

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PLAN NH ANNOUNCES 2022 MERIT AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

On June 22, 2022, Plan NH announced the 2022 Merit Awards of Excellence winners:

- *The Factory on Willow in Manchester, led by Eckman Construction*
- *Visions Green Street in Lebanon, led by MA+KE Architects*
- *Meredith Public Library Addition & Renovations in Meredith, led by Milestone Construction*
- *Lebanon Downtown Tunnel Project in Lebanon, led by VHB*

Merit Award winners represent outstanding projects that incorporate good planning, design, and/or development and have had a positive impact on their respective communities. Each year, a distinguished jury of industry professionals reviews each nomination and determines those that are truly outstanding and deserving of recognition. The 2022 winners were announced at the Plan NH Awards Evening on June 22 at Hotel Concord alongside the Plan NH 2022 Scholarship & Fellowship recipients and 2022 NH Construction Industry Ethics Award winner, State Fire Marshal Sean Toomey.

Information on each winning project can be found below and on [www.plannh.org](http://www.plannh.org). Respective photos of the awarded projects and project teams have been provided via email. More photos are available upon request.

### **1) The Factory on Willow**

The Factory on Willow sits prominently on Willow Street in Manchester. Dating back to 1904, this mill building was originally the McElwain Shoe Factory and at the economic center of Manchester's manufacturing industry. Fast forward and the building had become 90,000 square feet of vacant, dilapidated space with no future in sight, until Liz Hitchcock had a vision of transforming this historic building into a vibrant mixed-use community. The redevelopment included much-needed downtown housing, commercial space for entrepreneurs, community space for gathering and collaboration, and pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with the surrounding area.

The renovation involved significant environmental abatement and historic preservation. It took two years to complete with the first occupants moving in during March of 2021. Today, The Factory on Willow includes 60 freshly renovated open-concept studio units as well as 16 Airbnb units that provide housing to traveling nurses and out of town guests. The outdoor gathering space, food truck patio, and an amphitheater that will open this summer, further demonstrate the owner's focus on bringing people together and fostering community. This project has certainly had a positive impact in a long-neglected neighborhood in Manchester, creating a vibrant hub for the whole community.

**Project Name, Location, and Completion Date**

Official Project Name: The Factory on Willow

Project Location: 252 Willow St, Manchester, NH 03103

Completion Date: March 2021

**Owner # 1**

Name: Factory on Willow, LLC, Liz Hitchcock (Orbit Group)

Address: 848 Elm St, Manchester, NH 03103

**Key Team Members**

Liz Hitchcock	Orbit Group	Owner
Preston Hunter	Eckman Construction	Project Executive
Jonathan Krygeris	Eckman Construction	Project Manager
Jeff Highter	Eckman Construction	Site Superintendent
Adam Wagner	Market Square Architects	Principal in Charge
Sarah Howard	Market Square Architects	Architect Project Manager
Brian Pratt	Fuss & O'Neill	Senior Civil Engineering Project Manager
Kyle Roy	TFMoran	Senior Structural Engineer Project Manager
Rebecca Cox	GZA Environmental	Senior Environmental Project Manager

**Jury Comments:**

- The project honors the history of the site while providing 21st century choices.
- This building is about connections and community.
- A step in the right direction towards helping to solve New Hampshire's significant housing challenges.
- Great example of a true mixed-use development in a blighted neighborhood – this will likely spark further redevelopment in the neighborhood. The project honors the history of the site while providing 21st century choices.
- New Hampshire has significant housing challenges, especially those that provide quality community experiences. This building is a step in the right direction towards helping to solve this problem.

**2) Visions Green Street**

The mission of Visions for Creative Housing Solutions is to provide residential options, services and support designed to meet the needs of adults with developmental disabilities and similar disabling conditions. By extensively renovating two existing residential buildings and creating much needed housing for developmentally challenged adults, this project hit at the heart of the Visions mission. The renovations included accessibility improvements and Universal Design, upgrading the thermal envelope and mechanical systems to increase efficiency and comfort for the new residents, and reconfiguring the layout within each unit to foster a sense of community while balancing privacy for the individual residents.

The renovation and restoration serve as an example to the wider community of how existing

infrastructure can be rescued and given new life. The proximity to downtown Lebanon and a wide range of community resources, such as public transportation, helped the team achieve the goal of providing safe housing, accessible to all the potential needs of the residents. In addition, this project involved an impressive degree of community engagement with the neighborhood residents and above and beyond relocation services provided to the existing tenants who lived in the property upon its purchase.

