascoma River. Remnants of historic structures exist within the river itself.

4. Limited architectural character.

Urban renewal-era structures dominate parts of the site, and surrounding buildings face 'away' from the site. Future changes to City Historic District may further regulate site.

5. Poor soil bearing capacity anticipated.

High likelihood of structurally unsuitable soil conditions may complicate future redevelopment.

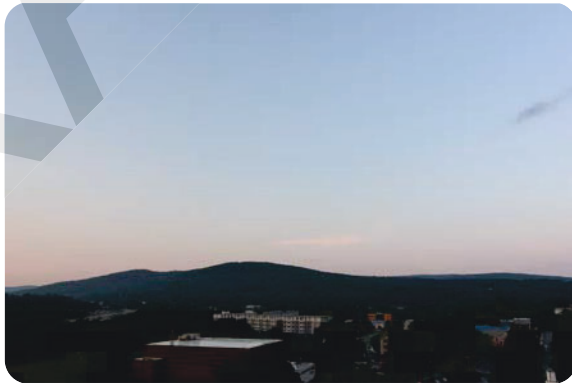
6. Confluence of utilities on and underneath site.



Upper Valley Vibes

Demographics, market analysis & public feedback

- 1. Median home price has doubled in the last ten years.**
- 2. Events are a major downtown economic driver.**
- 3. Market rate housing and commercial (restaurant) use drive demand.**
Demand for office use is weak.
- 4. Over 500 planned new downtown residential units.**
Versus estimated demand of 1,250 units within Lebanon, and over 5,600 regionally.¹
- 5. TIF revenue is possible funding/subsidy source.**
While 33% fund tunnel project bond debt, 67% have been accumulating. Anticipated 2025 balance of approximately \$2M.
- 6. Public feedback: 283 responses.**
General support for riverfront park/river access, preserving parking availability, as well accommodation for future outdoor events.



1. Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) Regional Housing Needs Assessment 2023

Guiding Principles



Based on the findings of the site assessment, the City's stated goals, and public feedback, the team developed a list of Guiding Principles for the project. As the project proceeds into the development of planning scenarios, these will be used to evaluate the merits of each scenario.

Future engagement with City staff and the Public will assist the design team in confirming and prioritizing these Principles:

Feasibility without Subsidies > make sound financial investments that generate revenue.

Economic Benefits Direct Tax/Spin-offs > build local and economic strength and amplify the Downtown's identity.

Supply of Housing > expand housing choices for Lebanon residents at all life stages.

Connecting to the River > create places and experiences that draw people to the Mascoma River and to regional destinations.

Opportunities for Recreation > increase the mix and year-round availability of activities that are centered on arts, recreation, and learning.

Site Sustainability > embrace growth and sustainability through climate-forward building.

Improved Circulation > prioritize accessibility for all visitors to the riverfront. Control the flow of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrian traffic to maximize safety.

Ease of Parking > enhance travel opportunities that make it easier for people to park, and encourage more sustainable forms of getting Downtown.

Considerations

During the initial site assessment, the team identified several key considerations which may impact the feasibility, cost or quality of potential site development options. These topics are discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this report, but a high-level summary of each follows below:

Ownership

While the City of Lebanon owns the majority of the project site, the survey was not able to locate record of deed for select portions of the project site. Additionally, certain deed rights to outside interests may remain, including the potential right to operate a railroad. As a result, the City's title company is unable to certify clear title. This matter is being resolved through the City's attorney, land surveyor, and title company, and may require engagement with additional parties to resolve. It is worth noting that though the owner of the rail line no longer exists; its interests in this area were transferred to the State of New Hampshire.

Parking

The single most common concern from survey respondents was ensuring an adequate quantity of convenient parking to support Downtown Lebanon in future development. A parking study was conducted as part of this report, sampling parking utilization on a typical summer Thursday and typical Saturday. The study showed that the maximum weekday occupancy in the study area peaked around 64% on Thursday evening. A complete version of the study has been appended to this report.

Soil Quality

Geotechnical field investigation is outside of the scope of this report. However the study team reviewed record documents from prior geotechnical investigation conducted on a portion of the site during the 1990's, which revealed generally poor soil quality. This, combined the site's historic use as an industrial and rail yard and the changing historic extent of the riverbank, suggest that any substantial future development may require complex foundation systems or structural ground improvements, adding cost to the potential project(s).

In addition to the structural quality of soils in the area, the site's history suggest the potential for soil contamination as well. Again, evaluating this is outside the scope of the current study, but the City could consider performing, or stipulate development partner(s) perform additional environmental testing described in the Environmental Assessment portion of this report.

Taxes and Public Perception

The City is currently planning significant tax increases to support expenses, and the general cost of living in the upper valley has increased dramatically, with the median home price in the area doubling since 2017. Taxpayers may be wary of proposed scenarios which present (or are perceived to present) an undue burden. This may be mitigated by proposing planning scenarios which defray costs to the City through revenue generation, partnerships with private developers, or other strategies.

Maintainability of solutions

Care must be taken in developing solutions which can be easily maintained and implemented in the long term by City or private stakeholders. Proposals that present undue burden on the City should be avoided during the planning process.

Planning Scenarios

Tbd in a future revision.

DRAFT

Fiscal Impact

Baseline Considerations

Today the two City-owned parcels at 0 Hanover Street and 0 Flynn Street are tax-exempt parking lots which offer free parking to the general public. Different aspirations have been articulated for the future of these lots – prioritizing these goals will be key to ranking alternatives. As property owners will soon be facing an unprecedented increase in tax bills, feasibility without municipal subsidies may be one of the leading concerns. The 2023 tax rate for Lebanon is \$24.28 per \$1,000 of assessed value for both residential and commercial properties. The final 2024 tax rate will be set in October/November.

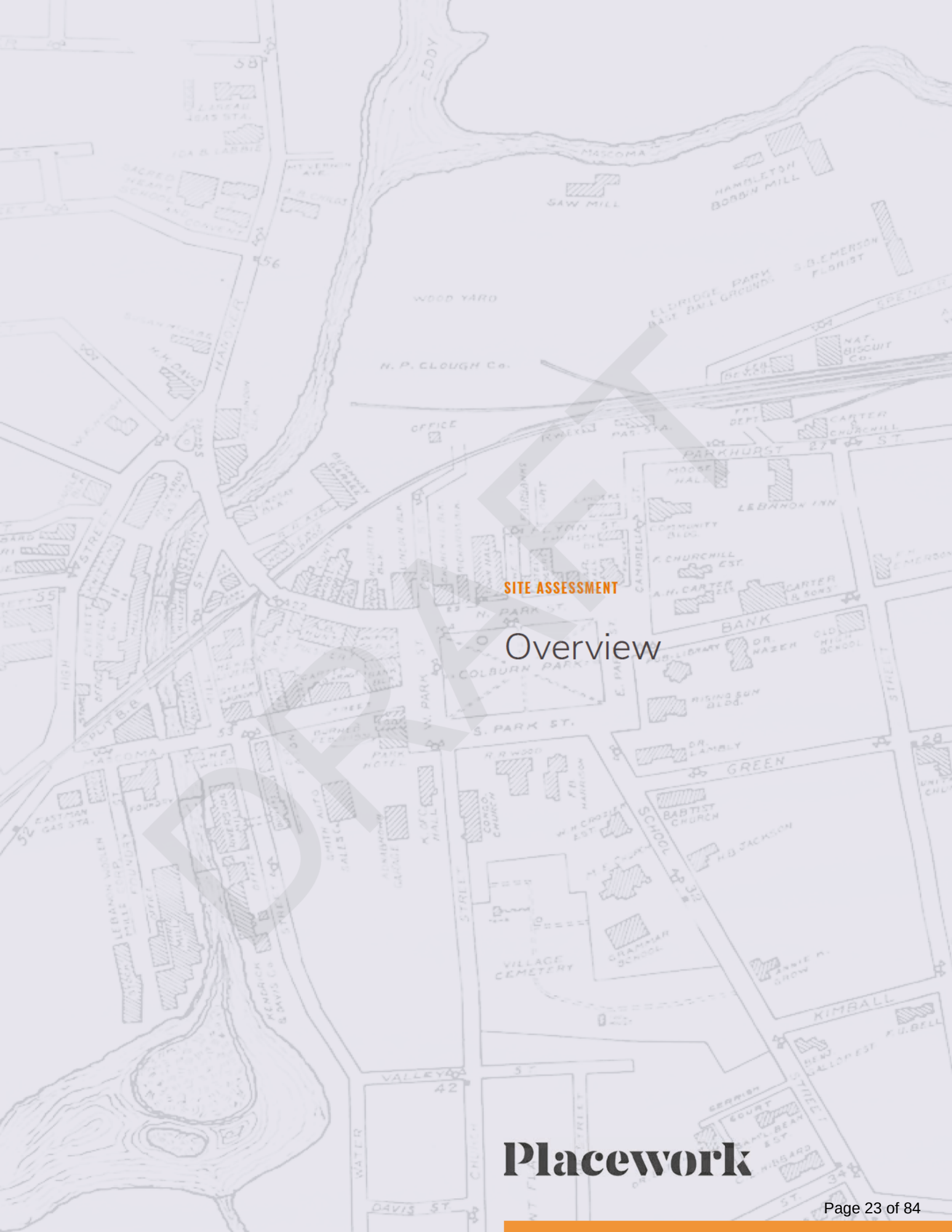
Redevelopment could act as a catalyst for the area, reinventing the way buildings relate to the riverfront and elevating surrounding property values long-term. Development of scenarios and evaluation criteria will factor in revenue generation and costs (both upfront and recurring).

Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District

Following the Downtown Vision Plan and Tunnel Assessment (2016), which identified downtown infrastructure improvements as important to the continued vitality and attractiveness of the downtown area, the Downtown Lebanon Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District was established (2018). TIF funds have been paying off the tunnel bond debt, additional revenues which have been accumulating are anticipated to reach \$2M in the next year. Source funds for redevelopment of the downtown parking lots could potentially include the Downtown TIF revenues.



SITES ASSESMENT



SITE ASSESSMENT

Overview

Placework

Overview

The project site is comprised of two separate lots, 91-230 and 91-245 on the Lebanon City tax map, divided in two by a retaining wall demarcating the location of a former rail line running through the site. The lots are separated by another parcel, formerly a right-of-way for the A third lot, 92-17, is also owned by the City and may be part of the proposed redevelopment strategy.

The site area is approximately 2.9 acres and features 410 feet of frontage along the Mascoma River. It is currently used as a parking area for approximately 333 cars, as well as an extension of Taylor Street, which connects to Hanover Street at the western limit of the site. The Mascoma River Greenway and Northern Rail Trail converge at the project site, making the connection through a parking lot with limited wayfinding or bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure.



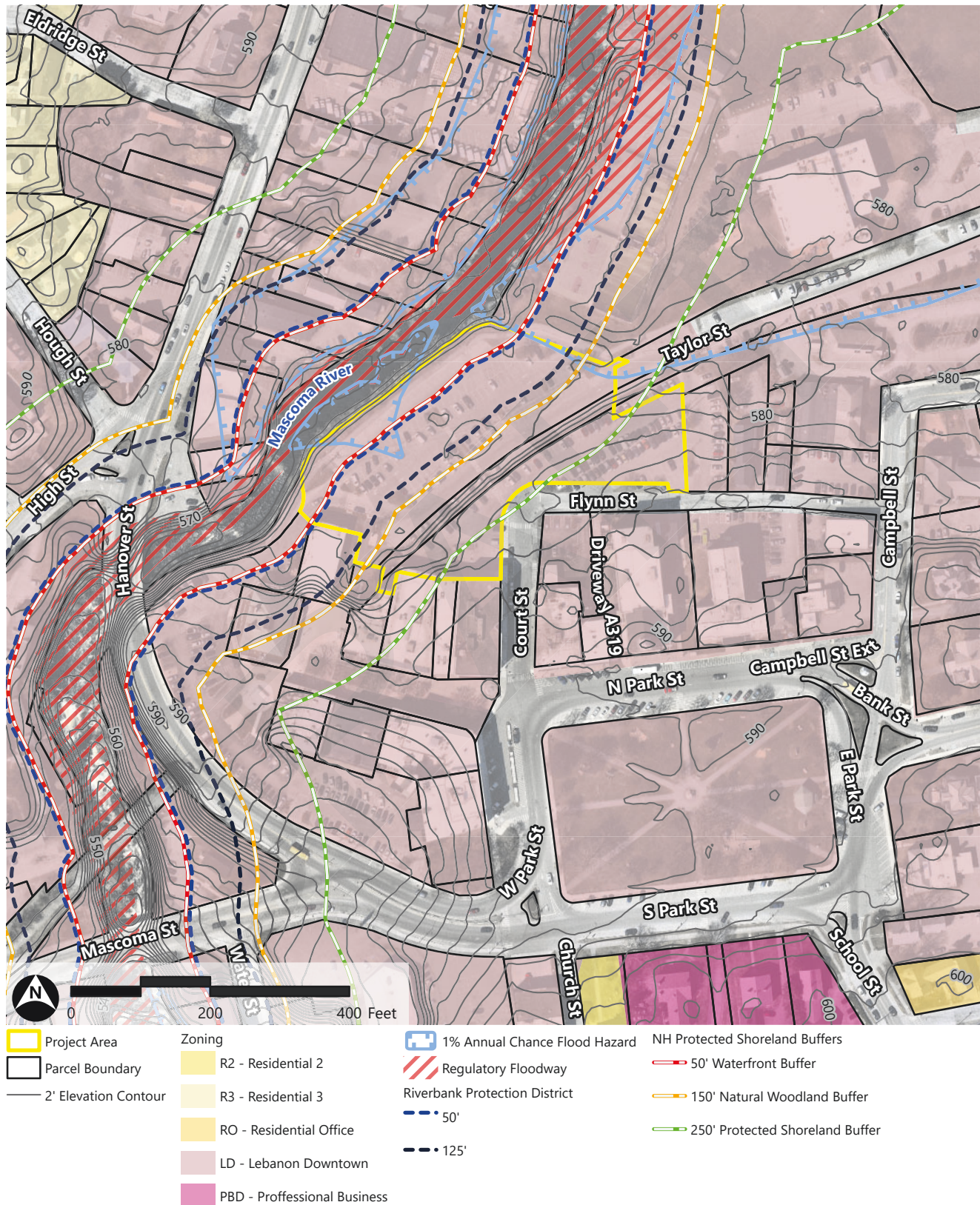
AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE LOOKING EAST

Notable surroundings include Lebanon City Hall and Opera House, River Valley Community College, the Carter Community Building Association (CCBA) Witherell Recreation Center, and other privately owned office, residential, and commercial buildings. The site is heavily used for parking in downtown Lebanon, most crucially during special events including the Lebanon Farmer's Market, Lightning Soccer events at the rec center, and Opera House events.

Potential development scenarios for this site have not yet been fully defined, but the City has requested consideration for:

- Development of a riverfront park along the Mascoma River
- Intermediate redevelopment scenario of the study area (may include a riverfront park)
- Full redevelopment scenario of the study area (may include a riverfront park)
- Parking lot reconfiguration and repair

Site Overview Map



SOURCE: CITY OF LEBANON, NHGRANIT, VHB, NEARMAP

Process

During summer 2024, the study team evaluated the project site to develop an understanding of the opportunities and constraints governing the project site. These include regulatory issues such as zoning, flood, and permitting, land ownership and legal issues, technical considerations such as existing utility networks, existing infrastructure, connectivity to surroundings, ecological conditions, and other issues. Taken together, they form the team’s collective understanding of the existing site.

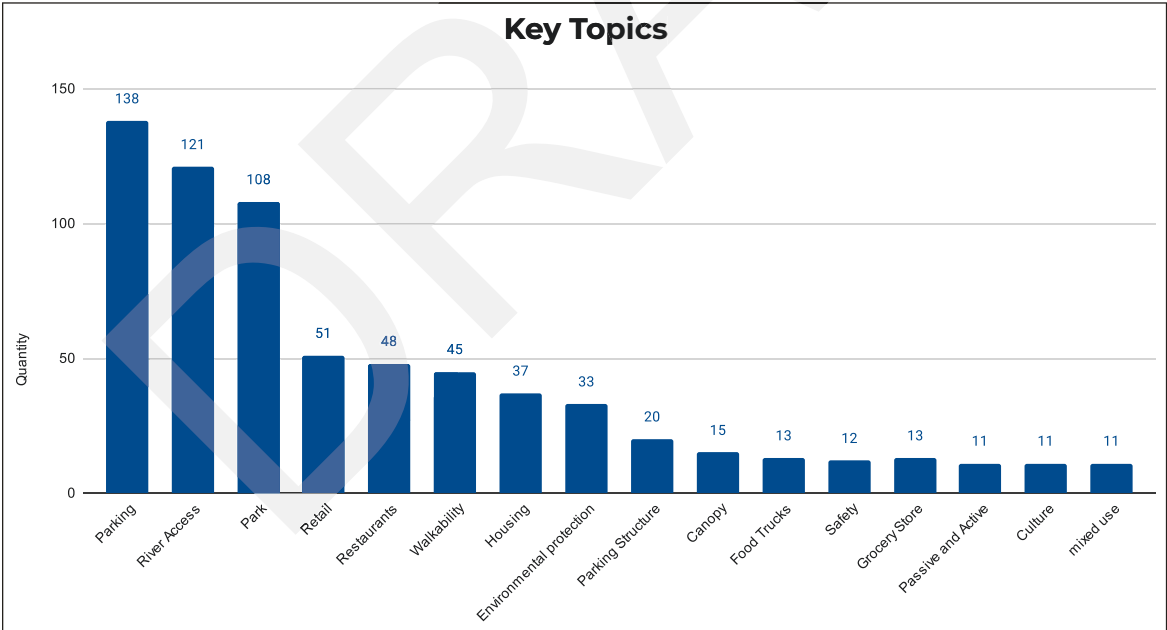
Several key findings or work product have been developed by others, and included in this report for information. These include:

- Detailed boundary, utility, and utility survey of the area, with wetland delineation.
- Legal / title opinions from the City of Lebanon counsel and title company.

Public Visioning Survey

The overall public engagement approach is discussed in detail elsewhere in this report. As part of this overall process, the study team conducted an online and physical visioning survey between June 5 and August 2, 2024 to gather insight into public ambitions for a potential redevelopment project. A complete summary of public engagement findings (including survey responses) has been appended to this report.

The findings were evaluated used to inform findings. There were **283 total respondents** to the survey, with 88% of online respondents being residents of Lebanon or West Lebanon, while 72% work in these areas.



*Topics Mentioned More than 10 Times across Survey & Postcard Responses

Additional summary findings from the survey follow below.

Engagement Snapshot

Throughout the public engagement process, participants highlighted opportunities for increased river access and trail connectivity, ideas for a riverfront park or riverwalk, and a desire for new spaces to contribute to a vibrant, walkable downtown. As expected, maintaining adequate parking availability in Downtown remained a consistent theme.

PROMPT:
“WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT?”



