

The image features a large, semi-transparent geometric pattern on the left side, composed of overlapping triangles in shades of blue, brown, and tan. The background is an aerial photograph of a town, showing various buildings, parking lots, and roads. The text is overlaid on the white space to the right of the geometric pattern.

West Lebanon Village Charrette Report

APRIL 2020

2019 West Lebanon Village Visioning Charrette Open-Ended Survey Questions & Responses:

1. What do you think is the biggest opportunity to improve public areas (such as sidewalk and parks) in West Lebanon Village?

- More effective sidewalks, better streetscape, fewer buses, and street area parking lots that aren't really parking lots.
- Make everything easily accessible and improve traffic patterns
- More cool restaurants, small shops, sidewalk/building art, finish River Park, and make West Leb more inviting down town. Of course, we would like for Westboro to be gone and a park to be there, but that is out of our control at least for now.
- A common 'square' with shade and benches on Main St.
- Connection to (and extension of) the rail trail. The MR greenway is now an amazing asset for Lebanon. If connected to West Leb, and ideally even WRJ, it would provide even more benefits to the city. This final connection would make the trail more useful as a mode of transport, would expand recreational opportunities, and would improve safety for connecting to the trail at the western end. Even just an extension to the skate park would be a huge next step in the right direction.
- Redeveloping the railyard and opening the rail bridge as an official bike/ped connection to WRJ.
- Access to the riverfront, cleanup of the railyard without losing the footprint of historic buildings, providing public parking.
- Better connections and orientation towards the river.
- Better bus service to enable more non-driving access from Lebanon.
- Clear, accessible sidewalks, crossings and plantings would ease the run-down feel of the village.
- Developing the old rail yard.
- Too much attention to the railyard issues can stall community development. Enhancing the walking environment by fixing sidewalks and planting trees and gardens is easier than fixing the railyard situation. Look for open land such as the ball field north end of Maple, the vacant church near Atwood, the land around Seminary Hill School as opportunities for park and event space development. Can West Leb ever have a town green?
- Move bus hub away from library.
- Lose a few on-street parking areas and create some streetscaping opportunities. Provide areas where people can sit and enjoy being in the spaces provided to them.
- Safe pedestrian (incl. bike) access and routes.
- Sidewalks need buffers, reduce on street parking and narrow pavement area near crosswalks to make streets feel walkable. Partially remove on-street parking (most businesses appear to have adequate parking that is underutilized). Use this linear space to hold events with vendor tents such as farmers market, holiday sale, etc. Develop residential and downtown park space in the West Lebanon vicinity and pedestrian connectivity from parks to downtown. Aldrich Ave, Civic Field, Maple Street Little League Field, Boston Lot (via The Falls), and the Westboro property (CT River) would form a solid focus for developing park space connectivity.
- Clean up railroad yard, fix sidewalks, clean up/repair buildings along Main Street.
- Cleanup of Westboro Yard - link to MRG and CT River.
- Finishing the Mascoma River Greenway connection, Better signage at trailheads and more centralized online information about trails/outdoor facilities in the area. I can't even find whatever the "2010 Lebanon Trails Map is" on your website even with looking for it.
- Improved community, more attractive streetscape, more vibrance and less desolation.
- More walking trails which connect to the river, Boston Lot, and White River Junction.

- Make the rail yard into a park that accesses the river. It could be linked to Lebanon via the Mascoma greenway once railroad rights are obtained, making it a destination for both towns. Lots of hungry/thirsty bikers and joggers to patronize the businesses in the village! Mascoma Lake to the Connecticut River could be a vacation destination experience.
- I am at a loss!
- There really isn't any room in West Lebanon Village for parks.
- I think if the Westboro railyard becomes habitable again that that space could be a beautiful pedestrian only spot with shops along both sides and possibly taking advantage of the river front property as well. If not, I think a strong effort to make Main Street more pedestrian friendly by rerouting traffic, transferring street parking to a different location in order to allow for wider sidewalks with trees, greenery, and bike lanes would go a long way for the economic development of the village.
- Make the parks more intentional- like they are in White River Junction. Named parks, information about names/history, benches, clear boundaries, landscaping, etc.

