

## **Route 120 Corridor Management Plan – Phase 1**

The Route 120 Corridor is a valuable intercity and regional resource, linking two important New Hampshire municipalities in the Upper Valley of the Connecticut River- the City of Lebanon and the Town of Hanover. This resource includes Route 120 and associated infrastructure, existing development, vacant land, and natural resources. It plays a major role in the economic health of both communities and, very importantly, is the access from two interstates to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) and the Centerra Business Park.

The DHMC has about 5,500 employees working at the Lebanon campus, which makes them the largest employer in the region and the state's largest healthcare provider. Commuting distances for employees at the hospital have been increasing over the past decade, primarily due to a lack of housing options in the core of the Upper Valley. This, together with the large number of employees and services in the Centerra Business Park, has contributed to significant peak hour congestion on the Route 120 corridor, which at times results in back-ups onto Interstate 89 despite recent improvements to the interchange. In fact, traffic has more than doubled on Route 120 since DHMC moved there from downtown Hanover (10,132 vehicles per day in 1989 to 21,225 in the year 2004). Given the prominence of DHMC in the region and their essential role in disaster plans, direct and quick access has become necessary.

The corridor is well positioned to closely link the region's largest employment centers, while providing a cluster of mixed use development that can be served with alternative modes of transportation. This would benefit both communities. However, the corridor is under significant development pressure. In the past, improvements have been based in reaction to development instead of planned, before development occurs. If market forces alone continue to shape future growth, the Route 120 area would continue to grow as a single use corridor likely necessitating expensive infrastructure improvements to mitigate travel demand.

**The issue is:** How can the municipalities manage this shared resource by anticipating and planning for future development? With the completion of the Master Plan in both communities, the opportunity is ripe for Lebanon and Hanover to become proactive in the management of this resource.

### **Project Goals:**

- To assess future land use and infrastructure needs and opportunities for the Route 120 Corridor.
- To assess opportunities to anticipate and mitigate adverse impacts of current and future development through the adoption of appropriate long term management strategies jointly implemented by the City of Lebanon and the Town of Hanover.
- Ensure that these management strategies are coordinated with the existing infrastructure, community land use controls and a common vision for the future of the corridor.

### **Project Approach:**

Phase I .

A. Complete and present a build-out analysis based on the policies contained in each municipality's Master Plan and compare the effects of such development with the capacities, both adequate and inadequate, of the various existing supportive infrastructures and characteristics of the corridor.

B. Identify further analysis required by traffic and water/sewer engineers.

Phase I I .

A. Offer options and alternatives for use of the corridor considering the assessment of existing and/or conceivable infrastructure.

B. Recommend initiatives that the communities can pursue, both together and individually, for the betterment of the Corridor, to include: demand management, access management and land use policies, short and long term infrastructure improvement/ expansion needs and suggested mechanisms for their financing.

PHASE 1 TASKS:

**1. Institutional Framework.**

Form and facilitate a Steering Committee to create a framework for Lebanon and Hanover to work together. This includes a process for decision-making and cooperation during the plan's development as well as its joint implementation of the recommendations.

Product: MOU between Lebanon and Hanover.

**2. Public participation.**

A. Establish Route 120 Steering Committee to include town and city representatives, planners, town/city managers, public works, and the NHDOT. The committee will meet as needed to provide overall guidance and direction for the study and specifically to review data, analysis and recommendations prepared by staff. The Committee will also host meetings to gather public input.

B. Assist the Steering Committee in creating a vision for the corridor to serve as a basis for the plan, and in obtaining public input on corridor issues. Mitigation measures and improvements associated with supportive infrastructure and environment should be consistent with what land uses and land use designs communities want to create.

Product: 1) Up to eight Steering Committee meetings  
2) Three public meeting to identify issues, share information, and obtain comments.  
3) Interviews with business, landowners, developers, and other local officials.  
4) Vision statement.

**3. Data gathering and enumeration of existing conditions.**

Compile existing information on the following:

Current and future land use	Water and Sewer	Transit
Traffic data and road features	Traffic data analysis	Municipal and state policies
Employer commuting data	Natural features	Development potential
Demographics	Sidewalks and trails	Demand Management

Product: Existing conditions profile including mapping provided in-kind by the City of Lebanon.

**Build-out analysis.**

Product: Three build-out scenarios forecasting growth will be completed. One scenario depicting BO under existing zoning and two scenarios to provide a range of development possibilities as directed by each community's Master Plan would be prepared. The results will be used to compare the effects of development with the capacities, both adequate and inadequate, of the various existing supportive infrastructures and characteristics of the Corridor in phase I I .