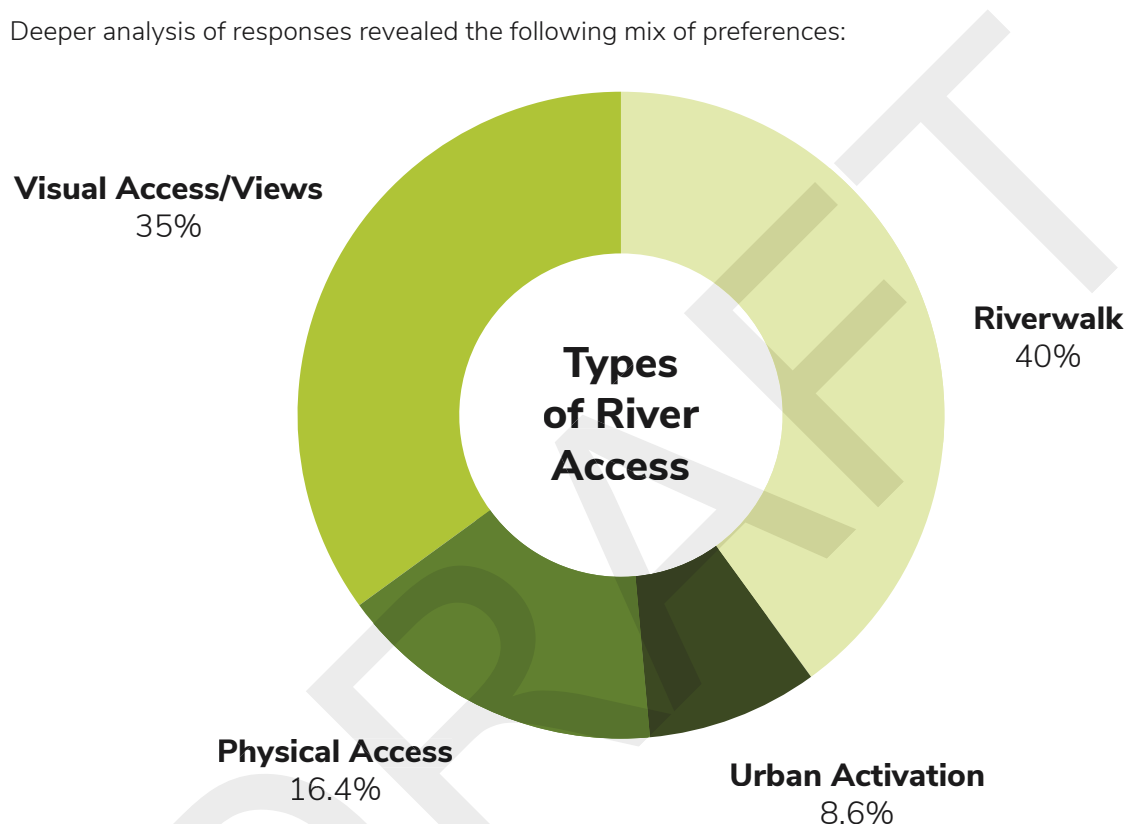
Throughout this report, **selected public survey comments are presented alongside the relevant technical topics**, to provide a comparison between public sentiment and the given technical opportunities and constraints of the site. They will appear in the report in the form of a thought bubble.

A more detailed summary of all comments is appended to this report, and matrix of all comments received is available as a Microsoft Excel file.

"I'd like to see a better walkway/
rail trail connection between CCBA
and the tunnel, more shops and
restaurants, and another green space
with shade closer to the river rapids."
- Online survey participant

Of the survey responses received, a number indicated a preference for access to the Mascoma River or the development of riverfront parkland. This sentiment is aligned with one of the City's key goals for the project, however the term "access" is not universally understood by all. Survey respondents' definition of access ranged from simply "visual" access, access in close proximity via parkland or a riverwalk, or physical access to the river for activities like swimming, fishing or watersports. Another key type of access is termed "urban activation" and refers to the concept of an activated riverfront - with restaurants, shopping, and other entertainment.

Deeper analysis of responses revealed the following mix of preferences:

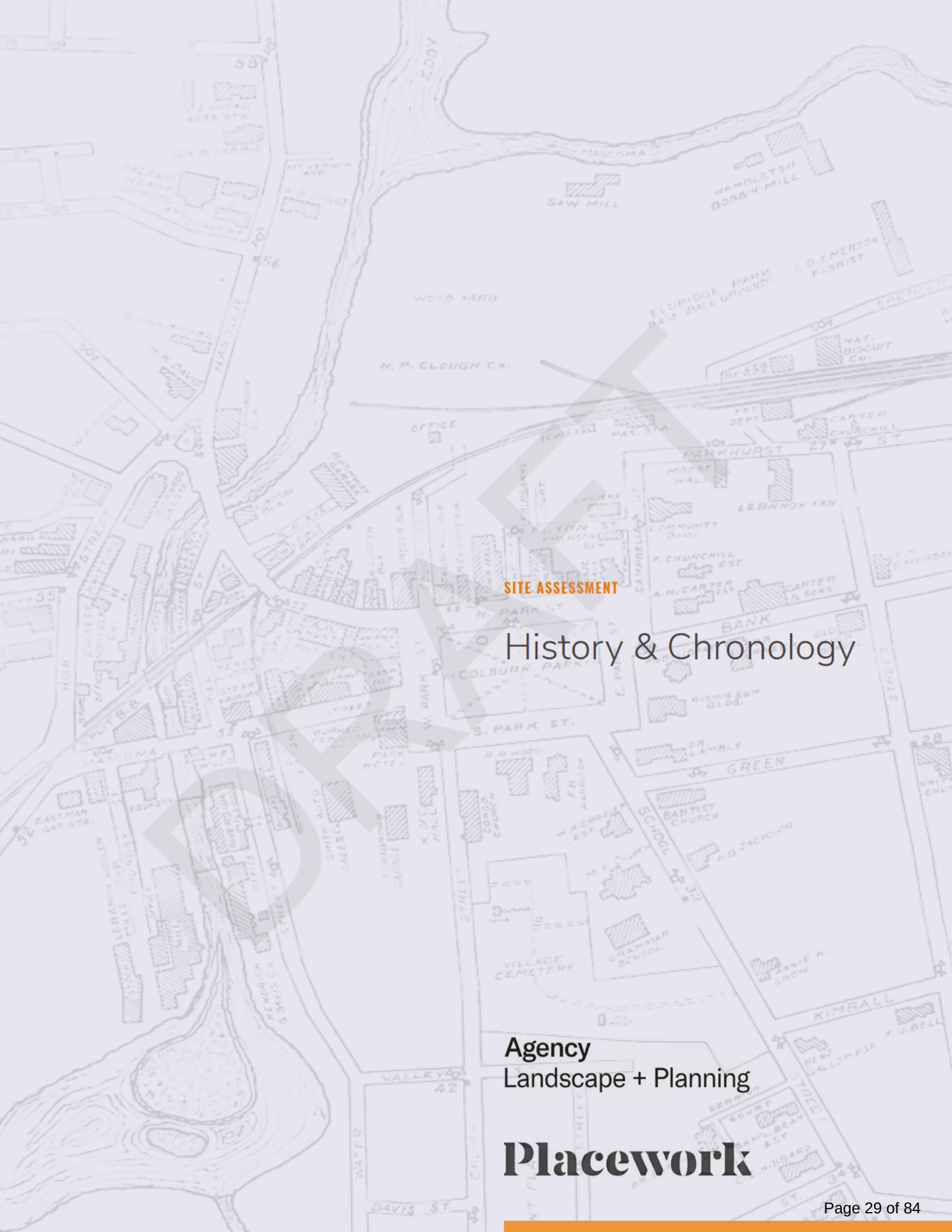


"There are many empty storefronts and seemingly opportunities for redevelopment. I could imagine a retail/restaurant district along the waterfront area with pedestrian access and a connector from the Mascoma Greenway to the Northern Rail Trail."

-Online survey participant

"Restoration and widening of the river's natural riparian zone. Removal of all non-native invasive species, with natives planted in their place. Break up large areas of asphalt parking with gardens and trees, lots of native shade trees."

-Online survey participant



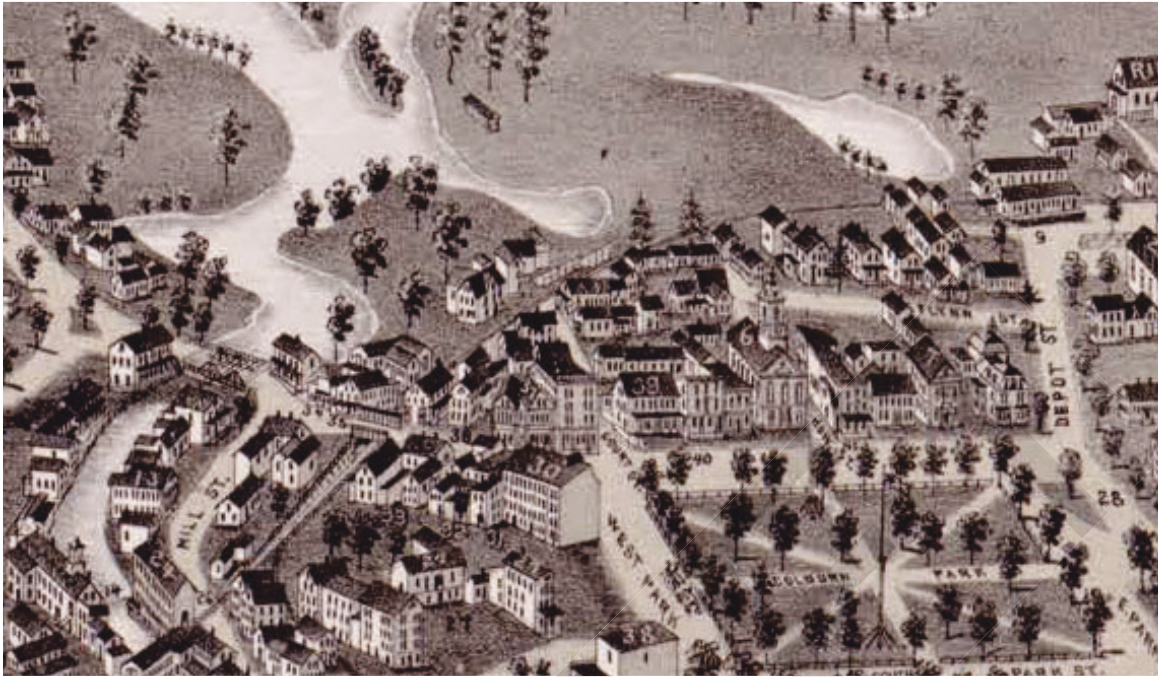
SITE ASSESSMENT

History & Chronology

Agency
Landscape + Planning

Placework

History & Chronology



1884 NORRIS MAP; COURTESY OF LEBANON HISTORIC SOCIETY

Background

Downtown Lebanon has evolved significantly since the time of its first habitation. Development has occurred in distinct phases, corresponding with colonization, the advent of industry, several devastating fires, and urban renewal in the mid 20th Century. With each new phase, along with incremental changes outside these dates, significant alterations to the project site have occurred.

The City of Lebanon acknowledges its foundation upon the ancestral and unceded lands of the Abenaki people, known as Alnôbak. These people used the existing network of rivers and forest paths to move throughout the area. Around the 1760's, Colonial settlers began establishing a town (and later, a City) along the banks of the Mascoma River. The river would go on to serve as an important economic driver, powering a number of mills along its banks. These included sawmills, gristmills, and later textile mills.

In 1847, the Northern Railroad officially opened in Lebanon, connecting the City with points South, (and later North) eventually extending from Boston to Montreal. This bolstered local industry, along with a boom in population growth. The rail line continued to be used through the 1960's and early 1970's, supplanted by the recently-completed interstate highway system. Several significant fires (in 1887 and 1964) destroyed significant portions of the City. After the 1964 blaze, an urban renewal initiative razed to create the parking area which exists today, and a pedestrian mall in the former location of Hanover Street. Conditions have not significantly changed since that period.

Recently, the City has begun to plan the future of downtown, undertaking a 2016 'Downtown Vision Plan', which offered planning recommendations to guide future development. The City has begun implementing the recommendations of that study, including the restoration of the tunnel under the Hanover Street Pedestrian Mall, updates to the City zoning ordinance, and other initiatives.

Over the last four hundred years, the project site has evolved from a seasonal indigenous encampment, to a colonial settlement at an important crossroads, to an industrial center, to an urban renewal-era parking lot supporting present day downtown.



CIRCA 1950 VIEW OF THE PROJECT SITE

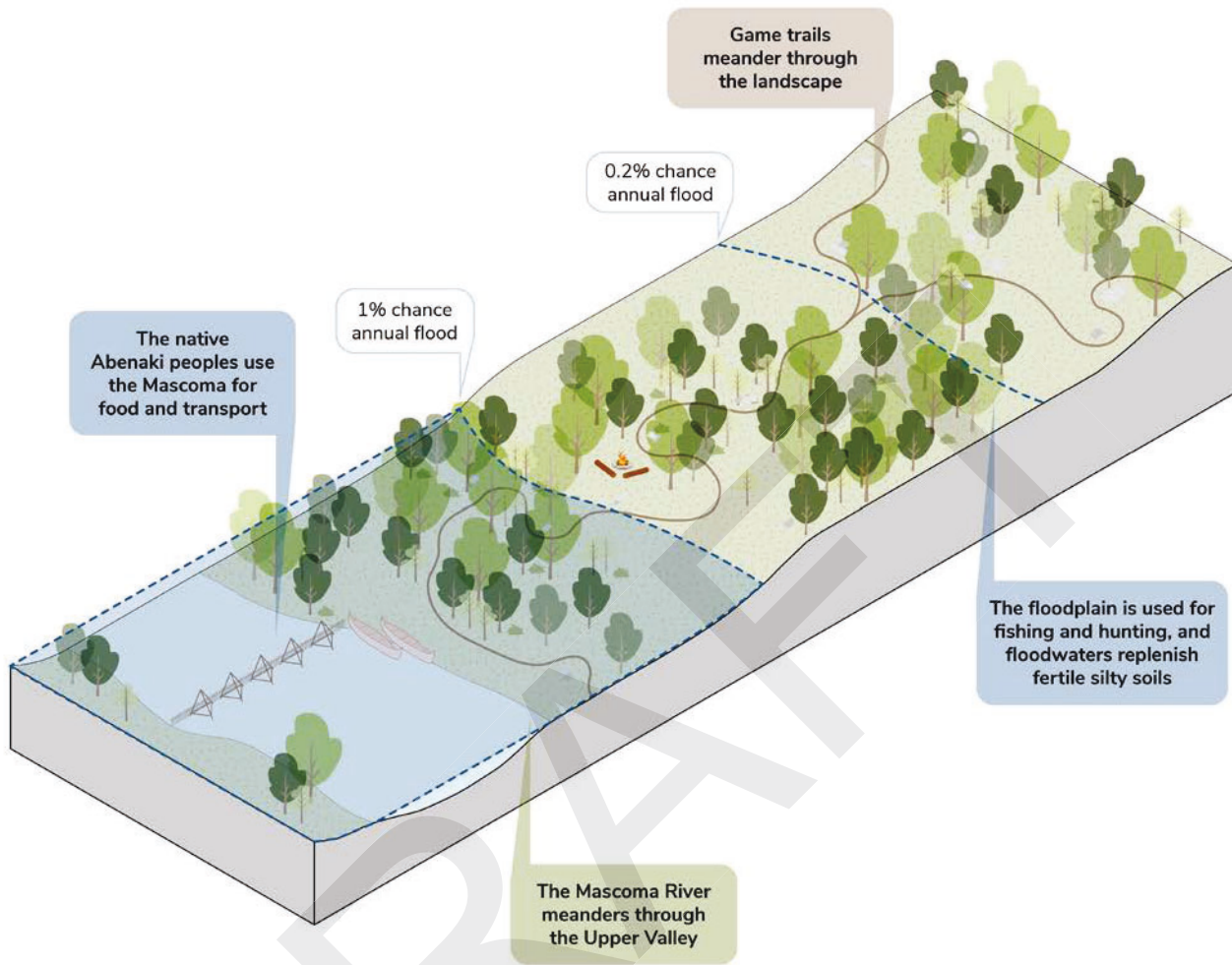


2024 VIEW OF THE PROJECT SITE FROM A SIMILAR VANTAGE

A brief visual history of the project site North of the present day City Hall / Lebanon Opera House is outlined on the following pages.

This summary was derived from "A Brief History of the Flynn Street / Court Street / Taylor Street Area, 1855 - Present", by Nicole Ford Burley, which has been appended to this report. Special thanks to Ms. Ford Burley and the Lebanon Historical Society, for providing this information. Additional historical information has been gathered from Ms. Ford Burley's book, "Images of America: Lebanon".

SITE HISTORY - PRE-COLONIZATION

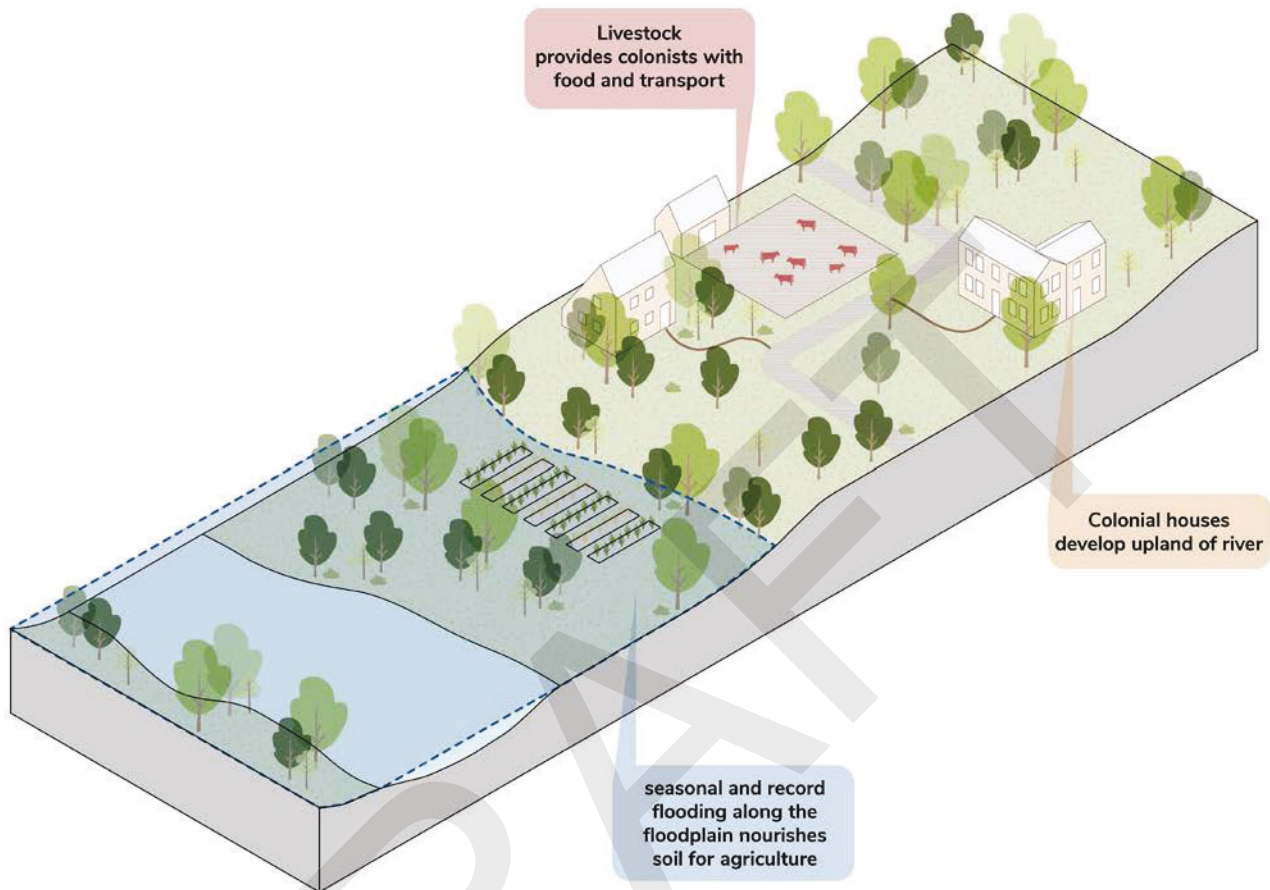


Prior to 1761:

The first human settlements in what is now Lebanon began after the recession of prehistoric ice sheets around 11,000 BC, which largely formed the present day geomorphological and hydrological conditions in the region. The region's proximity to the present-day Mascoma and Connecticut Rivers made it valuable territory for its ease of access by water, abundant wildlife, and fertile, nutrient rich land in the floodplain.

The indigenous Koasek and Western Abenaki people initially inhabited the area seasonally, returning to their winter villages to avoid the harsh season. Their trails and forest paths eventually came to be used by early settlers, and further developed into horse and carriage routes.