2. What do you think is the biggest opportunity to improve traffic and transportation (such as circulation, parking, signage, pedestrian/bicyclist/transit improvements, etc.) in West Lebanon Village?

- More effective sidewalks, better streetscape, fewer buses, and street area parking lots that aren't really parking lots.
- Parking!!!!!!!
- Move the bus stop north of Main St. on route 10.
- Convert the signals (most notably NH-10 & Dana St/Bridge St) to use permissive/protected left turns and maintain the vehicle detection (this seems to pretend to be broken on Main St). The volumes don't warrant protected only phasing and allowing a permissive phase would be an inexpensive improvement that would greatly improve traffic flows.
- Make sure signal detection works! Allow permitted left turns (install flashing yellow arrows). Shorten curb cuts for pedestrian safety.
- Consolidate underutilized parking and use available space for public space (park or other gathering space) or affordable housing.
- Perhaps moving parking off the traveled way to behind the businesses.
- Relocate the bus stop to Central/Atwood Streets and improve Main Street traffic flow.
- Main Street is a highway, extremely unfortunate. Simply crossing that street even at corners is uncomfortable to unsafe. Red light on-demand pedestrian push-buttons at frequent intervals down Main Street, and stronger visuals for crossings might help. Enforcement of traffic laws is essential; I see cars running red lights all the time now, very dangerous. I like the bustle of people around the buses at Kilton and with the new apartment building opening I hope that pedestrians start to win the visibility battle.
- Public transit on weekends
- Building a connector road to link Bridge Street with Railroad Avenue along the back of Main Street properties. This could open the rear of some of the lots for additional "public" parking.
- Safer bike lanes/routes/signage/parking.
- Removing on-street parking to promote better utilization of private parking will increase flow by streamlining the roadway for thru and local traffic. On-street spaces create uncertainty for drivers and wider crossings for pedestrians. Relocating the major bus station there or creating a clear division for the bus lane on that section of road would also clean up the roadway and improve traffic flow. While likely not popular with residents and with some logistical difficulties, creating signage and roadway improvements for drivers to use Maple Street for travel to and from Hanover could solve many traffic issues by separating Hanover traffic from any traffic going to and from Vermont.
- Improve pedestrian/bicyclist areas, move the bus stop.
- Improve sidewalks. Be open to electric bikes. Have one big parking area rather than several.

- Not sure.
- Minor: Tracy St light timing/sensor. Traffic backs up there every workday, seemingly for poor timing/coordination as much as for actual volume. Better signage coming up to the 12A intersection about lanes. Major: If there was some kind of remotely reasonable bike path or even just roadway shoulder going past the dam, I would probably bike to my job in Hanover on a regular basis.
- Better movement through area.
- Road bike lanes which make road biking safer.
- Rail trail behind the Main Street traffic.
- It seems that the space allotted to driveways and parking entrances along Main St is much more than is necessary. Increasing the length of sidewalks and striping pavement for pedestrians and bicyclists would calm traffic and make the village more inviting.
- Parking garage. Better pullover areas for buses. Separate bike routes.
- Rerouting traffic so that people going to 12A, across the river, or on Rt 10 don't all converge at the same stop light, essentially having roads or bridges that branch off before the intersections to eliminate most of the congestion and promote better traffic flow.
- Better signage for alternative routes.

3. What do you think is the biggest economic development opportunity for West Lebanon Village?

- Small business development, places to eat, event venues, parks with river access and programming similar to farmers markets.
- Bring in shops and little restaurants/cafes like WRJ VT
- Finish River Park. That will bring so many more people into West Lebanon during the day, which will mean more restaurants, shops, etc., as people will go out to lunch, stop on their way home to grab something, etc. WRJ is running rings around us.
- Take away the apartment houses and put in a variety of shops/services
- Start with nice streetscaping and ped connections and then perhaps folks will want to spend time there and businesses will follow.
- Railyard waterfront.
- Developing the riverfront as a destination...park, restaurant, recreation, etc.
- Outdoor recreation connections. Formalize access to the river and Boston lot.
- Westboro rail yard and associated spaces.
- Better businesses to visit and shop.
- Restaurants and coffee shops. We need our own Lucky's. Thousands of cars pour thru from VT on Saturday morning, give 'em someplace to stop and spend money in the Village.
- Small retail, satellite police station or police presence
- Anything that gets people to come and stay. More shopping, more restaurants (open evening hours), etc.
- Updating businesses in the area; many are dated and not being renovated. Need more modern local businesses for personal everyday services, ideally no chains or franchises. Things like: bakery/café, gym/athletic studio, barber, anything with outdoor seating, bar/restaurants.
- Walking area/park along the river. Make the Village more pedestrian friendly. Clean up the railroad yard! This is a huge eyesore with it's burned buildings and overgrown vegetation. It is unsafe and makes West Lebanon Village look neglected. Why would a business want to invest there as it looks now?
- The surrounding area up Seminary Hill and to the side streets contains a lot of appealing housing, as does Maple Street. Meet the housing needs of middle-class people as well as those with very limited resources. Turn streets like Farman into one-way and give us a sidewalk.