SITE HISTORY - EARLY SETTLEMENT

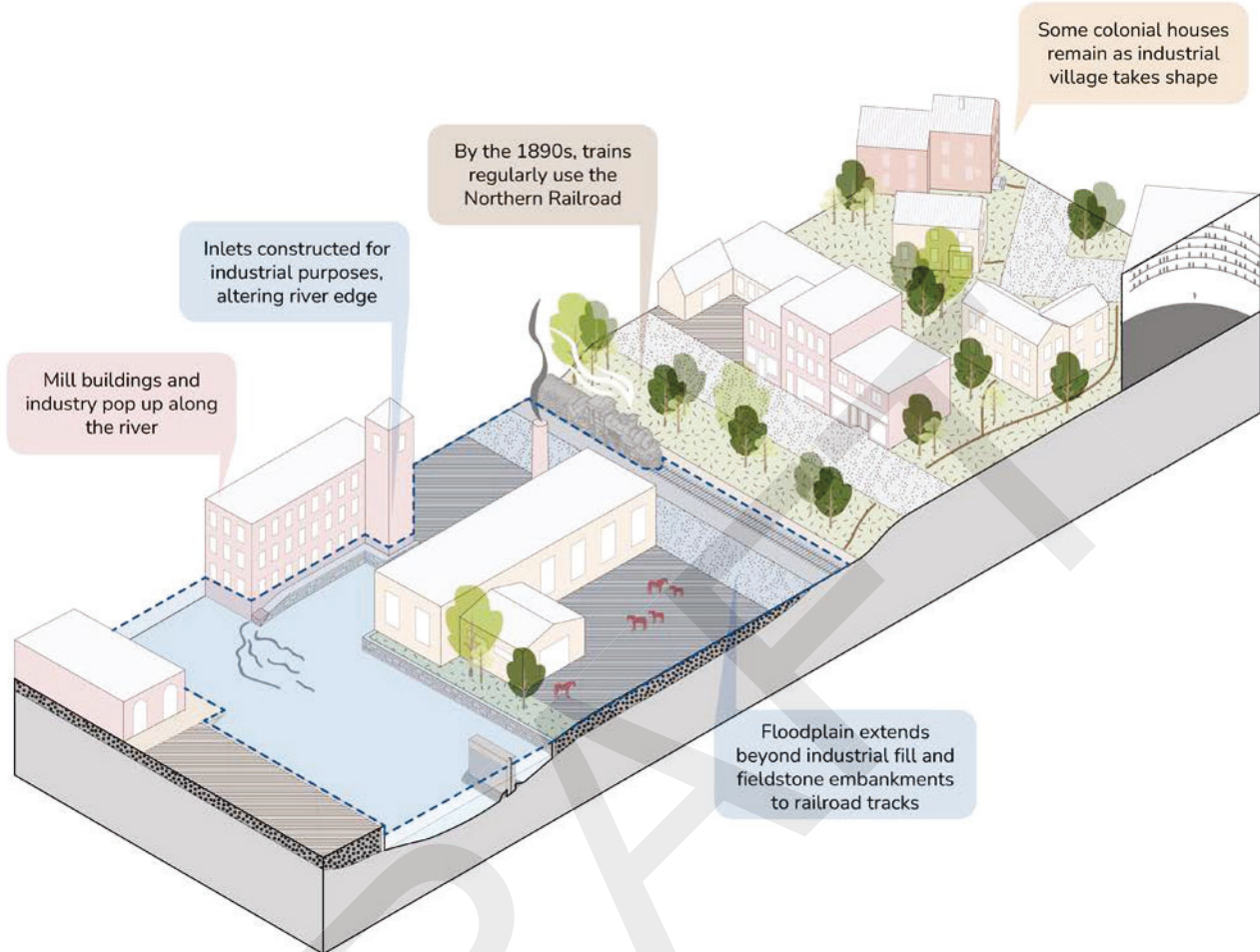


1761 - Early 1800's:

European settlers first began populating the area of what is now Lebanon around 1761; having been acquainted with the area prior to that during the French and Indian War. The town center of Lebanon, at what is now known as Colburn Park, was located at the intersection of several important horse roads on a height of land near the Mascoma River.

Early structures included colonial-era homes, meeting houses, and early industrial buildings sited along the river to produce power. Mills would become an important part of the Town's economy for the next several hundred years; the earliest forms were gristmills and sawmills, which further fed the Town's expansion.

SITE HISTORY - INDUSTRIALIZATION



Early 1800's - mid 1900's:

Into the 1800's the development of industrial mills on the site continued, with additional sawmills and gristmills, and later the addition of textile mills and other forms of industry. The Mascoma River bank evolved along with this; becoming channelized in some areas, with tributary inlets dredged in other areas as shown on the detail maps at right.

Starting around 1850, the Northern Railroad reached Lebanon, connecting the mill buildings to a wider area for transporting goods and people. This produced rapid growth and connected the town with regional population centers.

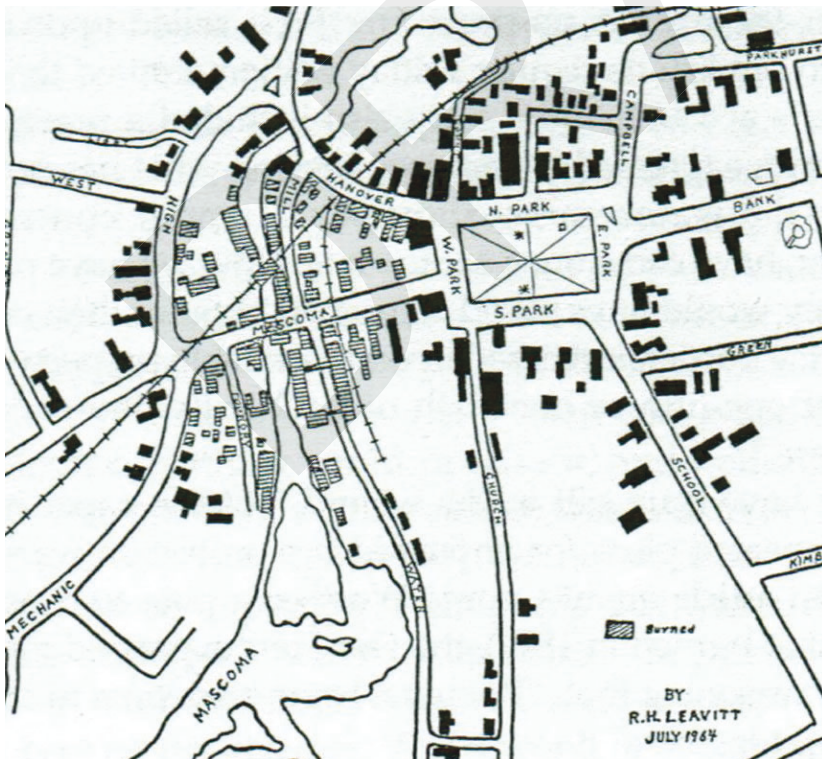
Owing to the high risk of fire in the predominant industrial buildings, Lebanon has had several highly destructive fires which destroyed significant portions of the village. The first major fire occurred in 1887.



1860 MAP SHOWING NUMEROUS INLETS ALONG THE MASCOMA RIVER
SOURCE: NH HISTORIC SOCIETY

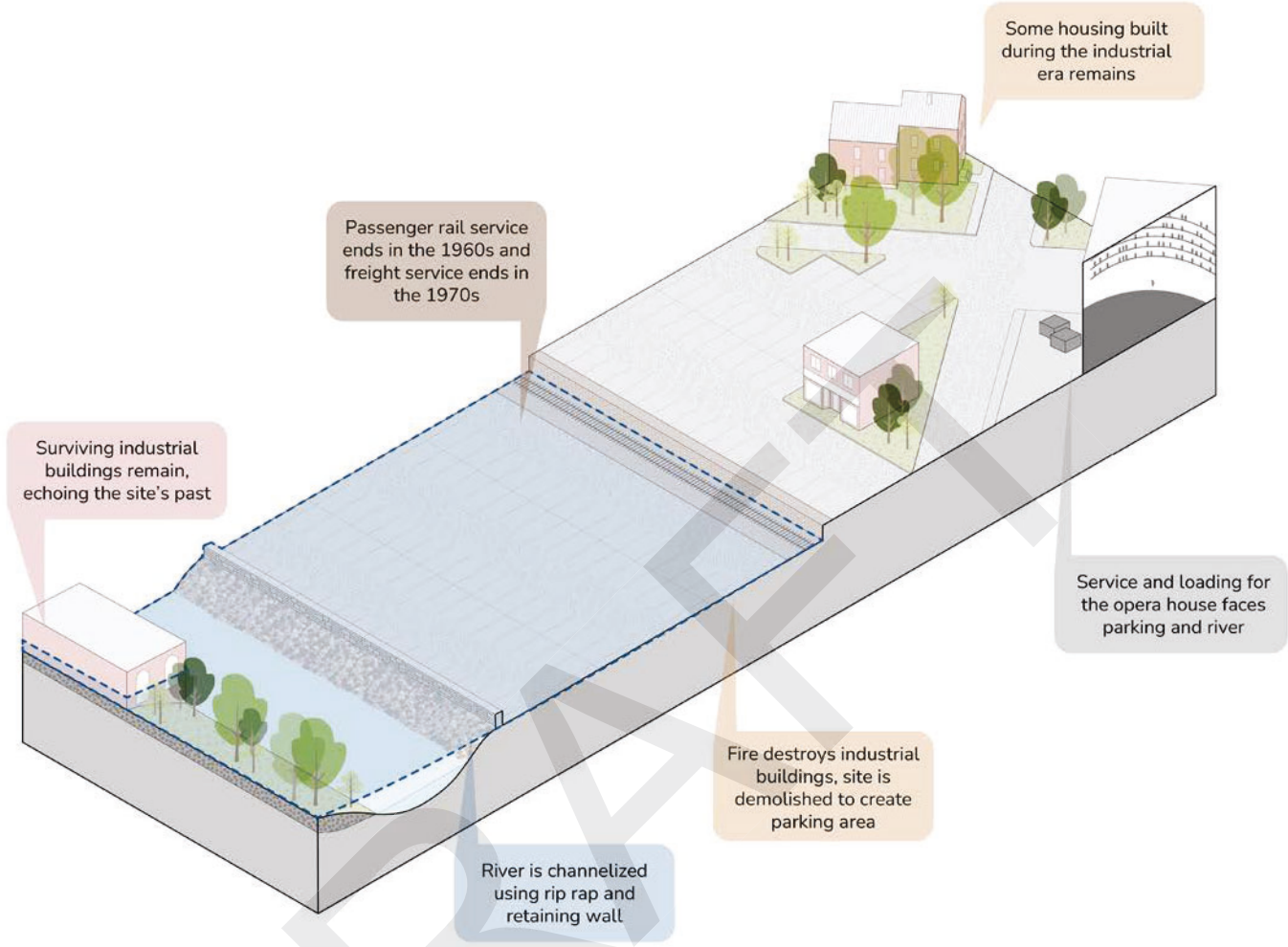


1887 - VIEW SOUTHEAST FROM HIGH STREET SHOWING DESTRUCTION OF THE 1887 FIRE
SOURCE: NH HISTORIC SOCIETY



1887 - RH LEAVITT MAP DEPICTING BUILDINGS DESTROYED IN THE 'GREAT FIRE'
SOURCE: COLBURN PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT UPDATE STUDY, L. PAPAIZIAN, 2021

SITE HISTORY - URBAN RENEWAL



1960's & 70's:

Industrial development of the site for manufacturing and rail yard use continued into the mid-late 20th Century, when it was halted by two events: the closure of the railroad around 1970 and a highly destructive fire in 1964 which destroyed many of the buildings in the area of Hanover Street.

In the aftermath of the fire, the area was subject to an Urban Renewal campaign circa 1969-70, which re-routed Hanover Street to the South of Colburn Park, and created a pedestrian mall in its place. Around the same time, the Lebanon Housing Authority was created, and the area between Flynn / Taylor streets was converted to a large parking lot, with a substantial retaining wall constructed along the riverbank.

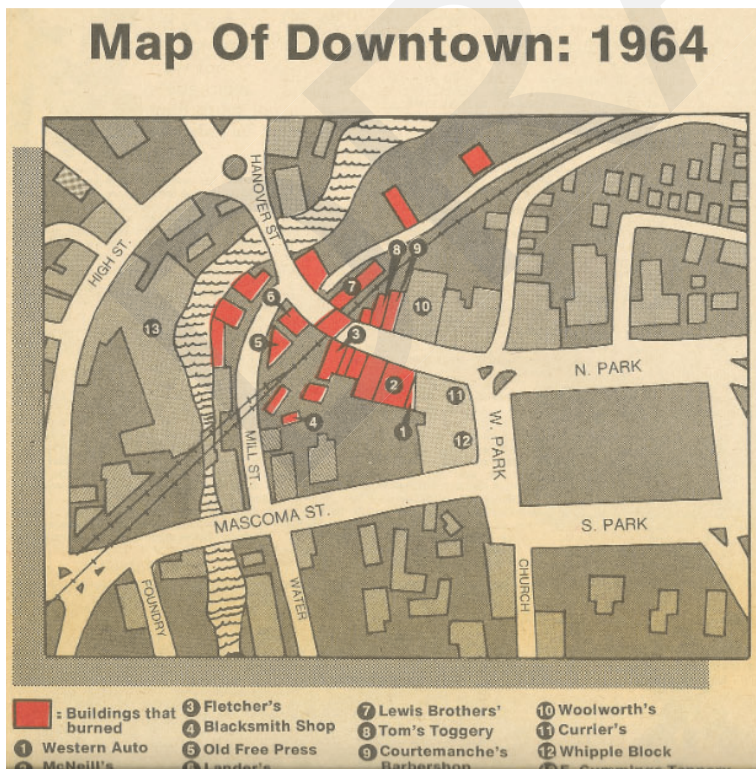
The Boston & Maine Railroad transferred the property to the City of Lebanon in 1969, however rail line remained operational into the 1970's.



1964 - SECOND GREAT FIRE; SOURCE: VALLEY NEWS

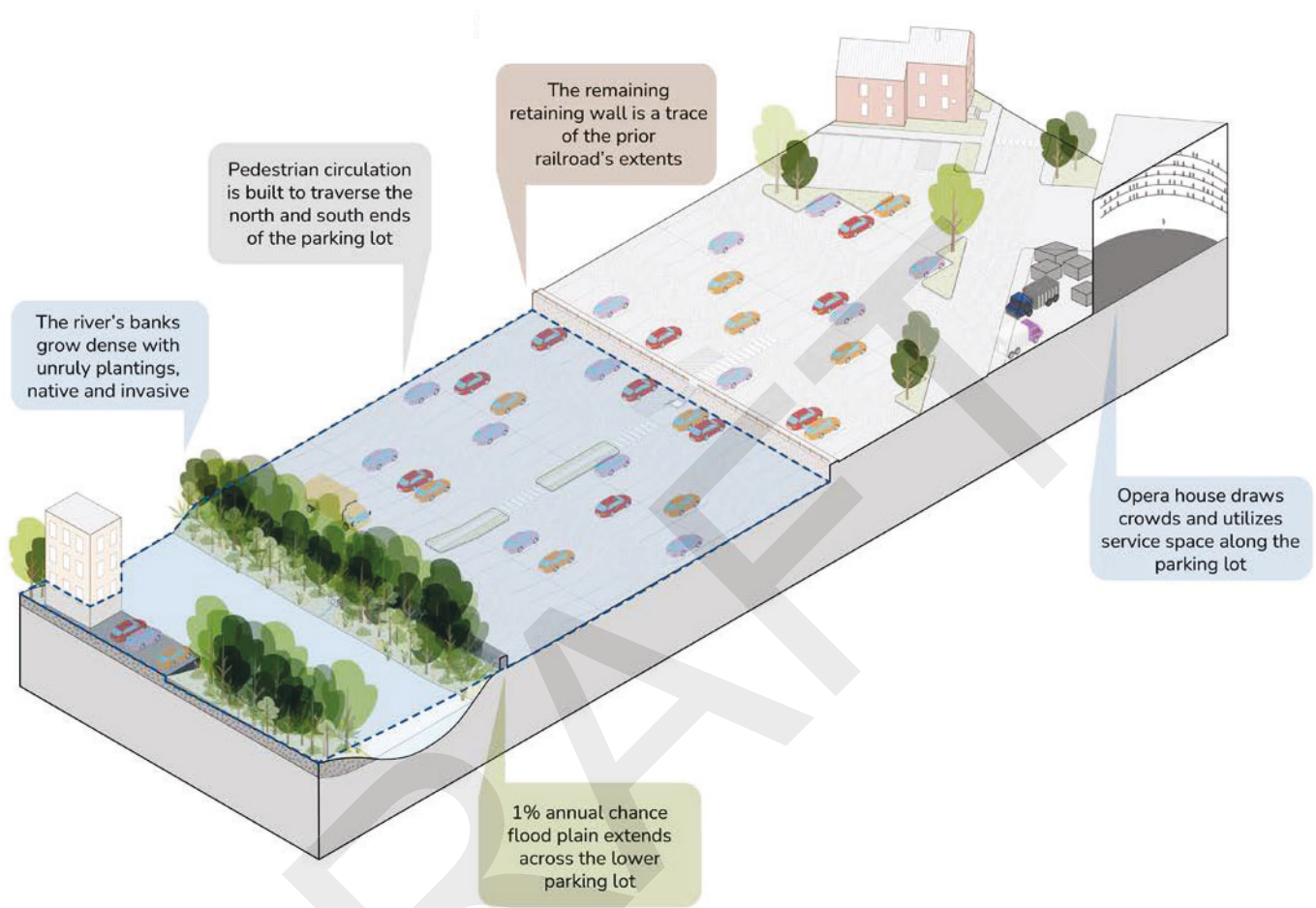


VIEW ALONG THE RAIL LINE SHOWING DESTRUCTION OF THE 1964 FIRE
SOURCE: VALLEY NEWS



MAP DEPICTING STRUCTURES BURNED DURING THE 1964 FIRE
SOURCE: LEBANON HISTORIC SOCIETY

SITE HISTORY - PRESENT DAY

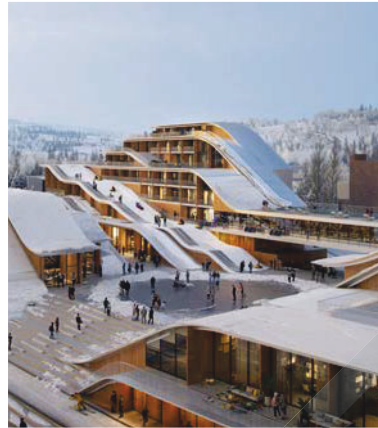


Late 1990's - Present Day:

Little change occurs between the Urban Renewal and the present day. The Mascoma Riverbank grows thick with native, non-native, and invasive species and retaining wall infrastructure continues to degrade from age and wear. The rail line was removed and lower parking lot expanded some time in the early 2000's. Today, the parking area houses approximately 333 time-restricted and unrestricted parking spaces. Public buildings face away from the site, with service, loading, and trash functions facing the project site.

The City has conducted several key planning efforts related to the Downtown Parking Lots during this period, including a proposal to construct a multistory parking garage in the 1990's, a 2016 Downtown Vision Plan, 2021 tunnel rehabilitation project, and a 2022 request for expressions of interest (RFEI) for development proposals.

Recent History



PLANNING CONCEPTS DEVELOPED DURING 2022 REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Though the property has physically changed little since the second great fire and urban renewal reconstruction, a number of legal, administrative, ownership and planning efforts have occurred. Through conversation with City officials and review of record documentation the following represents a partial development timeline of key events since 1964:

DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE SINCE 1964

- 1964: Fire destroys approximately 20 buildings, kills 2.
- 1964: Lebanon Housing Authority (LHA) established, partially as a means of implementing reconstruction from the fire.
- 1969: B&M holdings transfers railway and tunnel right of way to the City of Lebanon, retaining the right to operate a rail line. Rail operations continue into the 1970's.
- Late 1960's / Early 70's: Urban Renewal - under the authority of the LHA, re-routing of local roadways, establishment of downtown parking lots, and the pedestrian mall at Court Street.
- 1974: Lebanon Housing Authority transfers ownership of the site to City of Lebanon
- Early 1990's: City considers construction of a parking garage for ~175 cars on the site.
- 1992: Guilford Rail System obtained permission to abandon 60 miles of rail line (including the project site) between West Lebanon and Boscawen, NH¹
- Mid 1990's: State of NH acquires B&M holdings (former railway operator).
- Early 2000's: Rail line in the existing parking area demolished and parking expanded.
- 2012: Latest revision to the City's Master Plan
- 2016: Downtown Vision Plan proposes redevelopment of the area.
- 2019: City of Lebanon revises Zoning Code as a result of the Downtown Vision Plan
- 2021: The City opened the Downtown Tunnel, linking the site with the Mascoma River Greenway.
- 2021: The City considers expanding the Colburn Park Historic District to include the project site
- 2022: The City solicited development proposals for the site via a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI).
- 2023: City Approves the Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027.
- 2024: Downtown Parking Lot Redevelopment Study Commences

1 <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/rail/documents/maps-pubs/FinalReport4-30-03Boston-MontrealHSRcomplete.pdf>



AERIAL VIEW OF SITE LOOKING TOWARD CITY HALL AND COLBURN PARK

PRESENT DAY CONDITIONS

The current site provides City parking for approximately 333 cars, serving surrounding businesses, restaurants, residences and city owned buildings. The Mascoma River Greenway and Northern Rail Trail connect through the site, though issues of pedestrian safety and wayfinding exist. The Mascoma River bank has become overgrown with invasive species, and the existing site contains a number of retaining walls in various stages of degradation. Based upon the historical summary presented here and record documentation provided by the City of Lebanon, the site is expected to contain unsuitable soils, industrial remnants, and organic fills due to the prevalence of historic sawmills and other kinds of industry. Given this, the City or prospective developers may consider a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) or other similar study to assess potential contamination.

Studying the history of the project site is crucial to understanding the implications on future development. It reveals **several pertinent findings**, including:

- The assumed presence of sawdust, ash, soft cohesive fills (clay/silt), industrial remnants and other undesirable fill materials in the site are expected to create challenging conditions for future foundation design and earthwork.
- Historic easement for operation of a rail line may still exist, though the rail line itself does not.
- Urban renewal fabric of the 1960's era buildings in the vicinity of the rail line and tunnel have limited architectural character; perhaps as a result, the site is outside the current Downtown historic zoning district.
- Despite limited architectural/historic character on the site, nearby historic buildings surrounding Colburn Park have significant character.
- The Mascoma river, once a thoroughfare for transportation, food source, and a driver of industry, is largely overlooked today.

Market Context

W LANDWISE

Placework

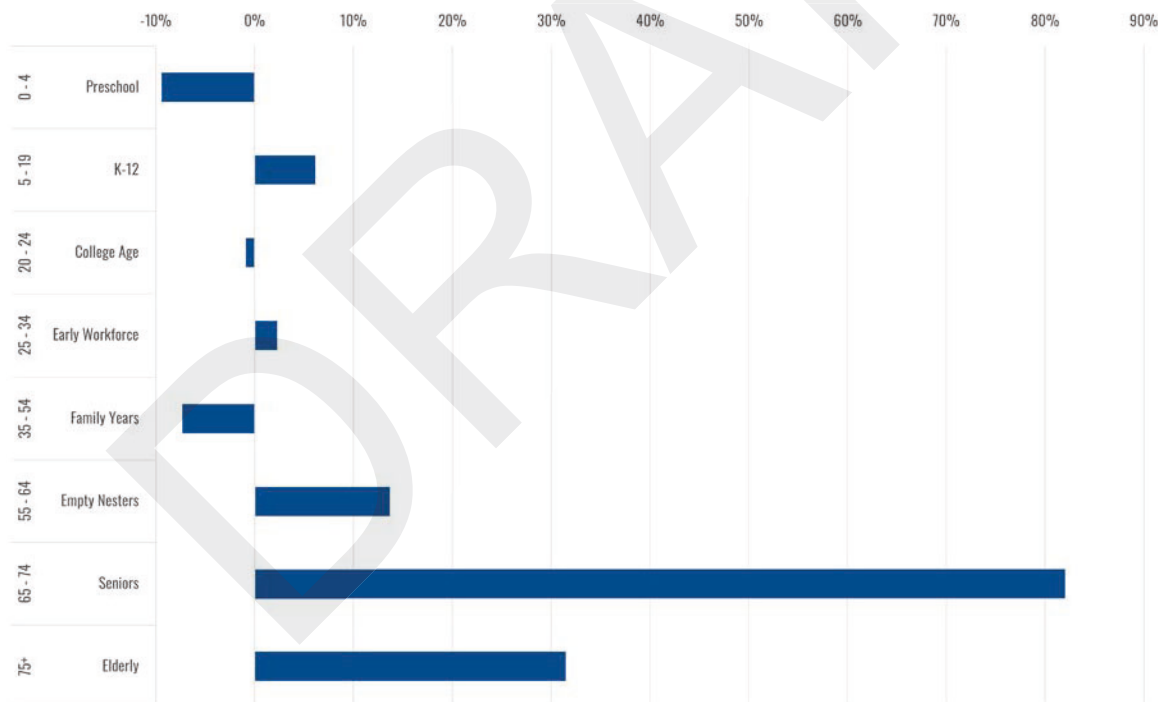
Market Context

Today, downtown Lebanon is relatively healthy from an economic perspective with low retail vacancies and planned new investment. Potential exists for additional improvements in the way it looks, feels, and functions and the subject site offers a unrealized opportunity. While the downtown has largely been a place for commerce and community events, current market dynamics favor residential development. A resurgence in downtown-living could further support area businesses and ensure downtown Lebanon remains a vibrant activity node in the Upper Valley.

Demographics & Employment

Lebanon is the only city in Grafton County, and the largest municipality in terms of population with 14,630 people. The City's annual population growth rate has been 0.8% (2010-2023), which is faster than the Lebanon NH-VT Micropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) annual growth rate of 0.2% over the same period. Today there are 7,000 total households in Lebanon. Median household income is \$88,150. Within the region, population cohorts experiencing an increase include youth (K-12) and early workforce (25-34), as well as significant increases in empty nesters (55-64), seniors (65-74), and elderly (75+).¹

CHANGE IN UPPER VALLEY POPULATION (2010-2023)

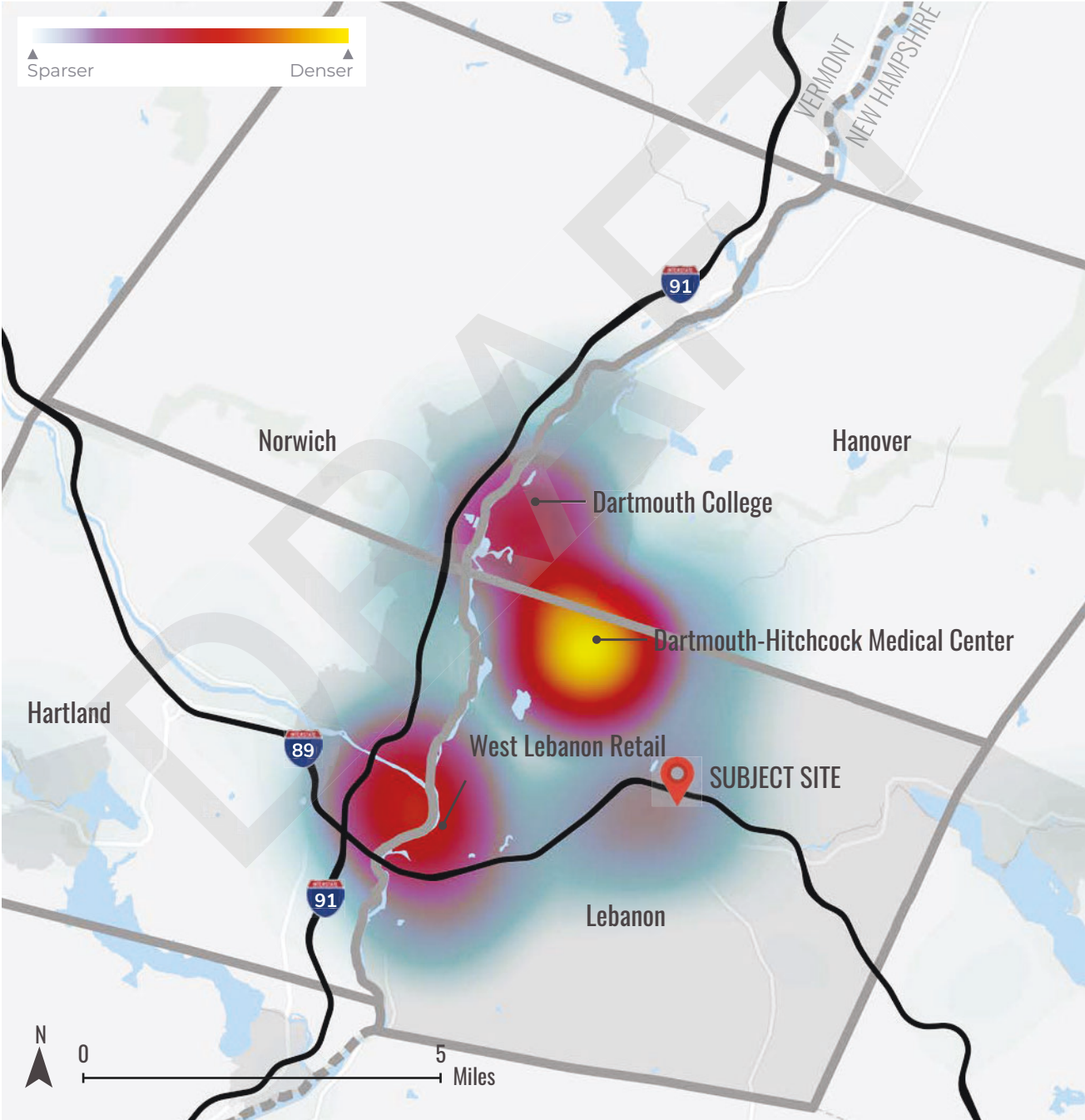


Source: ESRI BAO 2023, ACS 5-Year Estimates

1 Demographic data points from ESRI BAO 2023, ACS 5-Year Estimates

While the site has an urban walkable context, it is also proximate to both interstates I-89 and I-91. Lebanon has a high concentration of knowledge sector jobs, most are within 20 minutes of the subject site. Major employers are largely in the categories of Professional & Technical, Healthcare, and Education. The region has three primary employment centers (Dartmouth College, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, West Lebanon retail). The site is in close proximity to all three making it attractive for housing.

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau On the Map

Commercial Real Estate Market

While office vacancies are generally declining, they are still above pre-pandemic levels nationally. With institutional anchors and home-grown companies, the Upper Valley has fared better than many major metros. Recent area commercial activity largely comes from medical, technology and manufacturing firms wanting proximity to Dartmouth Hitchcock or Dartmouth College. At Centerra, with larger floor plates, rents generally range from \$20 - \$24 / SF. Downtown may see rents in the range of \$34 / SF. With current economic conditions, investment in downtown office space is more likely to come in the form of renovated space than new construction. While a build-to-suit project could likely acquire financing, a large company relocating to downtown Lebanon is less likely than companies launched from Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business or the Thayer School of Engineering looking for space in a walkable location. Additional housing choices are needed to further support the area's innovation economy.

Lebanon's retail space includes personal services, shops with discretionary items (bicycles, jewelry, craft supplies), and a cluster of restaurants. A sampling of retail rents suggests a range of \$10 - \$20 / SF in downtown while \$25 / SF at Centerra Parkway near Dartmouth Hitchcock. Consistent with national retail trends, food-focused tenanting is likely to continue. Events such as performances at the Lebanon Opera House, the Farmer's Market, and recreational activities around the CCBA are key to bringing people downtown and generating economic activity. Access to arts, recreation, community, and food are attractive amenities for downtown living.

"I envision a merging of businesses- particularly restaurants and cafes- and parkland. Imagine sitting on the patio of a cafe, sipping your favorite beverage while watching your kids play in the adjacent park."

- Online survey participant

Residential Real Estate Market

As part of the bi-state “Keys to the Valley” initiative, The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) undertook a housing needs assessment in 2023. Future housing targets for the year 2040 include a need for 5,671 housing units in the 27 UVLSRP municipalities and 1,249 housing units (820 ownership and 429 rental) in the City of Lebanon.

Currently, the area around the subject site has one of the highest concentrations of rental housing stock in the region. Lebanon also has more affordable housing than the region overall, with over 50% of homes valued between \$200,000 and \$400,000². In many locations across the country, home prices have been far outpacing incomes. Median home prices in Grafton County have doubled since 2017³, making the provision of housing for the area’s workforce a need that can potentially be addressed by redevelopment. According to Redfin, the median sales price in Lebanon this year (through August 2024) is \$434,000 for all residential properties and \$459,000 for single-family homes.

Recently opened apartment complexes have largely targeted institutional employees and graduate students. Since 2020, 832 new rental units have been added in the area around Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. Just outside of downtown smaller developments have added 28 workforce rental units at 195 Mechanic Street and 44 affordable rental units on Heater Road. A downtown renovation added 18 rental units at 1 Mechanic Street. New for-sale condos are lacking.

"I think the top priority in the area is more housing options but I like the idea of linking the area with the rest of downtown more directly and opening access to the river. The town already has great parks and green spaces, so I think converting the whole area to waterfront park would be a wasted opportunity. Some mixed use housing and retail with a green space/walkway along the river would be great."

- Online survey participant

While economic conditions have challenged smaller projects, several more housing developments are approved or in permitting totaling the potential for an additional 500+ apartments downtown. This positions the area to evolve as a place to live, work, and play. The pipeline of for-sale product in the area only includes units within Prospect Hills southeast of downtown, and pending resumption of the project, units in the proposed mixed-use River Park development along the banks of the Connecticut River.

Attached housing product in walkable locations would likely be attractive to both young professionals entering the market, as well as the growing number of empty nesters and seniors who have built equity and might be looking to downsize. Additional housing choices could free up single-family homes for new generations entering family years.

2 ESRI 2023 Estimates

3 New England Real Estate Network/New Hampshire Association of Realtors

SITE ASSESSMENT

Site Opportunities & Constraints



Agency
Landscape + Planning

Placework

Opportunities & Constraints



AERIAL VIEW OF SITE LOOKING EAST

The project team conducted a multidisciplinary assessment of the project site. This section summarizes the findings of this effort, and is broken into following categories:

- Site Conditions
- Access & Connectivity
- Topography, Views & Natural Features
- Site Ecology
- Historic District & Significance
- Boundary / Legal Description
- Zoning
- Flood & Shoreland Considerations
- Permitting
- Geotechnical Considerations
- Utilities
- Parking & Mobility

Site Conditions

CONDITIONS MATRIX

In addition to the topical sections in this section, the following matrix includes a basic condition assessment of each site element, recommended actions, and priority level for action. Presumably, a large-scale redevelopment project would inherently address many of the deficiencies identified, but in a “maintenance-only” planning scenario, at least some of the recommendations may be required to ensure continued safe and effective use of the parking areas.

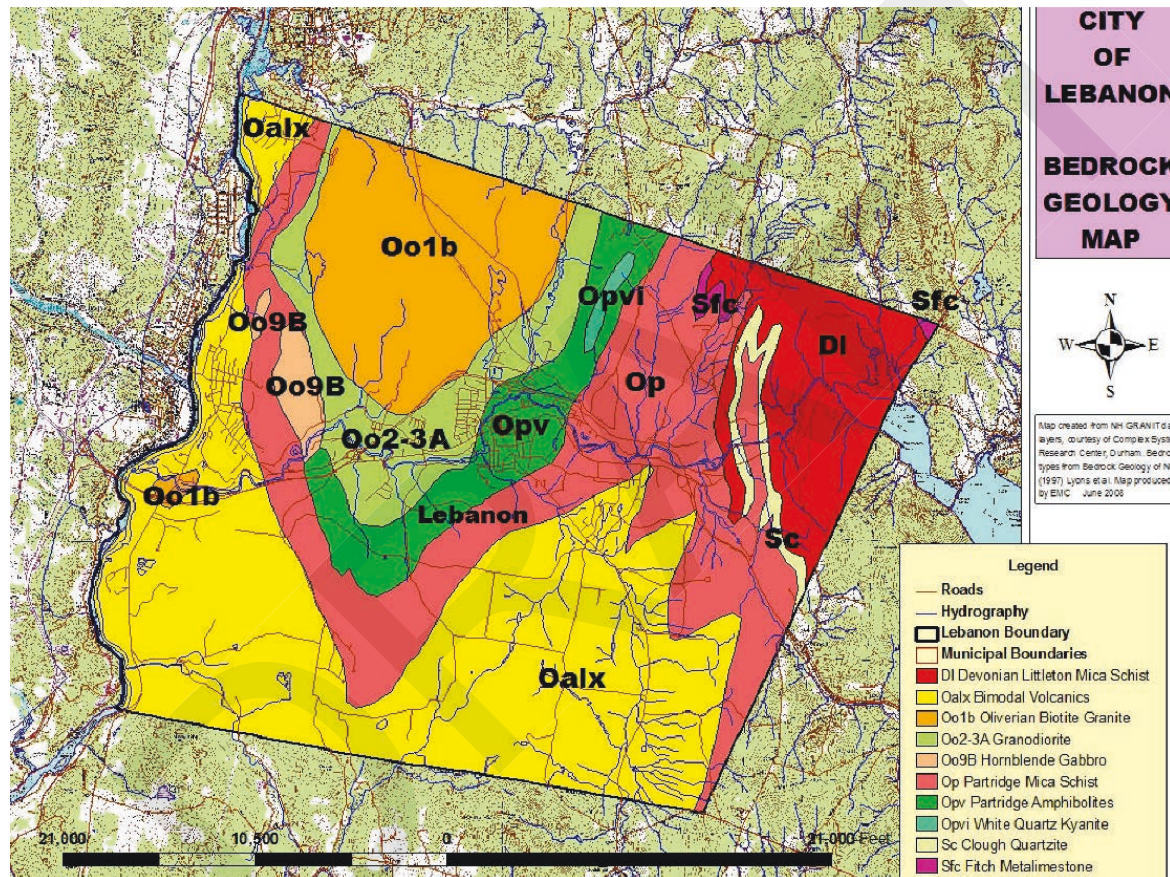
Element	Condition	Observations	Maintenance Recommendation	Priority
Curbs & Sidewalks	Fair	Widespread minor cracking at many asphalt and concrete sidewalks. Walkway at top of retaining wall is not continuous East of the Stair. Localized displacement of sidewalk around storm drainage outfall and top of retaining wall.	Mitigate erosion and site wall displacement to prevent further damage to sidewalks. Repair affected areas; consider wholesale replacement as part of future development.	Medium/ High
Accessibility	Fair	(6) signed accessible parking spaces. Current standard recommends (8) for this area. Accessible route exists to lower lot, but requires long traverse around retaining wall and access through drive aisles.	Consider additional accessible parking spaces; plan potential redevelopment to improve accessible route to/from parking and surrounding homes and businesses.	Medium
Asphalt Paving	Poor/Fair	Noted areas of extensive cracking and crumbling asphalt. No significant potholes.	Consider wholesale re-paving within 5 years. Areas with the most damage may require more immediate repair/replacement.	Medium/ High
Paint & Striping	Good	Generally good condition; misspelling of the word “only” at Western edge of center drive aisle in lower parking lot.	Re-stripe with periodic asphalt paving maintenance and future reconfigurations.	Low
Cast-in-place (CIP) Concrete Retaining Walls	Poor	Displacement observed at top of wall. Large crack and section loss in middle third; spalling concrete, spider cracking, and peeling paint at other locations. Uncontrolled vegetation growth along bottom edge of wall. Western ~30’ of wall is not original/infill with concrete block/brick with CIP concrete cap.	Further assessment by structural engineer and possible wall replacement.	High
Precast Concrete Block Retaining Walls	Fair	No significant deflection noted along length of wall; units generally appear uniform without significant damage.		Medium

Element	Condition	Observations	Maintenance Recommendation	Priority
Fencing & Guardrails	Poor	Widespread areas of deteriorated wood guardrails; displacement along deteriorated sections of retaining wall presents safety issues.	Wholesale replacement of guardrail.	High
Drainage	Good	No observed or reported surface or subgrade drainage issues; recent drainage project separated storm/ sewage systems. Stormwater is discharged directly into the Mascoma River. Portions of the site lie within the floodplain.	Consider stormwater best management practices (BMP's) as part of future redevelopment.	Low
Signage & Wayfinding	Poor	There is limited signage directing pedestrians & cyclists through the site and connecting the Mascoma River Greenway to the Northern Rail Trail, and users must cross traffic several times to traverse the area. Team observed drivers performing illegal traffic maneuvers despite posted signage (indicating confusion particularly around Taylor Street).	Short term: Provide additional guidance directing pedestrian traffic through the parking area. Long term: Consider redevelopment approaches that support intuitive wayfinding, and control vehicular and pedestrian flows without reliance on signage.	High
Site Lighting	Good	Pole-mounted lights appear to provide adequate coverage to the parking area, although the team did not measure light levels at night. Lights appear to be newer vintage LED style (unclear if Dark-sky certified).	Measure nighttime illumination levels for pedestrian movement & safety in the parking area.	Low
Security	Good	Some areas with limited visual coverage. Limited bollards protecting loading areas, transformers and other infrastructure. Camera coverage at tunnel.	Consider security enhancements (bollards or other means of separation, visual control strategies) as part of any potential redevelopment.	Medium
Plantings & Vegetation	Poor	Limited planting within parking area itself. Uncontrolled plant growth alongside bottom edge of retaining wall. Planting along the riverbank is overgrown and largely invasive.	Prune as required to maintain walkways and retaining walls; consider remediation of invasive species and riverbank restoration measures as part of future redevelopment project(s).	Medium

Topography, Views, & Natural Features

The City of Lebanon is located along the western edge of the central part of New Hampshire. Lebanon shares a border with the towns of Hanover to the north, Enfield to the east, and Plainfield to the south. At Lebanon's western edge lies the Connecticut River, which demarcates the Vermont-New Hampshire border.