Currently it is unsafe to drive there because of the speeders taking the turns. Local people near Main Street will support its economic development. Make it easier for all of us to walk there.

- A grocery store, a hardware store, a pharmacy: all reachable on foot.
- More opportunities for stores and restaurants and resources to the residents of the area.
- Dense housing within town, within road-biking, mountain-biking, and walking distances to big employers in Lebanon, White River Junction, Hanover, Centerra, DHMC. There is an affordable housing shortage for working folks in the Upper Valley (especially working people who don't earn a doctor's salary). I think "rural character" as a goal is best applied to protecting actual rural/wooded areas like Boston Lot, not the Main Streets of a town. The main and side streets within a town should have lots of small, not-too expensive-to-rent, well-kept up, apartments.
- Make it a destination - park, railroad museum, river access, events.
- Change regulations to allow taller buildings. Iron Horse Park was the best opportunity until the planning board killed it - maybe develop Westboro into an industrial park instead. The City would be wise to keep rail viable - don't kill it with a park.
- Cultural development, encourage social hubs to pop up, like restaurants, coffee shops, places that inspire creativity and social interaction. If there were places to hold events that supplemented these fixed areas of social interest (turning the rail yard into such a venue for concerts, festivals, etc. would be a great opportunity) it will make the Village a much more desirable location.
- Good restaurants and cafes. Yama is the only decent option. The vape shops and dusty businesses are not appealing. More modern architecture with hip cafe options, like Juel in WRJ and Piecemeal pies will be a draw. The library building is great- can you host more events there? Particularly for your professionals moving to the area from other parts of the country, lounges and light, airy restaurants and bars are more appealing than dark pubs and places that don't serve decent cocktails. Other types of amenities like a fitness club, multi-use spaces, other types of shops like bookshops, farm stands and a general store. Architectural diversity would also be very welcome.

4. What do you think is the biggest opportunity to improve and/or highlight the historic, natural, and cultural resources in West Lebanon Village?

- Identify historic buildings. Protect them from demolition. Reduce presence of car part stores, remove "Title Cash" signage from establishment no longer in business.
- Railroad preservation.
- Love the history of West Leb. Play on that with art around the town (sides of buildings, historic signage. Also, use the river to our benefit!
- Use/expand the old Lebanon Library.
- I am not particularly interested in this.
- Not sure.
- Preserving the railyard footprint, involving the library.
- Better connections to the river.
- Beyond the RR and river, I don't know what "historic, natural and cultural resources" are to be found in W Leb.
- Develop the old rail area with good shops and events.
- Programming in the Kilton and their backyard. The Kilton is a jewel, our librarians are such a strong resource.
- I think it needs to begin with actually identifying the historic, natural, and cultural resources available in West Lebanon. Once they have been identified then attention can be given to highlighting and improving.
- Thinking about West Leb village as an extension of the Mascoma River Greenway and connection to WRJ. Right now, it's a bottleneck between Leb, WRJ, West Leb, and the MRG, but it could be a vibrant central hub if it was safe to walk and bike there.