Lebanon's natural features are the result of an underlying bedrock and surficial geology which played a crucial role in shaping the land. In Lebanon, ten different bedrock formations can be found, and glacial till material including silts, sands, gravels, stones, and boulders—overlies more than three-quarters of the City. These sediments sorted by glacial meltwaters were deposited in low-lying beds along Lebanon's major river and stream valleys, including the Mascoma River.



MAP OF LEBANON'S BEDROCK GEOLOGY. IMAGE SOURCE COURTESY OF [CITY OF LEBANON](#).

SHAPING DOWNTOWN

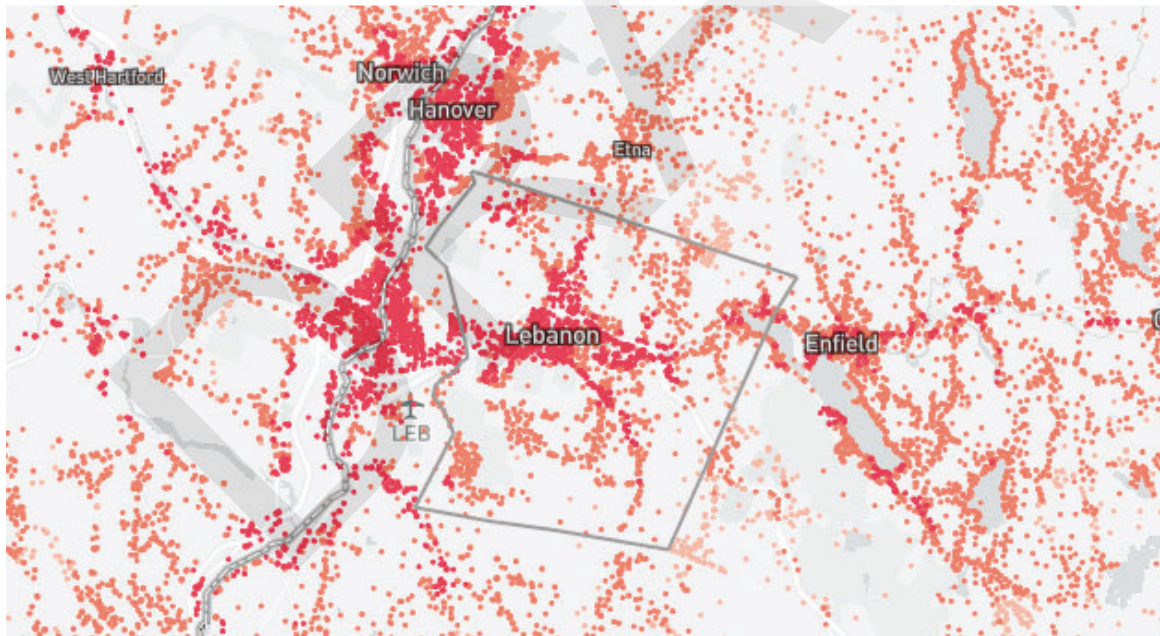
Downtown Lebanon is characterized by diverse topography that contributes to its unique sense of place. Fairly steep highland ridges exist to the north, east, and south, with the downtown area nestled within a valley formed by the Mascoma River, which winds through the heart of Downtown. Across the entire project site, there is about 20 feet of grade change, and an existing retaining wall separates the upper and lower "tiers" of the site, which differ in grade change by about 8 feet. Although the Mascoma River moves slowly past the site, it drops quickly as it moves downriver to the south, in a series of falls that were historically harnessed for mill hydropower.

Eldridge Park and significant land area to the northeast of the site are part of the Mascoma River floodplain, but the site itself exists on a slight bluff, partially filled during the industrial era, which avoids inundation during floods.

While the project site includes 410 feet of frontage along the Mascoma River, the river is not visible from the project site. Instead, an opaque wall of dense vegetation (primarily invasive species) dominates the riparian edge, and obscures any potential view of the river. The most prominent views from the project site are to Colburn Park just to the south, and to the buildings that are visible from the site on the north end of the river. Just visible from portions of the site is the Storrs Hill Ski Area and its iconic 35 meter wooden ski jump built in 1939.

URBAN HEAT

A hot day in Lebanon is considered to be any day above a temperature that feels like 91°F or above¹. In Downtown Lebanon, 61% of homes have a moderate heat risk factor, and the vast amount of impervious surface present Downtown contributes to this heat risk. The majority of the site is paved, with just a few pockets of limited lawn planting and two shade trees that are not thriving within so much asphalt. This intensity of impervious surface is apparent throughout Downtown, and contributes to greater urban heat island that is felt on extremely hot days. This year, Downtown is expected to experience 7 hot days, and as temperatures continue to rise, it is projected that in 30 years Downtown will experience 29 days above 91°F. Lebanon's Tree Advisory Board started mapping urban heat islands across the City in 2022, and is currently exploring how the City can work to break up large stretches of pavement with trees to reduce these impacts.



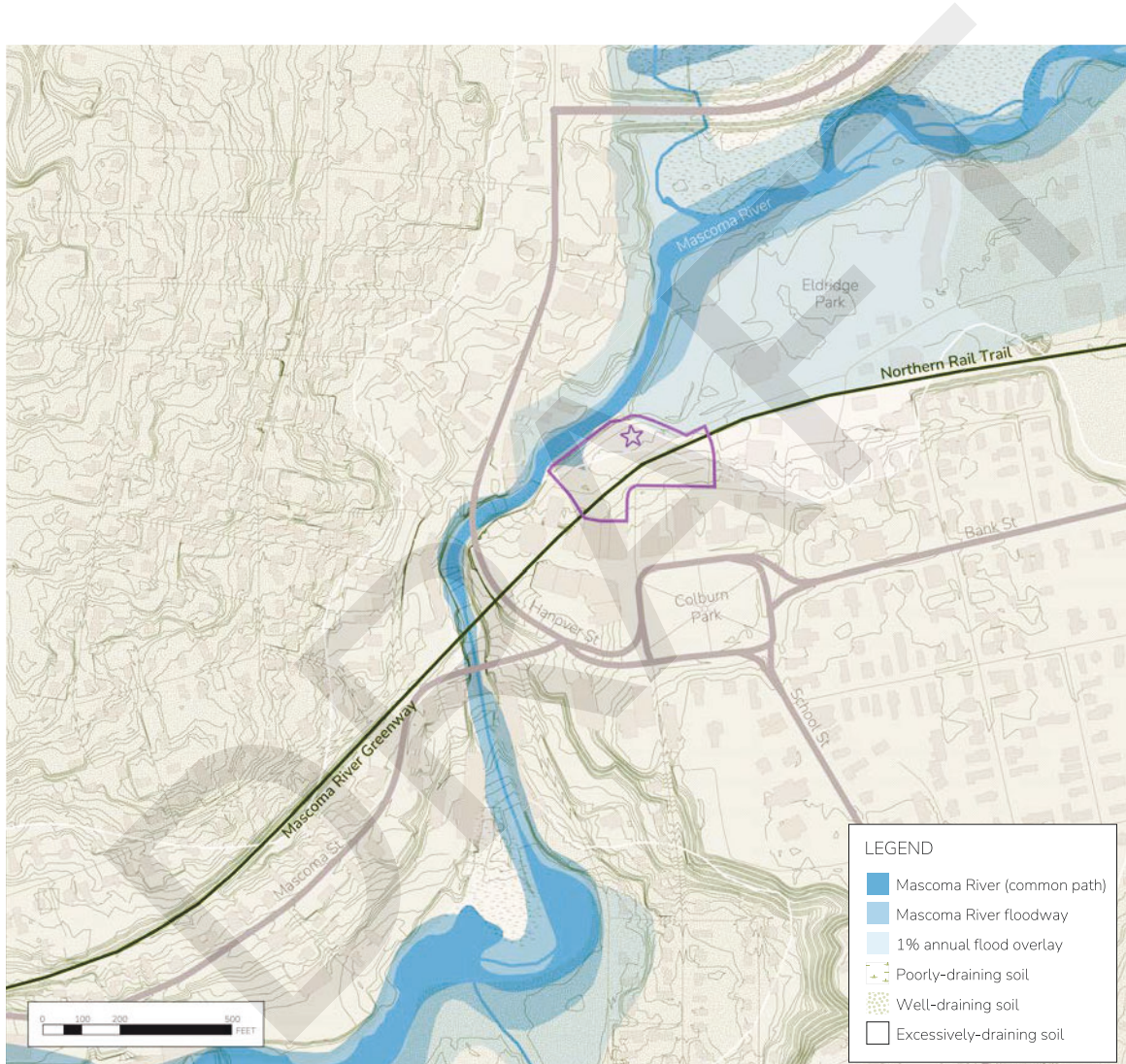
MAP OF HEAT RISK IN DOWNTOWN LEBANON. IMAGE SOURCE COURTESY OF [FIRSTSTREET.ORG](https://firststreet.org).

¹ [Heat Risk Factor for Downtown Lebanon, NH](https://firststreet.org). FirstStreet.org.

² [“Lebanon Tree Advisory Board wants more plantings in hot spots.”](#) Valley News, April 15, 2023.

STORMWATER AND IMPERVIOUS SURFACE

In addition to improving heat island, integrating more tree canopy throughout the project site would also greatly improve stormwater management. While 63% of the site is characterized by excessively-draining soils and is at low risk of flooding, increased tree canopy and pervious surface on site would actively work to slow down, filter, and reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and pollutants that ultimately flow into the Mascoma River. Reducing these pollutants - namely oil, dirt, chemicals, and lawn fertilizers, would have a significant impact on the river's water quality and overall environmental health.



MAP OF SITE CONTEXT, SHOWING MASCOMA RIVER FLOODWAY AND SOIL QUALITY.

Access & Connectivity

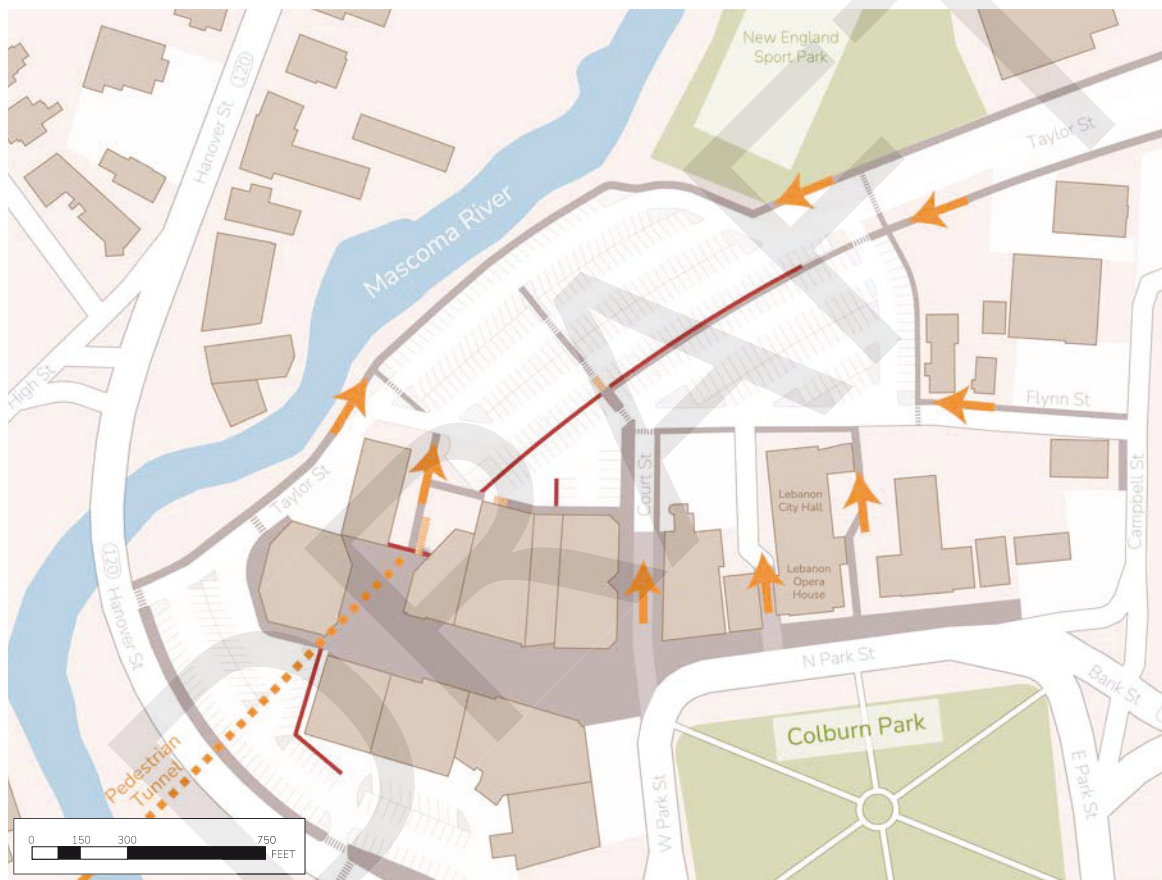
The project site sits between the Mascoma River Greenway, the former railway corridor and 2.5-mile paved way for trail users, and the Northern Rail Trail, a 58-mile trail that runs from Lebanon to Boscawen. Other trails located just outside of downtown include the Upper Valley Loop Trail north of the Mascoma River, and the CCBA Riverwalk located northeast of the site near Eldridge Park. Trail connectivity through the site currently traverses around the parking with limited signage, narrow existing sidewalks and crosswalks, as the direct route along the former rail alignment is interrupted by cars and vehicular travel.



MAP OF SITE CONNECTIVITY, SHOWING EXISTING TRAILS.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Pedestrian access within the site is challenging; a singular pedestrian ramp at the southern corner and a stairway in the center of the site allow for movement between the upper and lower tiers of the parking lots. The major pedestrian access into the site is along Court Street and two other entry points off of N Park St, next to the Lebanon Opera House and City Hall. Two of these entry points have been seasonally or temporarily occupied by pop-up plazas, removing vehicular access. Crosswalks and pedestrian islands within the parking lots are limited. A continuous sidewalk connecting from Hanover Street at the western end of the site does allow for pedestrian access along the river, and connects back onto Taylor Street to the east. One of the most notable features of the site is its connection to the pedestrian tunnel which goes under Hanover Street, and connects back to the Mascoma River to the south.



SITE DIAGRAM: PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

LEGEND	
	Pedestrian access towards site
	Sidewalk
	Crosswalk
	Pedestrianized streets
	Outdoor stairs
	Retaining wall/grade separation

“Better walkway/rail trail connection between CCBA and the tunnel; more shops/restaurants; another green space with shade closer to the river rapids.”

- Online survey participant



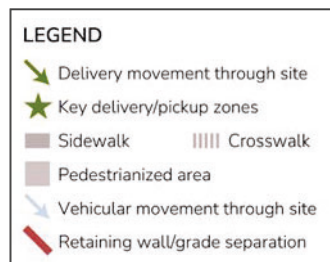
PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL

VEHICULAR ACCESS

Delivery vehicles and trucks primarily use Taylor Street to cut from Spencer Street to Hanover Street, and use Flynn Street to access service areas for buildings along North Park Street. The pedestrianization of Court Street allows for an enhanced pedestrian experience, but limits movement for passenger vehicles and trucks and requires turning around in the upper tier of the parking lot.

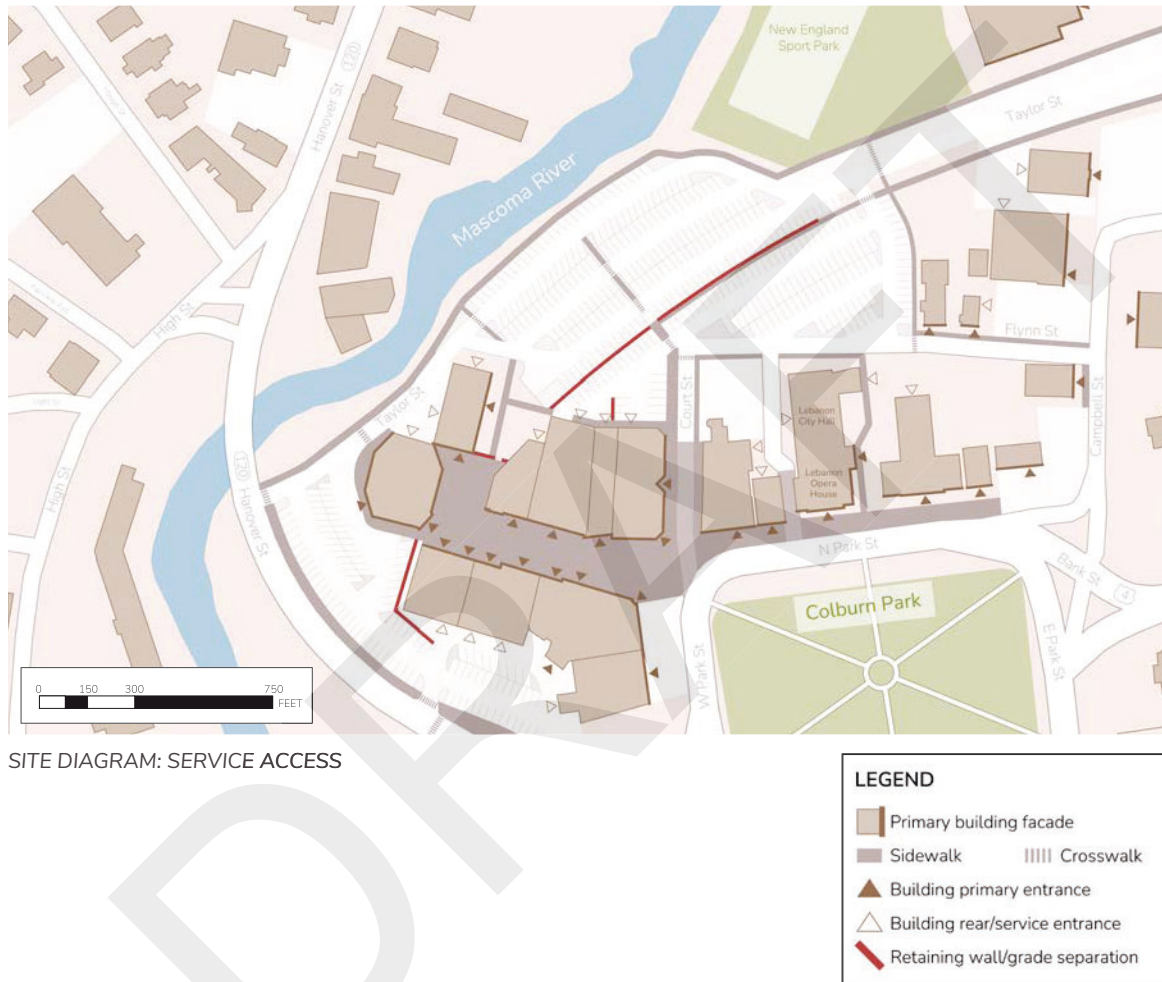


SITE DIAGRAM: VEHICULAR ACCESS, SHOWING DELIVERY AND PICKUP ZONES



SERVICE ACCESS

A notable characteristic of the site is how the existing buildings adjacent to the parking lots turn their backs on the site. Originally designed to face Colburn Park, North Park Street and the Pedestrian Mall, these buildings have service entrances at the rear, facing the site. Back of house services impacting the site include loading docks, dumpsters and other maintenance functions which must accommodate larger trucks and their turning radii.