- Historic resources could be featured via the library, signage, events, and coordinating the Lebanon Historical Society with local schools. Partnering with the White River rail museum and preserving for exhibit the Westboro property would likely be the biggest opportunity to highlight railroad history. Natural resources would be highlighted by developing park spaces and connections to them (see parks section above). Cultural resources would be highlighted by developing a more vibrant and comfortable downtown (see all suggestions above)
- Create a small outdoor museum with plaques about the railroad once the yard is cleaned up and made into a park.
- **Developing the riverfront. Saving Crafts Ave.**
- Use of building (former High School) and land around and near it for indoor and outdoor events/recreation.
- Make it an inviting place for its residents and visitors to spend time in, not simply pass through...in its current state it is a bit of an eyesore without even a decent grocery store for its residents or attractions for visitors.
- Refurbishing the railroad buildings, lots of high quality, well maintained trails to Boston Lot and the river.
- Gain control of the rail yard.
- Have a park and/or restaurant on the river that can be accessed by foot from Main St. Then have a footpath behind the buildings, closer to the river, that connects that to the bridge into Vermont.
- Some historic buildings should be preserved, but not all of them. Preserving all historic buildings will impede re-development.
- Creating a bike path along the river that perhaps ran through downtown with little info boxes about the history of the village, the rail yard, and the importance of the river could be a nice way to integrate all three.
- Define what the village's historic identity is and brand it as such. Is it the railway or something else? WRJ has revitalized itself with the railway history, which was immediately clear. I still didn't know what the village history is, or why it would be a draw for anyone. There is an opportunity also to think of the White River and Connecticut and the bridges- is this a place to walk beautiful bridges? Something inspired like that.

5. What is your long-term vision for downtown West Lebanon Village?

- West Lebanon is the first area of settlement in the city proper. It is at the confluence of three rivers and has a Main Street that still resembles its 19th century scale. It has a historic railyard, unfortunately neglected by the State, and a growing propane storage facility that will hamper development and pose risks to residents. These issues need to be solved before meaningful change can take place. The City should actively consider utilizing the Seminary Hill School for arts and performance events.
- I'd love to see a quaint Main Street with the old-fashioned look of small town USA with eclectic shops. Cafes and small owner businesses. I'd love to see lights throughout the whole Main Street during the holiday season. It would also be neat to have like a wedding venue, maybe down near the railroad.
- Great place to walk to for coffee with friends, grabbing a gift in a great gift shop, sitting outside on Main Street and eating lunch.
- A day-to-evening destination with food, shops, services, and easy traffic.
- A nice place to spend time, live, or pass through.
- A pleasant small village with a couple nice stores, a couple decent restaurants/bars, and a waterfront park.
- **Walkable, vibrant, more residents, traffic-calmed, better connection to natural assets (river, trails).**
- **A healthy residential core which will spur economic development.**
- Like other towns in NH through which traffic passes, there should be some green spaces for reflection, some reasons to slow down and see what one is passing through.
- Create an attractive area to visit.

- I want to comfortably walk down neighborhood streets from my home on Seminary Hill, have a cup of coffee and talk to neighbors. There are ten places like Yama where they greet me as I walk in and know I've been there before. This is happening around Colburn Park, lots of good stuff (the Leb Diner!) to imitate.
- To not have a "mall" of adult themed retail upon entering from Seminary Hill. To have a Main Street reminiscent of a quaint New England town. A Main Street for all ages to feel safe.
- A walkable area with a large variety of shops, services, and retail establishments. A destination rather than a pass-thru area.
- A vibrant community center desirable to live, eat, and shop.
- It could be an area to walk around in with a park along the river and cute shops/ restaurants along Main Street.
- It should be recognized as ideally located for access to Hanover, WRJ, Exit 20 shopping and Lebanon, and thus draw people looking to buy and fix homes as the aging population vacates some of the housing.
- Most needs could be met without use of a car.
- Downtown WRJ would be a nice model to try to become more like.
- That the city will improve its walkability attracting helpful retail and making it less of a depressing place for people to live and be in.
- A lively town center with interesting local businesses, and affordable-but-nice housing, within walking and biking distances to employers, surrounding residential areas, and beautiful natural areas.
- It will be a place people plan to go to because the quaint village is easily accessible by foot from the fabulous park where events occur regularly. Kids can safely get to the park and swim in the river. Kayakers can beach their boats and walk up to the park and restaurants. In the winter, the Kilton and restaurants/clubs will still be a draw, hosting lots of community activities.
- I'd love for it to be a place to go and spend half a day - having lunch, browsing a couple shops, going for a walk...
- A vibrant multi-use city center, not a "village". Look to White River.
- A thriving pedestrian friendly (or pedestrian only, like Church St. in Burlington) Main Street with shops that provide social spaces instead of simply utilitarian ones with the capacity to be the center of large social gatherings, festivals, and events would make revitalize the Village and make it more than a congested Main Street that one has to pass through in order to get where they're going.
- A clearly defined destination that includes a selection of good restaurants and cafes, walking options along the river/waterfront, a center for cultural activities (not limited to regional tastes) with a few reliable businesses and a great place to live.