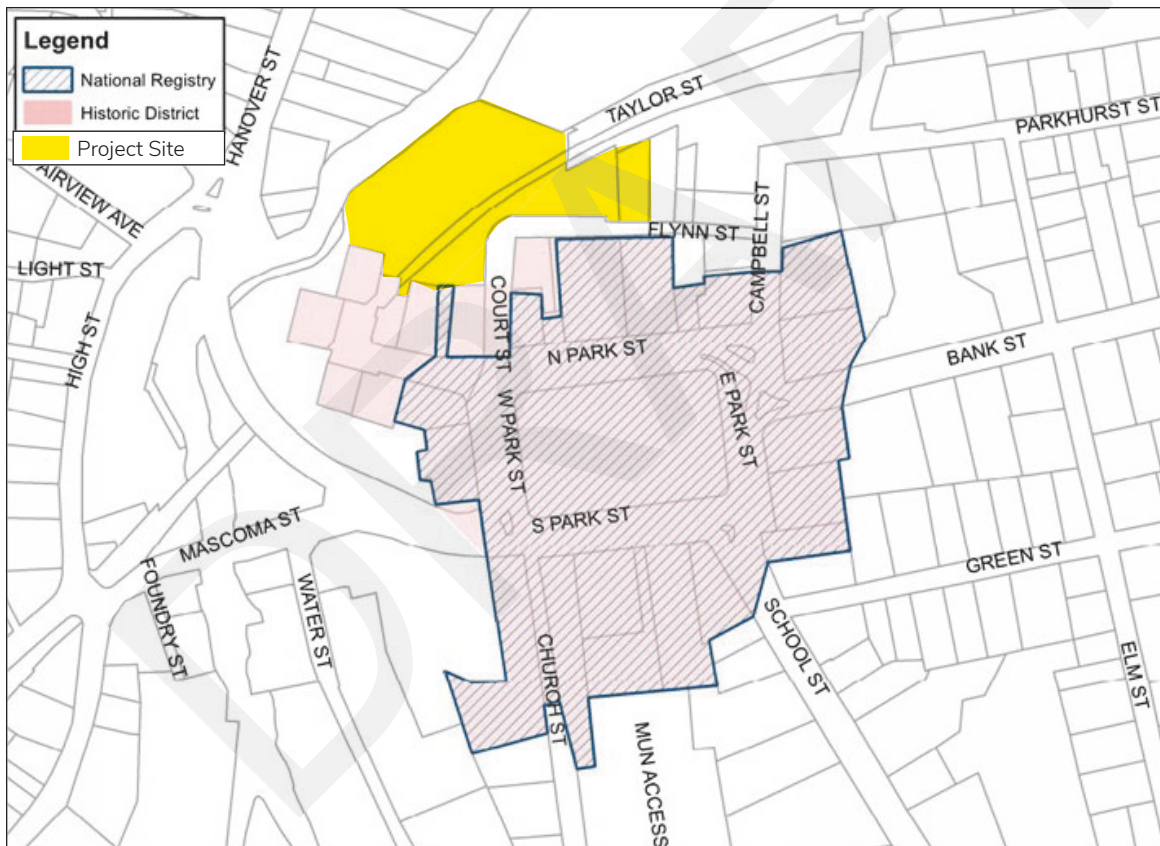
SITE DIAGRAM: SERVICE ACCESS

Historic District and Significance

A brief history of the project site is summarized elsewhere in this report; this section describes pertinent historic districts, regulations, background and other considerations.

The project site is **not currently located within any federal or local historic districts**. As much of the historic fabric of the area was destroyed by fire throughout history, there is little remaining historic character strictly within the confines of the project site. Despite this, the area surrounding the site is some of the most historically rich in Lebanon, and much of the surrounding area is designated historic property at both the local and federal level. The key historic overlay districts are:

- National Register of Historic Places: the Colburn Park Historic District consists of twenty-three structures (nineteen of which are contributing) and several objects facing and including a large, rectangular green in the center of down town Lebanon called Colburn Park.¹ The current listed period of significance for this district is 1725 - 1935.
- Lebanon Historic District: locally designated zoning district subject to the provisions of section 408 of the Lebanon Zoning Ordinance.



CITY HISTORIC ZONING DISTRICT OVERLAY MAP

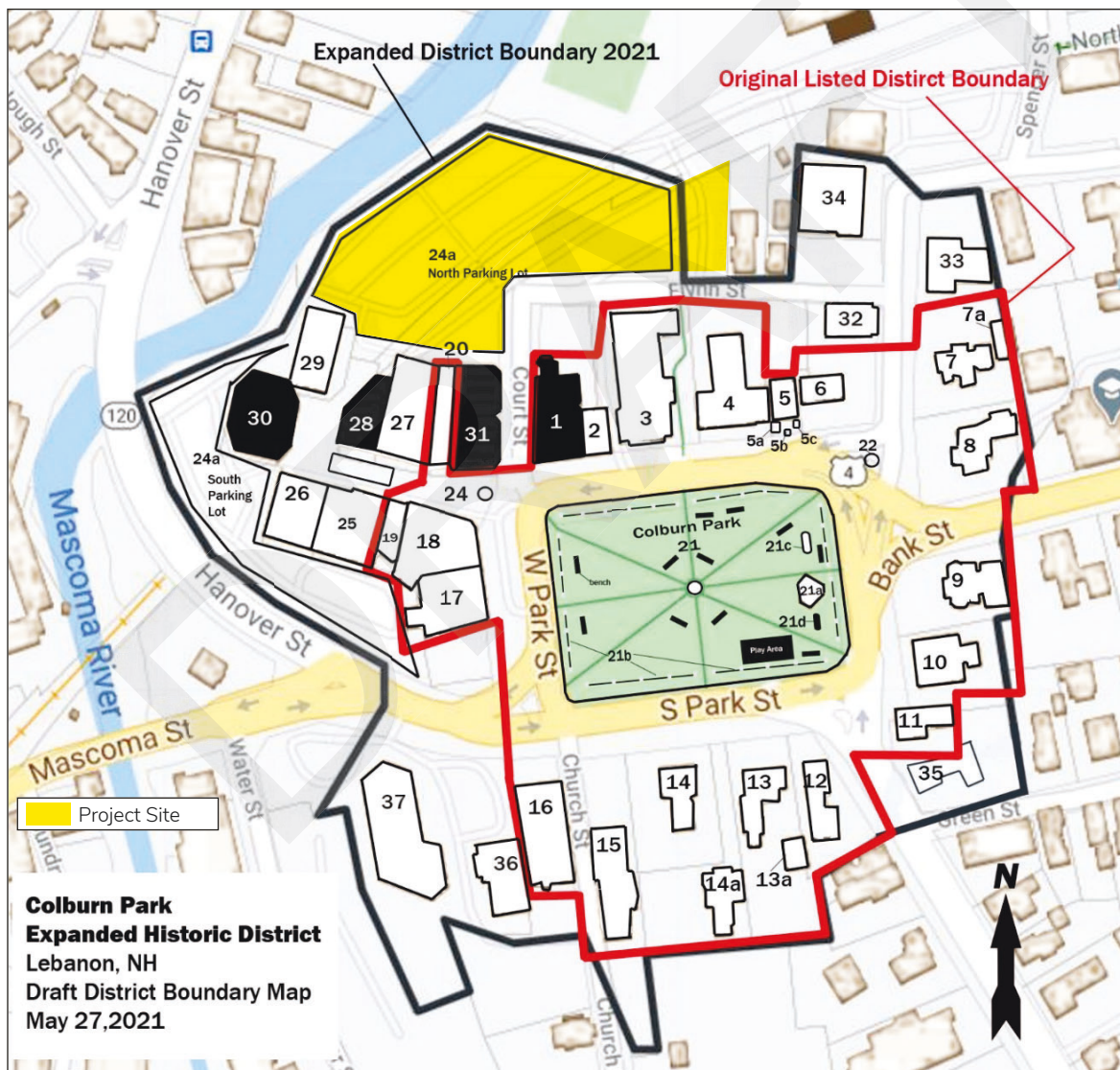
Historically significant structures in the area include Lebanon City Hall, Lebanon Public Library, Rogers House, and the Lebanon National Bank building, among others. Though the project site lies in close proximity to established historic districts, the majority of the surrounding buildings are oriented toward Colburn Park, and away from the project site. There is little character-defining fabric facing the project site; service entrances, loading and trash areas are also present.

¹ <https://lebanonnh.gov/DocumentCenter/View/707/Colburn-Park-National-Historical-Registration-Nomination?bidId=>

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

If current overlay districts remain unchanged, there will be **no required local historic review** process for proposed redevelopments, beyond the typical planning board review process. Even though the site does not fall within the current National Historic District, review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106 review) may be required for any proposed project requiring federal permits. This process is conducted in conjunction with the NH Division of Historical Resources. Refer to the permitting section of this report for additional information.

It is worth noting that around 2021, the City of Lebanon engaged a historic preservation consultant to evaluate a proposed update to the Colburn Park Historic District, which would expand the local district to include the site, as well as update the National Register boundary to include the project site. Additionally, the study recommended that the period of significance listed in the register be updated to add years 1935 - 1971.



PROPOSED EXPANSION TO THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
SOURCE: 2021 COLBURN PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT UPDATE PROJECT; L. PAPAZIAN

If the recommended expansion to the historic district(s) were placed into effect, the any potential redevelopment project would be subject to section 408 of the Lebanon Zoning Code, which requires review by the Lebanon Heritage Commission.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Lebanon is a progressive community with an active City Heritage Commission and Historical Society, which are active in preserving the City's historic resources for future generations. The public survey comments reveal a general interest in reconnect or otherwise engage with downtown Lebanon's historic roots as a regional hub of industry, connectivity, and natural resources.

Any proposed development should consider the historical and cultural significance of the site and seek opportunities to reconnect to the site's history. The established period of significance of the Lebanon Downtown Historic District may offer some guidance, and may help to inform or evaluate future development.

"The Mascoma River is the reason that Lebanon exists as a city. The power generated by the falling stream provided the economic engine that created this city. We need to find a way to re-connect to that stream, whether it's similar to the riverwalks in San Antonio or Chicago or in a unique manner."

- Online survey participant

Site Ecology

As part of the project, FB Environmental Associates completed an initial assessment of the site ecology pertaining to the project site.

The site assessment began with a field survey and meeting with project consultants and stakeholders to discuss the vision, goals, and challenges of the project. As part of the field survey FB inventoried both native and non-native, invasive plants within the monitoring area and assessed it for erosion/soil stability issues, particularly along the Mascoma riverbank.

Invasive plants are abundant and widespread along the riverbank, including ten species classified as Prohibited on the New Hampshire Invasive Plant Species List, and at least two species on the Watch list. The complete report contains additional information on prohibited and watch-list species. There is little or no stormwater management or treatment within the parking lot; catch basins channel water directly into the Mascoma River. Additionally, the river's shoreline has also been heavily modified with sections of riprap and retaining walls, cutting off flow to floodplain areas and negatively impacting riparian habitat. Assessing the water quality of the Mascoma River is outside the scope of this report, this is advised in future redevelopment.

The report offers potential strategies for mitigating invasive species, riverbank stabilization, and stormwater best management practices, and possible next steps for the project, including:

- Implement mitigation measures for invasive species, riverbank stabilization, and stormwater.
- Determination of required federal / state permits, depending upon scope of potential project(s).
- Conduct a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) as part of a future development due-diligence process.
- Geo-location of invasive species.

A complete environmental assessment memo containing more detailed information has been appended to this report.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Potential redevelopment of the site offers an opportunity to restore native species and enhance the riparian habitat quality along the Mascoma River.

Public comments indicates preferences for enhancing natural conditions of the riverfront. This could include creation of riverfront parkland, dedicated green area as part of new development, and restoration of riparian and natural riverfront conditions as part of a proposed redevelopment.

"A safe and enjoyable space that honors the river, protects the environment and is responsibly accessible to all."

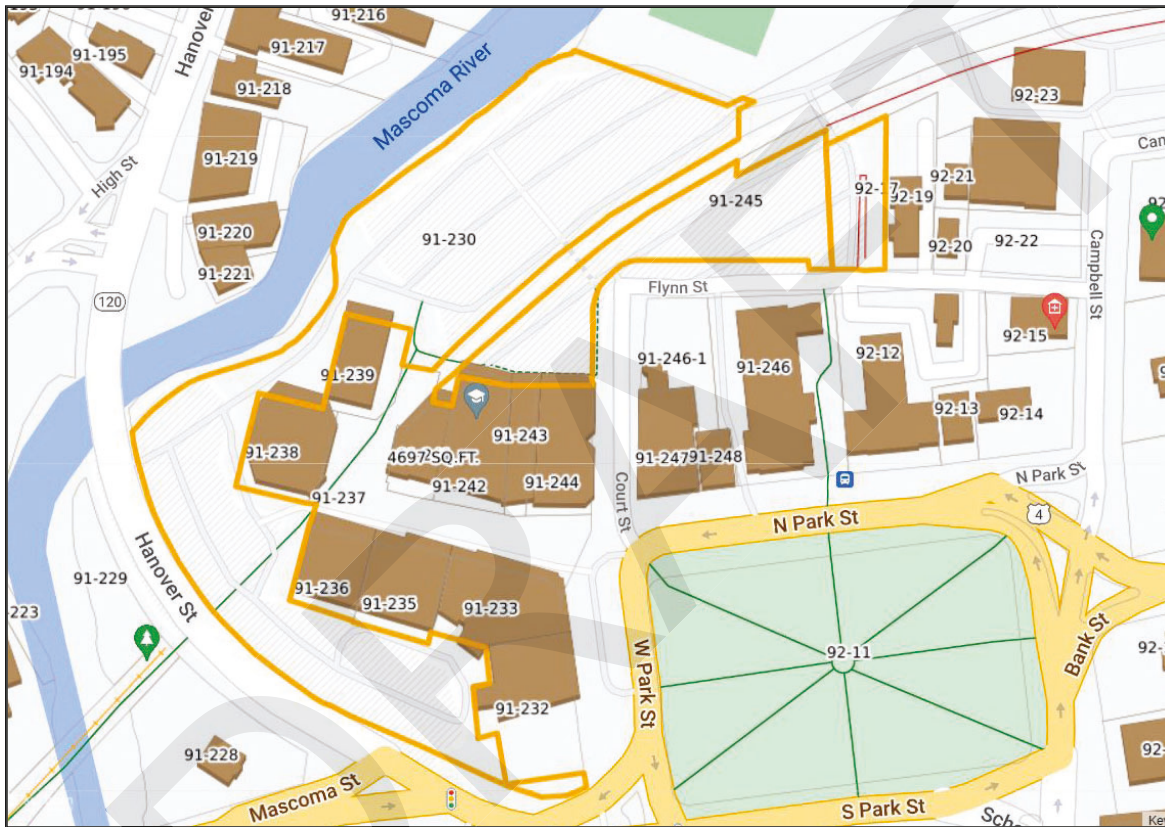
"The Mascoma River is an under-appreciated life-enhancing resource running through Lebanon. Could its beauty and rich potential as natural habitat be opened up for human enjoyment without damaging its potential as habitat for wildlife?"

Boundary & Legal Description

A site survey was conducted by others during the development of the assessment, and is appended to this report for information. The site is made up of (3) City owned parcels as indicated on the City of Lebanon tax map:

- Lot 91-230
- Lot 91-245
- Lot 92-17 (not included in the City's RFP, but contiguous with the parking areas and city owned)

The survey includes detailed site boundary description, and deed research summarized below.



EXCERPT FROM CITY TAX MAPS IDENTIFYING SUBJECT PARCELS

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

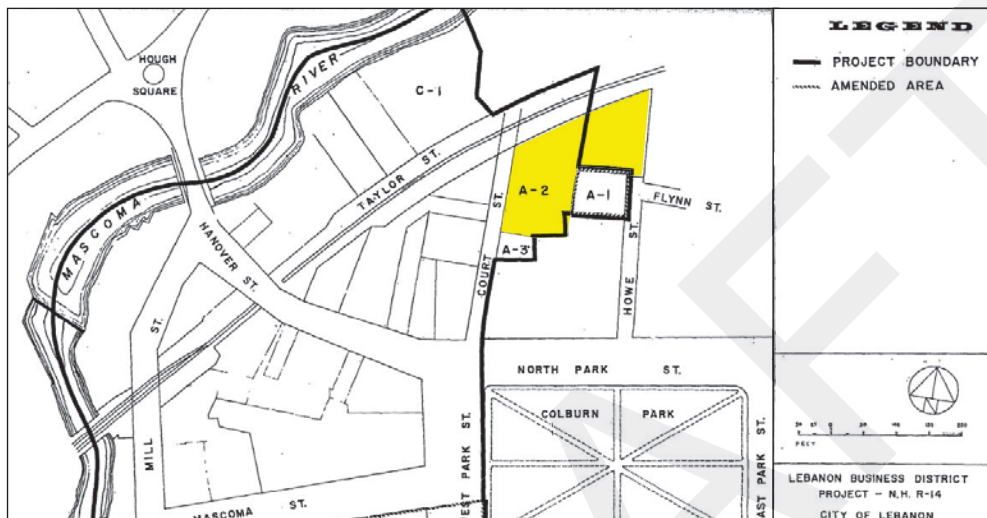
The City is involved in an ongoing review into its legal right to title over the subject properties. Based on current available information, the City's title company cannot certify title based on uncertainty regarding the precise location and boundaries of the property, particularly Lot 17. The recent survey also shows that portions of the area identified on the City Tax Map as lot 91-245 may be subject to the claims of other owners. Further investigation is necessary.

Additionally, the title company and surveyor noted that City's interest may be subject to the rights, restrictions and easement of the Northern Railroad and their successors or assigns. Though the railroad has since dissolved, those rights have been transferred to the State of New Hampshire.

The recently completed survey should assist the title company and City attorney in making a final determination of the City's rights. However, **resolution of these matters will have a significant impact on the approach to site planning and development**, and may require negotiation with outside parties.

TITLE NARRATIVE

The project area consists of portions of Tax Map 91 Lots 230 and 245. The land was acquired by the City as part of the 1965 Business District Project through several deeds. Examination of provided title documents and research at the Grafton County Registry of deeds **did not recover deeds in the chain of title** for portions of Lot 245 from Matthew Gile, approximately 1.3 acres, shown as Parcel A2 in the land acquisition property map in the 1965 Lebanon Business District Project documents and Edward Sanborn, approximately 0.25 acres, located the east of the Gile tract and west of Tax Map 92 Lot 17.



1965 URBAN RENEWAL DOCUMENT HIGHLIGHTING THE GILE AND SANBORN TRACTS

EASEMENTS

Deed Book 1092, Page 479 reserved a 17' wide track easement to the Northern Railroad that straddles the tract line between Lots 230 and 245. The track has subsequently been removed and the ownership land of the Northern Railroad line was subsequently conveyed to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and is now used as a rail trail. Other easements include:

- Public sewer enters the northeast part of Lot 230 from a 20' sewer easement across the land of Cater Community Building Association. Deed Book 2082 Page 744 indicates there is a drainage easement connecting the Surveyed Property to land of Cater Community Building Association but the plan referenced in the document depicting the location and extents was not found in the conduct of the survey.
- Deed Book 3210 Page 125 indicates a "right to maintain fire escape facilities on northeast corner of building" for Lot 241.
- Deed Book 4152 Page 94 states Lot 242 benefits from "any and all rights of way from Court Street."
- Deed Book 2471 Page 282 states Lot 282 is subject to "rights of the City of Lebanon, if any, to maintain and replace present sewer and water mains in and through the premises."

Research and field observations suggest the land may be subject to telephone and electric transmission agreements across its land. There are overhead pole mounted utilities crossing the property from the southeast corner of the premises from the location of the old Hanover Street bridge over the Mascoma River and extending to Taylor Street and to private properties on Flynn Street. Telephone Manholes were also observed on the property and the project documents for the 1965 Business District Project indicate underground communication lines within the 17' wide track easement area noted above then crossing the property towards the south, crossing Flynn Street and connecting to City Hall.

Zoning

LEBANON DOWNTOWN DISTRICT:

The Project Site is located entirely within the Lebanon Downtown District (LD), according to the City of Lebanon Zoning Map. The Lebanon Downtown District is designed to support a vibrant mixed-use environment with a blend of residential, commercial, and public service uses that encourage pedestrian activity and community engagement. Below is a detailed overview of the allowed uses, restrictions, dimensional requirements, and buffer zone requirements.

Allowed Uses

- Residential Uses:
 - * Multi-family dwellings (with specific conditions per Section 307.5)
 - * Dwelling units above or below street-level stories
- Commercial/Non-Residential Uses:
 - * Indoor amusements
 - * Community centers
 - * Financial institutions
 - * Group day care facilities (per Section 604)
 - * Health clubs
 - * Hotels
 - * Houses of worship
 - * Libraries
 - * Local government uses
 - * Membership clubs
 - * Museums
 - * Offices
 - * Personal services (e.g., hair salons, spas, dry cleaners)
 - * Radio or TV studios
 - * Renewable energy systems (per Section 612)
 - * Restaurants and sandwich shops
 - * Retail stores
 - * Senior housing complexes
 - * Social service centers
 - * Theaters, concert halls, and movie theaters
- Uses by Conditional Use Permit:
 - * Craftsman's shop, art studio
 - * Dry cleaning pick-up stations
 - * Educational facilities, colleges/universities
 - * Essential services
 - * Laundromats
 - * Publication/printing services
 - * Recreational facilities (indoor and outdoor)
 - * Parking facilities

Additionally, Section 307.4, Other Uses, allows the Planning Board to permit other uses by a conditional use permit, not identified in Section 307.2, that will contribute positively to the vibrance of the Lebanon Downtown District.

Density requirements for residential uses are detailed in Section 307.5 for multi-family and mixed use. The requirements vary for based on location on a primary or secondary street, however, the Planning Board has authority to waive requirements with a conditional use permit.

DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The following dimensional requirements apply to the subject site and proposed developments:

Requirement	Minimum/ Requisite	Maximum/Limitations
Lot Area	3,000 square feet	-
Lot Frontage	40 feet	-May be reduced by Condition Use Permit
Front Yard	-	NONE, except as may be required per Section 307.7
Side Yard	-	NONE, except as may be required per Section 307.7
Rear Yard	10 feet	NONE, except as may be required per Section 307.7
Building Coverage	-	NONE
Building Height	-	55 feet, except as may be permitted by conditional use permit per Section 307.8

The Planning Board also can approve a conditional use permit to modify setbacks, building heights, and lot coverage.

PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR USES ALLOWED IN THE LEBANON DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

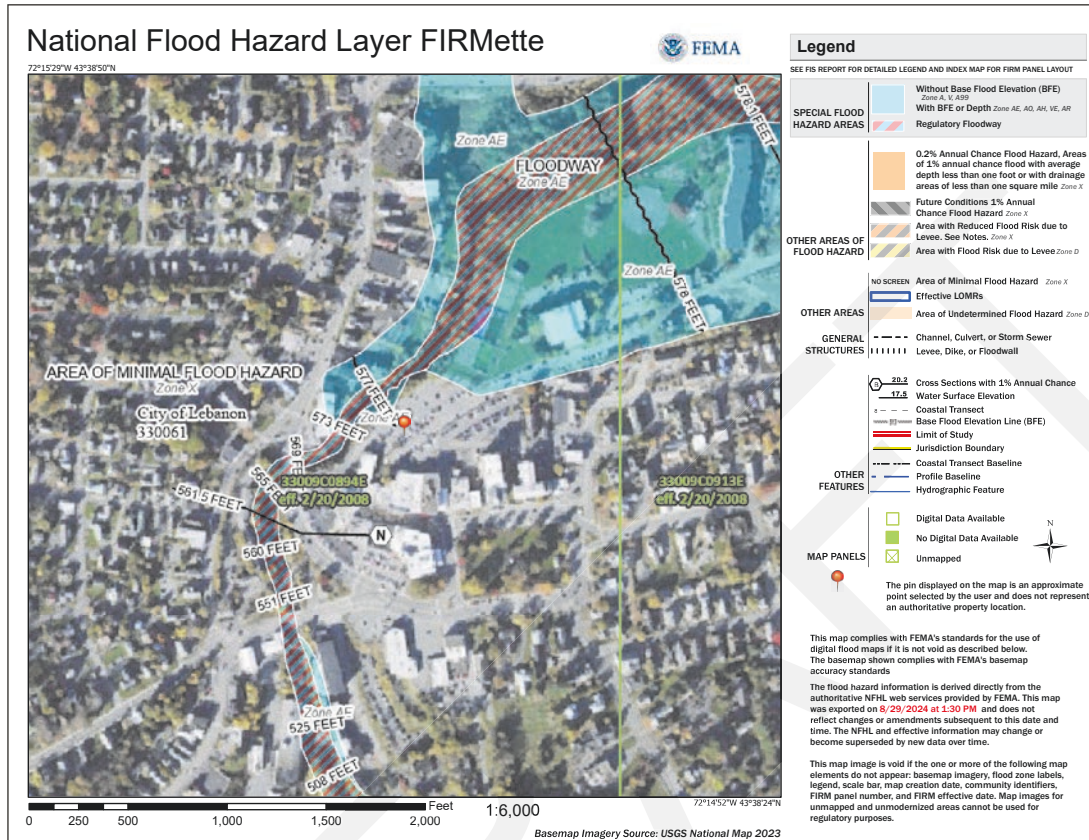
The parking requirements within the Lebanon Downtown District specify space allocations based on the use type. Below is a detailed table summarizing the parking requirements for the various uses allowed within this district:

Use Category	Permitted Uses	Parking Space Requirement
Residential Uses	- Multi-family dwellings	Determined by Planning Board based on site-specific conditions
	- Dwelling units above or below street-level stories	Determined by Planning Board based on site-specific conditions
Amusements	- Indoor amusements	1 space per 4 seats or 1 space per 100 sq. ft. of assembly area
Community Centers	- Community centers	1 space per 300 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Financial Institutions	- Financial institutions	1 space per 300 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Day Care Facilities	- Group day care facilities (per Section 604)	1 space per employee, plus 1 space per 10 children
Health Clubs	- Health clubs	1 space per 150 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Hotels	- Hotels	1 space per guest room, plus 1 space per employee

Use Category	Permitted Uses	Parking Space Requirement
Houses of Worship	- Houses of worship	1 space per 4 seats
Libraries	- Libraries	1 space per 500 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Government Uses	- Local government uses	Per Planning Board determination
Clubs	- Membership clubs	1 space per 200 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Museums	- Museums	1 space per 500 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Offices	- Offices	1 space per 300 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Personal Services	- Personal services (e.g., hair salons, spas, dry cleaners)	1 space per 200 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Radio or TV Studios	- Radio or TV studios	1 space per employee
Renewable Energy Systems	- Renewable energy systems	Per Planning Board determination
Restaurants and Cafes	- Restaurants and sandwich shops	1 space per 3 seats, plus 1 space per 2 workers
Retail Stores	- Retail stores	1 space per 200 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Senior Housing	- Senior housing complexes	1 space per unit
Social Service Centers	- Social service centers	1 space per 300 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Entertainment Venues	- Theaters, concert halls, movie theaters	1 space per 4 seats
Art and Crafts Studios	- Craftsman's shop, art studio	1 space per 200 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Dry Cleaning	- Dry cleaning pick-up stations	1 space per 200 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Educational Uses	- Educational facilities, colleges/universities	1 space per employee, plus 1 space per 10 students
Essential Services	- Essential services	Per Planning Board determination
Laundromats	- Laundromats	1 space per 3 washing machines
Publications and Print	- Publication/printing services	1 space per 300 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Recreational Facilities	- Recreational facilities (indoor and outdoor)	1 space per 200 sq. ft. of activity area
Parking Facilities	- Parking facilities	Determined by specific conditional use permit conditions

Flood & Shoreland Considerations

Owing to its riverfront location, the site presents several additional local, state and federal regulatory considerations related to waterfront development.



FEMA FIRMETTE FLOOD MAP SHOWING THE PROJECT SITE

FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT:

The Project Site includes areas that are within the Floodplain Overlay District. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panel 33009C0894E, effective date 2/20/2008, there is floodplain (Zone AE) associated with the Mascoma River, with a flood elevation identified between approximately elevation 573 and 577 (NGVD 1929 datum). Portions of the lower lot of the Project Site are within the floodplain limits. This district aims to minimize flood risk and ensure public safety.

Allowed Activities:

- Uses that inevitably require location within or adjacent to waterbodies, with adequate flood protection measures.

Prohibited Uses:

- No underground chemical or fuel storage tanks (excluding propane) of any size within 200 feet of a wetland.
- Any development that increases flood risk or does not comply with the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.

Building code typically requires construction with a floodplain shall have the lowest occupied floor at least 1' above the base flood elevation or provide provisions for floodproofing and flood insurances and that no adverse impacts to the flood-carrying capacity of the area. Provisions are set forth in the City of Lebanon's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. The City Engineer will normally serve as the Floodplain Official.

WETLANDS CONSERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT:

The Wetlands Conservation Overlay District includes the wetland areas, according to RSA 482-A and 674:55 and a 100' horizontal buffer to those wetland areas. The Project Site abuts the Mascoma River, which is identified as a wetland area according to the GIS database, therefore the 100' buffer applies to portions of the Project Site. The Wetlands Conservation District aims to protect the wetlands by preventing pollution, flooding, and unnecessary costs to the city for essential services.

Allowed Uses (Special Exceptions):

- Uses that cannot feasibly be carried out on portions of the lot outside the Wetlands Conservation District.
- Uses essential for the public health, safety, and welfare, compliant with state and federal requirements.
- Activities related to wetland restoration, enhancement, or preservation.

Prohibited Uses:

- Underground septic systems or new fuel storage facilities within 200 feet of wetlands.
- Any activities that alter the natural flow of watercourses or significantly impact streams and riparian conditions.
- Any form of pollution, increased erosion, or destabilization of soil.

Projects that require minimal permitting from NHDES, including Permit by Notification, Minimum Impact Expedited Permit or other Minimum impact permits shall be exempt from the requirements to obtain a special exception. The Zoning Board of Adjustment can grant a special exception for development within the Wetlands Conservation District for High and Very High Value wetlands to allow certain development within the 100' buffer to these wetlands.

RIVERBANK PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICT:

The Mascoma River is identified as a public river in jurisdiction of the Riverbank Protection Overlay District. This district aims to protect water quality and maintain ecological integrity by preventing erosion and pollution. There is a 50' and 125' horizontal buffer zone from the ordinary high-water mark of the Mascoma River.

Permitted Uses:

- Above-ground propane tanks and home heating fuel tanks within principal structures.
- Low-impact recreational activities like pedestrian trails.
- Habitat development and conservation activities.

Prohibited Uses:

- Septic systems and new fuel storage facilities within 125 feet from the high-water mark.
- Any structures that would alter the surface configuration of the land through fill, excavation, or dredging.
- Activities leading to erosion, sedimentation, or pollution.

NHDES URBANIZED SHORELAND EXEMPTION

NHDES Urbanized Shoreland Exemptions exempt areas from the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA). City of Lebanon Planning Staff indicated that an exemption would be requested by the City Council specific to this area of the Downtown Lebanon area. This request for this exemption was planned to be filed during the late summer 2024. If the exemption were granted, the project area would be exempt from the requirements of the SWQPA and not be required to obtain a NHDES Shoreland Permit, in addition to the local requirements of the Riverbank Protection District.

Permitting

Depending upon the scope of proposed development, potential projects may be required to obtain a variety of local, state and federal approvals. This section discusses the various permits or regulatory reviews which may be required, their criteria, application process and approval timeline.

To aid in understanding the various permits required, a permitting matrix has been developed, and included with this section.

LOCAL PERMITTING

Privately developed projects are anticipated to be subject to Site Plan Review by the Lebanon Planning Board. The planning board may request the input of additional City staff or committees (ie. fire department, conservation commission, heritage commission, etc.) as a part of this review process. In most cases, Planning Board approval is required prior to the issuance of any building permit.

NHDES ALTERATION OF TERRAIN (AOT) PERMIT

The proposed redevelopment scenarios will likely require an AoT permit through NHDES. Generally, any project that disturbs more than 100,000 square feet of terrain, or 50,000 square feet within the 250' protected shoreland, will require an AoT permit. The permit helps regulate stormwater controls and treatment on larger development sites, erosion control protections during construction, implementation of stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) and requires operation and maintenance plans to be incorporated to ensure proper maintenance and functionality of the systems. The permit application process typically involves submitting:

- Cover Letter
- Permit application form and checklist
- USGS Project Location Map
- NHDES OneStop Data Mapper review showing AoT Screening Layers and Surface Water Impairments
- NHNHB Data Check Results
- USDA Web Soil Survey Map
- Site Photographs
- Groundwater Recharge Volume Calculations
- Hydrologic and Hydraulic Analysis
- Outlet Protection Calculations
- Site Specific Soils Map
- Infiltration Feasibility Report
- Site Plans
- Stormwater Management Report, including Inspection and Maintenance Manual
- Fee

NHDES SEWER CONNECTION PERMIT

The proposed redevelopment scenarios will likely require an NHDES Sewer Connection Permit. It is anticipated that the redevelopment scenarios will extend a collector or interceptor, or require a connection in excess of 5,000 gallons per day. The permit application process typically involves submitting:

- Permit Application
- Flow Calculations
- Site Plans

NHDES SHORELAND PERMIT

The Project Site is within the protected shoreland of the Mascoma River and currently subject to NHDES Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA), which extends 250' from the reference line of the river. The SWQPA regulates setbacks for various uses, including primary structures, accessory structures, septic systems, use of fertilizers and chemicals. Additionally, there are requirements for tree/vegetation removal within certain buffers and impervious requirements within the protected shoreland. A summary of the setbacks are identified below:

- Waterfront Buffer (0-50 feet from Reference Line)
 - * Natural Woodland Buffer: At least 50% of the area between 0-50 feet from the reference line must remain in a natural woodland state.
 - * Tree and Sapling Regulation: Trees and saplings can be pruned but not removed, maintaining the vegetative layer.
 - * Structure Restrictions: No new primary structures are allowed, and existing structures cannot be expanded. Accessory structures have limited allowances based on specific conditions.
- Natural Woodland Buffer (50-150 feet from Reference Line)
 - * Woodland Retention: At least 50% of the terrain within 50-150 feet from the reference line should be maintained as a natural woodland buffer.
 - * Tree Cutting: Limited cutting is allowed, ensuring that no more than 50% of basal area of trees can be removed over a 20-year period. A permit may be required for substantial tree removal.
- Septic Systems Setback (75 feet from Reference Line)
 - * New septic systems must be installed a minimum of 75 feet from the reference line. Replacement or expansion of existing systems also needs to comply with this distance as much as possible.
- Minimum Setback for Other Structures:
 - * Primary Structures (150 feet from Reference Line)
 - o New primary structures, such as homes or businesses, should be placed at least 150 feet from the reference line, unless grandfathered rights or variances are applicable.
 - * Accessory Structures (Depending on Municipality)
 - o Regulations regarding accessory structures like sheds, decks, or docks often vary by municipality but generally follow stringent guidelines to minimize shoreline impact.
- Key Impervious Surface Requirements:
 - * Overall Coverage Limits:
 - o Maximum Percentage: The creation of new impervious surfaces within the protected shoreland is restricted to a maximum percentage of the lot area. Typically, this is capped at 20% impervious coverage, but it can go up to 30% if specific stormwater management practices are implemented and maintained.
 - o Exemptions and Variances: Certain pre-existing properties may have different requirements, and variances may be sought under specific circumstances.
 - * Stormwater Management Practices:
 - o Design Requirements: When impervious surfaces exceed 20% but are below 30%, effective stormwater management practices must be designed to handle the increased runoff. These practices often include systems like infiltration basins, permeable pavements, rain gardens, and other low-impact development techniques.
 - o Ongoing Maintenance: Owners must ensure that these stormwater management systems are well-maintained to function effectively over the long term.
 - * Retrofit Requirements:
 - o Existing Properties: For properties that already exceed the impervious surface limits, retrofitting measures may be required to bring them into compliance or otherwise mitigate environmental impacts through improved stormwater management systems.

HISTORIC/CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSULTATION

As the redevelopment scenarios are likely anticipated to require a federal permit, the project will require a review of impacts to historic properties under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Section 106 process requires participation by the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) and consulting parties. A Request for Project Review (RPR) is required to be submitted to NHDHR. The RPR will contain data on historic structures (i.e. above-ground resources) as well as a Phase IA Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment, if explicitly requested by NHDHR.

RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSULTATION

The redevelopment scenarios are anticipated to require consultation for rare, threatened and endangered species. An online data check request with the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau (NHNHB) is performed to identify known populations of state-listed threatened or endangered species within the vicinity of the project parcel. If rare species are identified within the vicinity of the project area, additional consultation with NHNHB and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHF&G) may be required to address concerns related to potential project impacts. Additionally, data checks are required for federally listed species utilizing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) System. It is anticipated that the report issued by USFWS will list the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) and the monarch butterfly. Concerns related to the northern long-eared bat in New Hampshire revolve around tree clearing activities. For the NLEB, VHB will initiate consultation via the IPaC system utilizing the Range-wide NLEB Determination Key (DKey). Further details with respect to any proposed tree clearing, project construction and operation will be needed from the Client prior to formally submitting a species review through IPaC which may help to refine the preliminary results and determine next steps. No consultation is required for the monarch butterfly at this time, as its candidate status does not provide protection under the Endangered Species Act. Acoustic surveys may be required to determine presence/absence of the NLEB based on further consultation with USFWS.

EPA NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION GENERAL PERMIT

The proposed project scenarios are anticipated to alter greater than one acre of land. Accordingly, the individual/s who control the construction activities on the site (e.g. owner, contractor/s) are required to file a Notice of Intent (NOI) and receive acknowledgment from the EPA at least fourteen days prior to the start of construction pursuant to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Sites (CGP) with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These regulations require the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the site-specific construction activities and implementation by the individuals who control the site. The SWPPP must be in place at the time of the filing of the EPA NOI.



LEBANON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT (APPROXIMATELY 2 MILES FROM PROJECT SITE)

FAA OBSTRUCTION ANALYSIS

It is anticipated for most redevelopment scenarios will require an evaluation to determine the need for an obstruction analysis and notification filing in accordance with the requirements set forth in 14 CFR Part 77, Safe, Efficient Use, and Preservation of the Navigable Airspace as these construction activities are presumed to be located in the operational vicinity of Lebanon Municipal Airport (LEB). The evaluation will be required to understand the location, proposed elevation, site characteristics, distances and alignment with runways at LEB and the associated airport airspace surfaces to determine whether the proposed structures (buildings and cranes) have the potential to penetrate airspace surfaces. It is anticipated that an FAA Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration for the structures and cranes will be required for construction activities.