6. What short-term actions (things that could happen in the next 1-2 years) do you think would help West Lebanon Village the most?

- West Lebanon is the first area of settlement in the city proper. It is at the confluence of three rivers and has a Main Street that still resembles its 19th century scale. It has a historic railyard, unfortunately neglected by the State, and a growing propane storage facility that will hamper development and pose risks to residents. These issues need to be solved before meaningful change can take place. The City should actively consider utilizing the Seminary Hill School for Arts and performance events.
- Get rid of the apartment buildings and rehab all rundown buildings.
- River Park proceeds, move the bus station so there aren't tons of people blocking the side walk there (plus the library is looking dingy, I guess from the buses sitting there), put lights up for Christmas and all year round, flowers in the summer along the street, have a coffee shop and an ice cream shop open for summer (I've even thought about asking McNamara's to bring their little building up in the summer to serve ice cream where the old post office used to be--picnic tables out.) Find a way to have a few events in West Lebanon (old school building auditorium), see if Clem would let us have a music event on the River Park land, have an outside art event (music and art) on the back lawn and driveway of Kilton Library (parking at the church).

- Zoning changes to get things started.
- Permissive lefts at signals, rail trail connection, and street trees.
- Not sure.
- Not yet certain.
- River and trail access improvements. Traffic calming. Consolidate parking to allow for more developable area or park space. Change land use regs to disincentivize excessive parking with new developments.
- Expanded bus service.
- I'm not an urban planner and don't understand the sequence of events. Is the sewer/storm water behemoth coming to W. Leb? If so, that's a huge opportunity to reconfigure the look of Main Street. Lighting can help. Evening destinations can help beyond just the library and the one restaurant there open in the evening.
- Improve traffic flow, attractive lighting, landscaping.
- Make all that traffic slow down and observes laws; fix the crumbling sidewalks.
- Rehab rundown buildings, move bus hub away from library.
- Increasing the attractiveness of the area (streetscaping, wayfinding, and enhancements for pedestrians).
- BIKE LANES and/or sharrows. The road is more than wide enough if you remove parking on one side (and those parking spaces are rarely even half full).
- If the rail bridge on 12A is replaced as planned and the adjacent Seminary Hill intersection update and the non-leased portion of the Westboro property is developed as planned that would be a huge benefit to the area's vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Removal of some on-street parking in favor of green space, benches, decorative streetlights, etc. would be a great help to the feel of the area. Holding a West Lebanon festival where the street is closed (detour via Maple). Could be a fall festival, winter carnival, summer cookout, etc. would begin to create more of a community feel for the neighborhood.
- Clean up the railroad yard or fix sidewalks and clean up some of the buildings.
- Extend Mascoma River Greenway there and encourage a cafe like Lucky's right in town.
- Cleanup of Westboro Yard.
- Improve sidewalks and landscaping, pocket parks, maybe a historical center, deviating some of the traffic from the Main Street cutting through...things that would make people take pride in their community and maybe, by extension, themselves and help them enjoy being there.
- Get rid of the gas tanks and allow traffic back there. It would decrease congestion on Main Street and encourage patronage of the rail yard businesses.
- Incentivize inviting development - restaurants, shops (no more auto parts stores or payday loans outfits!) and configurations (no more parking in front of buildings).
- Parking garage and allow for taller buildings - build up, not out.
- Reroute the traffic on Main Street, eliminate street parking, and green up Main Street so that it's more walkable.
- Get rid of the vape shops and attract better restaurants and retail options. Hold more events at the library (not limited to regional tastes- NE is great but there are people from all over the world living, working and studying here). Give out permits to open cafes and restaurants.