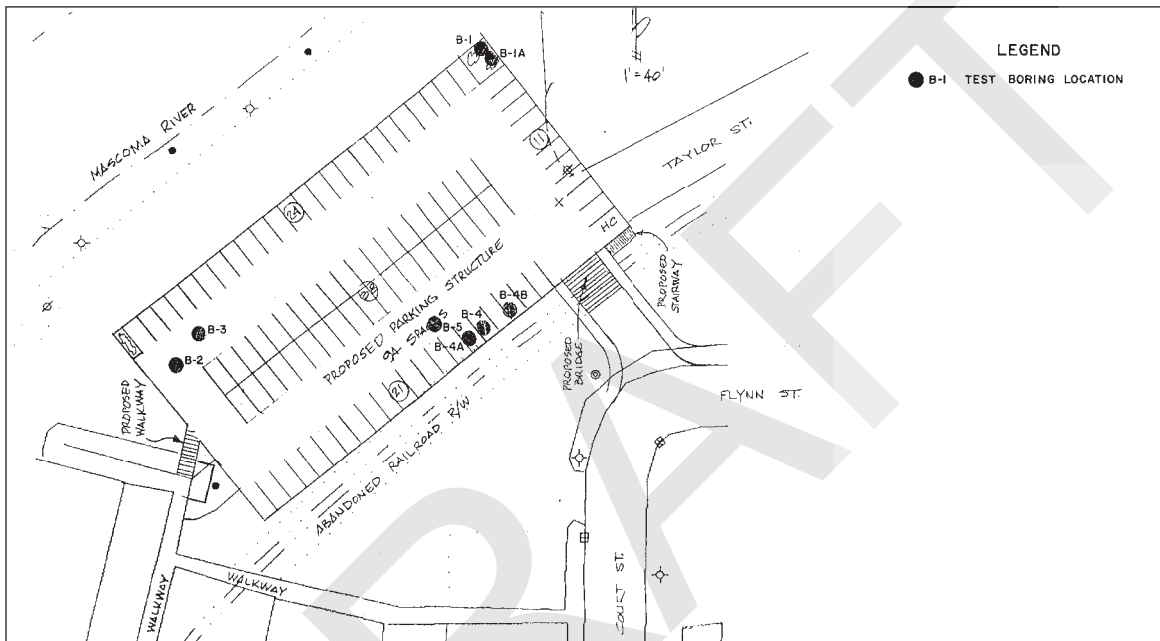
Permitting Matrix

	Permit	Agency	Description	Regulatory Review Duration
Local				
	Lebanon			
	Major Site Plan Review	Planning Board	Required for Land Development Projects: Increase in gross floor area of a building: a) equal to or greater than 2,500 sq. ft; or, b) equal to or greater than 25% of the existing gross floor area Reconstruction of demolished buildings a) equal to or greater than 2,500 sq. ft; or, b) equal to or greater than 25% of the existing gross floor area New improved surfaces, including but not limited to gravel or paved parking areas, driveways, walkways, or other improved surfaces, whether or not such surfaces are pervious or impervious - equal to or greater than 2,500 sq. ft.	Anticipate 3-6 months Recommend a Conceptual Review with Planning Board prior to formal submittal Submit for Site Plan Review Determination of potential regional impact Staff Review Meeting Planning Board - Hearing 1 - Completeness Hearing Planning Board - Hearing 2+ - Project discussions. The applicant shall file the application with the Planning & Development Office on second Monday of the month for the on the second Monday of the following month. Review by City Staff Other Department Review (Town Staff/Departments) Engineering Review Determination (Peer review) Initial Completeness Determination Review by the Planning Board Hear the project within 30 days of application Completeness hearing to accept application and open public hearing The Planning Board shall act to approve or disapprove within 65 days after formal acceptance of the application, subject to extensions. The Planning Board may petition the City Council for an extension not to exceed an additional 90 days before acting to approve or disapprove an application. The applicant may waive the requirement for Planning Board action and consent to such extension as may be mutually agreeable. Concurrent with Planning Board - TBD depending on any impacts. Will be an advisory opinion to the Planning Board.
	Conservation Commission Recommendation	Conservation Commission	Wetland buffer and/or wetland impacts	
State				
	Alteration of Terrain	New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES)	Required for projects disturbing greater than 100,000 SF	Anticipate 50-75 days The time to review an application is no more than 50 calendar days, as required by statute. At that time the application is either permitted or a request for more information letter is sent to the applicant. The applicant then has 120 days to respond to the request for more information. Once the response is received from the applicant, the department has no more than 30 days to make a decision to permit or deny the project.
	Wetland Dredge and Fill Permit	NHDES Wetlands Bureau	Impacts within wetland resource area	Anticipate 50-75 days Applications are reviewed within 50 days from the issuance of an Administrative Completeness Notice or 75 days for wetland impacts over 1 acre. Following review, the permit application is either permitted, denied, or a "Request for More Information" letter is sent. Applicants must respond to the NHDES "Request for More Information" within 60 days or request an extension. Once a complete response is received from the applicant, a decision to permit or deny the project is made within 30 days
	Shoreland Water Quality Permit	NHDES Shoreland Program	Impacts within 250' Protected Shoreland	30 days
	NH Fish & Game Dept. Nongame & Endangered Species Program	NH Fish & Game	Data Check and consultation	30 days
	Rare Species	NH Natural Heritage Bureau	Data Check and consultation	30 days
	Cultural Resources Consultation	NH Division of Historical Resources	Request for Project Review. US Army Corps of Engineers review may be required pending wetland impacts.	30 days , however, if findings, will require additional coordination and possible studies
	Sewer Connection Permit	NHDES Wastewater	Extension of sewer system and new flow greater than 5,000 gpd	Varies, typically within 30 days
Federal				
	Wetland Dredge and Fill Permit	US Army Corps of Engineers	30 day review following NHDES Wetland Dredge and Fill Permit review (filed concurrently)	30 days (following NHDES review)
	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit	EPA	Required for projects disturbing greater than 1-acre	14 days
	FAA Form 7460-1	FAA	Obstruction analysis presumed to be required due to proximity to Lebanon Municipal Airport	After submitting FAA Form 7460-1, there is a mandatory notice period. Generally, the FAA recommends that the form be submitted at least 45-60 days before the start of construction. This notice period helps ensure that the FAA has enough time to begin and complete its evaluation.
	Northern Long-Ear Bat	USFWS	Rules are currently being modified. All of NH has NLEB hits	Anticipate 30 days

Geotechnical Considerations

VHB provided a cursory review of the previously prepared Geotechnical Reports prepared in February 1990, by Jaworksi Geotech, Inc., for the City of Lebanon. The initial geotechnical investigation was performed to evaluate the feasibility of constructing a parking garage at the Project Site.

The report provided an overview of the history of the area from when the property was previously used as a sawmill and lumber yard. The scope of the initial study focused primarily within the footprint of the proposed garage at that time, which was located on the lower parking field area (to the north of the former rail line and south of the Mascoma River). The scope of the study included the advancement of eight (8) test borings to a depth of three to thirty-five feet.



EXCERPT FROM 1990 GEOTECHNICAL REPORT, SHOWING TEST BORING LOCATIONS

The results of the initial test borings identified **generally poor soils in this area**, consisting of fill, organics and soft clay which are not advantageous for conventional foundation designs. Additionally, groundwater was determined to be approximately 11-11.5' below ground surface.

It was recommended additional investigations, including test pits and additional borings, be performed to better understand the depth and character of fill soils and the ability of the natural inorganic soils to support the structure, including, soil properties related to the differential settlement, surcharging and riverbank stability, strength and compressibility of the soils. It does not appear that the second study was performed by the city.

For any redevelopment scenario, a new comprehensive geotechnical investigation should be performed to understand the subsurface conditions of the entire Project Site. A Geotechnical Engineering firm should review the previous reports and provide recommendations for scoping of an investigation to support the development scenarios. The proposed redevelopment area is much larger than the proposed parking garage area and the anticipated structures may be more substantial. A broader geotechnical investigation will be required, likely including a series of test borings and test pits, installation of monitoring wells to understand groundwater fluctuations. Additionally, the laboratory sampling to understand soil characteristics. Also, it is unclear if there has been any characterization of the soils as it relates to any past contamination based on the former use of the property. The geotechnical engineer may recommend more advanced foundation design and construction methods than previously recommended in the early 1990's.

Utilities and Infrastructure



DIAGRAM SHOWING LOCATION OF KEY SITE UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

VHB reviewed existing available information related to the various utilities servicing the site, including, water, sewer, electric, cable/television/internet services and summarized below. A complete utility survey, conducted in August 2024, is appended to this report.

SEWER

- Sewer infrastructure was reviewed from the City's GIS database and information provided on the survey prepared by VHB for the City of Lebanon in August 2024.
- 24"-42" vitrified clay (VC) sewer main is located within the northerly portion of the paved parking area, adjacent to the Mascoma River. The sewer infrastructure flows in the similar direction as the Mascoma River, east to west within the parking field and then in a southerly direction adjacent to the river. Sewer flows in an east to west direction towards the river and then southerly with the river towards Water Street.
- Interior sewer lines collect flow from the nearby structures and connect into the sewer main, generally comprised of 8"-12" collector pipes.
- Initial discussions with City Engineering Department for this area of the sewer shed is that there are no capacity issues related to sewer.

WATER

- Water infrastructure was reviewed from the City's GIS database and information provided on the survey prepared by VHB for the City of Lebanon in August 2024.
- According to the City's GIS database, there are three water connections through the Project site.
 - * The northerly portion of the parking lot (the lower lot area), there is a 6" water line generally within Taylor Street.
 - * The southerly area of the parking lot (the upper lot) has a 12" water line connecting from Flynn Street. This water line appears to be connected on both ends to the 6" water line noted above, creating a redundant loop in this area.
 - * There is an 8" water line generally from Court Street that is located behind the Hanover Street commercial buildings and continues beneath the Mascoma River prior to connecting to water mains on Hanover and High Street.
- Hydrants are located within the lower parking field, primarily on the easterly and westerly side of the Project Site on Taylor Street, the intersection of Court and Flynn Streets and the south-easterly corner of the parking field adjacent to Flynn Street.
- Initial discussions with City Engineering Department there were no flow and/or capacity concerns identified in this area. Hydrant Flow test data was requested from the city for this area, however, was not confirmed if any records exist.

FUEL - NATURAL GAS / PROPANE / FUEL OIL

Natural Gas service is not provided in the Upper Valley Area of New Hampshire. It is anticipated that future private developments in Lebanon will utilize electricity as the primary heating/cooling energy source. However, if required, private natural gas service would need to be provided by an outside vendor. Typically, propane may be utilized as a means of backup generator emergency power.

ELECTRIC – LIBERTY UTILITIES

Liberty Utilities provides electric service to the Lebanon Area. Overhead wire infrastructure with utility poles bisects the lower parking lot area along Taylor Street. Riser poles were observed that bring electrical service below grade and electrical manholes observed within the parking field. Three phase power is available.

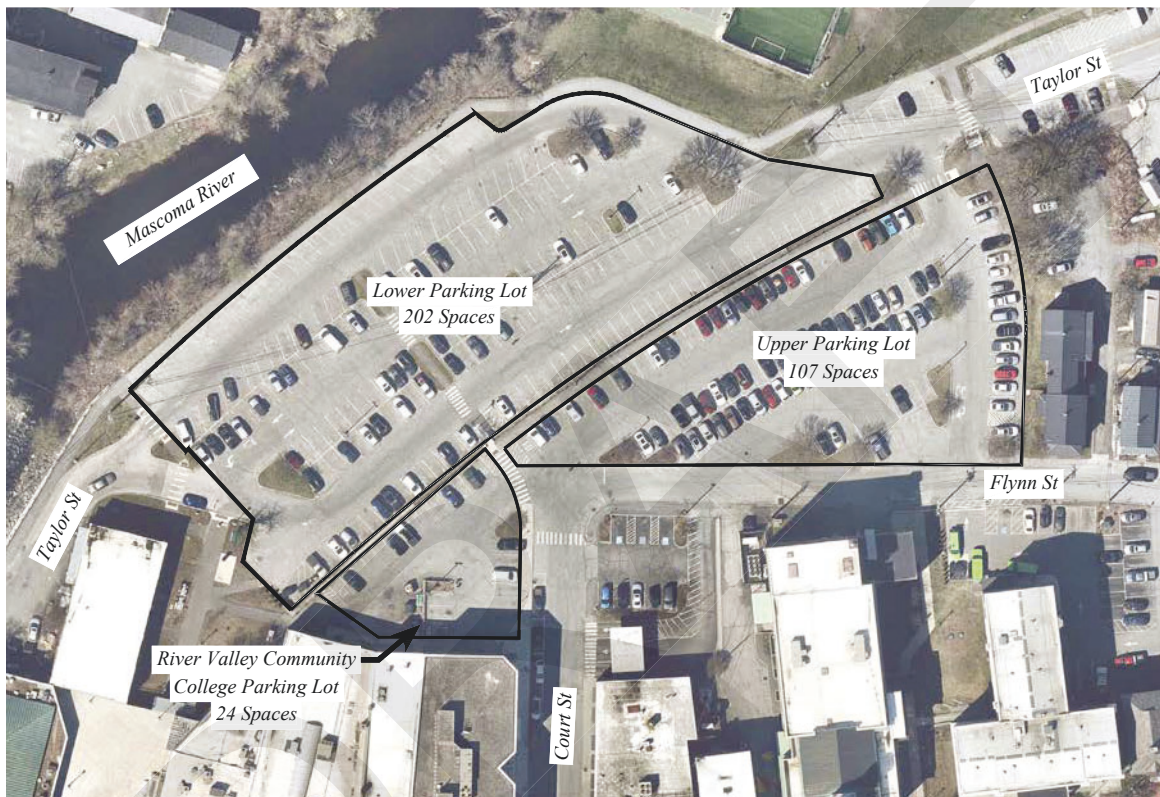
CABLE/TELEVISION/INTERNET

Consolidated Communications and Comcast provide service to the Lebanon Area. Infrastructure appears to follow the same utility poles and routing as the overhead electrical lines. A fiber optic infrastructure was mentioned during the site visit with city officials to be located along the railroad right of way, however, record plans were not able to be located to identify this infrastructure during the field survey data collection efforts.

Parking

A Parking and Mobility Assessment was performed by VHB during the summer of 2024, with field work taking place on Saturday, July 27th and Thursday, August 1st. Field work consisted of aerial drone imagery to obtain hourly parking demand (indicated by number of occupied spaces) between the hours of 7am and 7pm, as well as vehicle turning movement counts at four key intersections. The goal of the study is to establish an existing baseline conditions for existing parking lots. This baseline will be used in future planning to justify the necessary parking infrastructure to support the existing downtown and future development.

A complete copy of the Parking and Mobility Assessment is appended to this report.



SUMMARY OF PARKING STUDY AREA (333 TOTAL SPACES)

Findings of the assessment suggest there is ample parking to meet current demand. **Total occupancy for the entire study area peaked at 64%**, on Thursday between 5-6pm. The highest parking demand occurred within the upper lot parking spaces without time restrictions on Thursday between 10 AM-1 PM (between 85-94% occupied). Other notable findings include:

- Generally, higher demand existed on Thursday than on Saturday.
- The upper parking lot experienced higher parking demands and occupancies than both the lower lot and the RVCC lot.
- None of the overall parking lots were considered to be functionally full.

It should be noted that the data does not account for existing vacancies in adjacent buildings, and the hypothetical parking demand associated with the potential uses for those spaces. Additionally, the team understands the true peak parking demand occurs during simultaneous events, such as the Lebanon Farmer's Market and a concurrent event at the Lebanon Opera House. Due to the overall project schedule, the study did not collect data during such an occurrence, which City staff estimate occurs 4-5 times per year.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

As the project team expected, public survey respondents indicated a strong preference for retaining parking “as-is” in Downtown Lebanon. A majority of the feedback pertaining to parking relates to preserving an adequate quantity of parking, there were also comments pertaining to the safety, effectiveness, and administration of the parking area as well. Though the parking study suggests that an adequate quantity of parking exists in the area, potential reconsideration of these issues may improve the effectiveness of the existing parking.

It is also important to note that though many survey responses urge the City to leave parking as it is, there is no true “do-nothing” scenario. If the City were to maintain the lots largely in their current configuration, this scenario would require considerable investment in repair and maintenance of deteriorating retaining walls, paving, signage, and operating cost, in addition to any ‘functional’ improvements related to traffic control, wayfinding, and safety. These items, and a preliminary budget for their implementation, will be defined during future phase of the study.

“Install some features, signage, and enforcement to make traffic travel more slowly. Ever since the tennis courts were redone, the volume of traffic has increased. Better signage and some speed bumps might help.”

- Online survey participant

“Left as is. The LOH and restaurants need the parking space. Development will bring more traffic and less parking.”

- Online survey participant

“Reconnect the downtown to its river with an actual park/promenade that is a prominent feature and destination. Remove excess parking and impose reasonable time limits or pricing on remaining parking based on demand and need for turnover. **Free parking is not what makes downtowns attractive places.** In fact excess underutilized parking prevents creating a critical mass of activity necessary for a thriving community. ”

- Online survey participant

Planning Scenarios

Tbd in a future revision to this report.

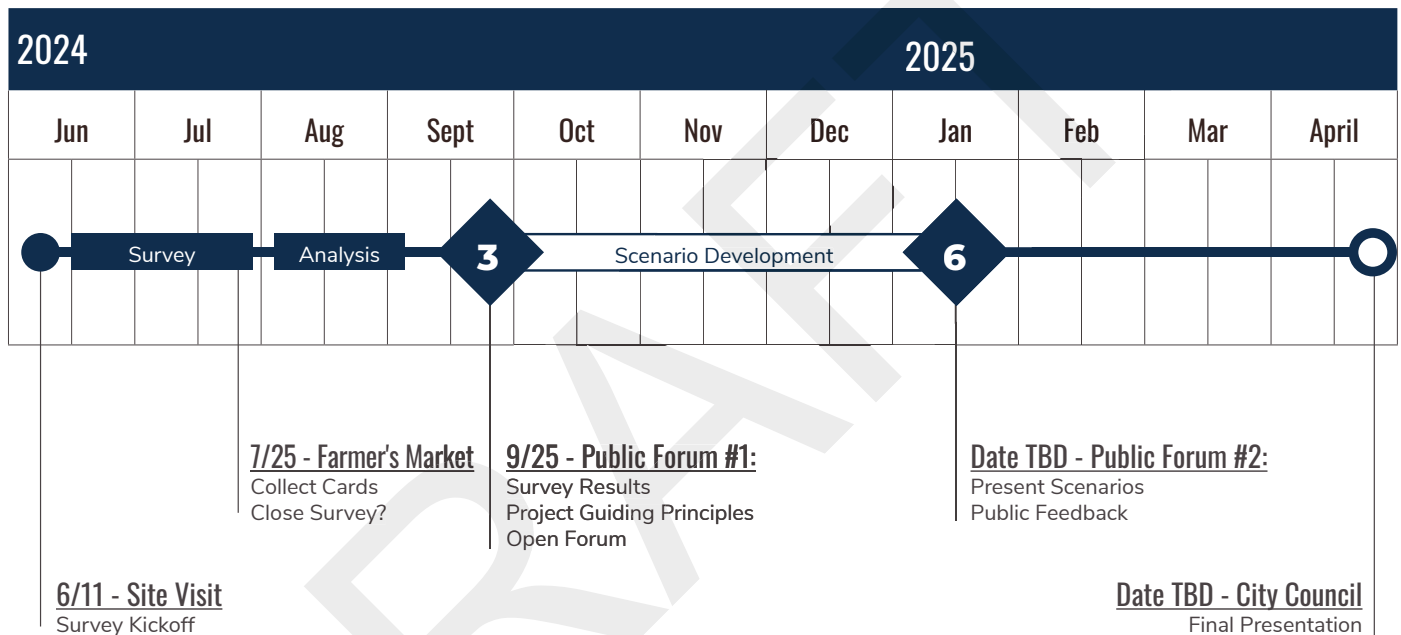
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Next Steps

This report summarizes the project team's preliminary findings after having visited the project site, conducted initial public surveys, and interviewed key City staff, members of the local business community and the general public. The project key findings and guiding principles are a result of this effort. As a critical next step, the team will seek to verify this information during an upcoming public forum and meetings with the EDC/TIF Committees in late September. This information will be finalized and serve to **guide development of planning scenarios** during fall and winter 2024/25.

Public engagement will continue throughout the development of planning scenarios, with a second public forum held in early 2025, and a final presentation of the study results in early spring.



ADDITIONAL TASKS

Beyond the scope of the Parking Lot Redevelopment Study, this report identifies a number of additional tasks and studies which may be required prior to proceeding with site redevelopment. These include, but may not be limited to:

- Obtain certification of title for the entire property, and/or confirm legal limitations for development with relevant professionals.
- Update geotechnical investigation for the preferred development scenarios.
- Confirm City's approach to the expansion of the Downtown Lebanon Historic District.
- Consider additional environmental 'due diligence' activities such as Phase I Environmental Site Assessment.
- Depending upon preferred development scenario(s), consider potential strategies & partner(s) for implementation.

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