**Project Name, Location, and Completion Date**

Official Project Name: Visions Green Street  
Project Location: 12 Green Street, Lebanon, NH 03784  
Completion Date: Fall 2021

**Owner # 1**

Name: Visions for Creative Housing Solutions, Executive Director Sylvia Dow  
Address: 8 Sunrise Farm Ln, Enfield, NH 03748  
Phone: (603) 632-7707  
Email: sdow@visionsnh.org

**Key Team Members**

Sylvia Dow	Visions for Creative Housing Solutions	Executive Director
Chris Kennedy	MA+KE Architects	Principal Architect
Bob Kischko	DuBois & King	Electrical Engineer
Ryan Lacey	Lacey Engineering	Mechanical Engineer
Miles Stetson	Engineering Ventures	Structural Engineer
Nick Estes	Estes & Gallup, Inc	Construction Manager
Dana Nute	Resilient Buildings Group	Rebate Consultant
John Eller	JEllerConsulting, LLC	Consultant
Liz Nickerson	Nickerson Development Services	Consultant

**Jury Comments:**

- This project gets a "10" for social and inclusivity. There is a huge need for this type of housing in our communities.
- Great location, great asset to the community.
- Huge team effort, from fundraising to construction.
- The re-use and walkable proximity to downtown and public transportation make this a smart use of the property.
- Provides a sense of belonging to tenants and preservation of the existing neighborhood.

**3) Meredith Public Library Addition & Renovations**

The addition and renovations to the existing Meredith Public Library not only enhance the physical building and property, but also maximize the resources they are able to offer the wider community. In addition to their current programs, from story time and game nights to sewing classes and educational programs that contribute to workforce development, there are now modern and functional gathering spaces to support their role as a central community hub. The

new and updated spaces include a children’s room, teen room, makerspace, and genealogy room. Additional updates include expanded parking, a new elevator, new sidewalks, updated ADA accessibility, and improved fire safety and egress.

Collaboration and cooperation were key elements of this project’s success that are worth noting. Strong community outreach included postcards, flyers, surveys, presentations, and public meetings that involved community members in the planning process and helped garner wide support for the project. While no small undertaking, this project was a cost-effective way for the Town of Meredith to provide their community with a true multipurpose facility for all ages, while also preserving and honoring the historic features of the existing library. The well thought out design and functionality of the addition and renovations ensures that the Meredith Public Library will serve the community for years to come – and right in the heart of the Town’s downtown and waterfront areas!

**Owner #1**

Name: Meredith Public Library, Town of Meredith  
Address: 91 Main Street, Meredith, NH 03253  
Phone: (603) 279-4303  
Email: librarian@meredithlibrary.org

**Key Team Members**

Brian Gehris	Milestone Construction	Project Manager
Ernie Briggs	Milestone Construction	Site Superintendent
Chris Drobat	Lavallee Brensinger Architects	Architect
Eric LeBlanc	Lavallee Brensinger Architects	Architect
Michael Bruss	Bruss Project Management	Owner Project Manager

**Jury Comments:**

- Great example of enhancement of a critical community center.
- Reinforcing historic downtown and providing accessible services supports a strong community, free and accessible to all.
- This is a building that will enhance the community for a long time to come.
- Engaging the community members during the project development showed a commitment to making the space work for everyone.
- Expansion of a historical building in the heart of Meredith - the building looks spectacular!

**4) Lebanon Downtown Tunnel Project**

The City of Lebanon’s 2016 Downtown Vision Plan and Tunnel Assessment identified the rehabilitation of their former downtown railroad tunnel as a key priority project for their community. At that time, they set forth a vision that included a pedestrian friendly shared use path connecting to and revitalizing the above plaza and adjacent parking lot. Speaking to the power of community visioning and planning, this project was completed in less than six years from the time of the initial assessment study.

Complex and multifaceted, this project included structural design of the tunnel, landscape

architecture to enhance the plaza aesthetic and create a concourse to anchor the north end of the mall, lighting design for the tunnel as well as the plaza above the tunnel, design of a CCTV system for enhanced safety inside the tunnel, utility design and coordination, refurbishment of the parking lot area, and transportation engineering to design the multi-use trail and associated wayfinding signage. From incorporating natural light, to connecting the trail system, to increasing foot traffic downtown, the project team utilized outside of the box thinking every step of the way. The resulting tunnel and plaza improvements contribute towards a more vibrant and safer downtown area and will support the quality of life and economic vitality for the City of Lebanon for generations to come.

**Owner #1**

Name: City of Lebanon  
 Address: City Hall, 51 N. Park Street, Lebanon, NH 03766  
 Phone: (603) 448-4220  
 Email: paula.maville@lebanonnh.gov

**Key Team Members**

Greg Goodrich	VHB	Project Manager
Mike Willard	VHB	Landscape Architect
Mark Suennen	VHB	Traffic Engineering/CCTV/Utilities
Greg Bakos	VHB	Bike/Ped, Roadway Design
Mike Chervincky	VHB	Structural Engineering
Kyle D’Urso	VHB	Structural Engineering
James Macpherson	VHB	Structural Engineering
Mark Verostick	VHB	Site/Civil Engineering & Utilities
Matt Picanso	VHB	ITS Design
Keith Wentworth	VHB	Structural Engineering/CADD
Taylor St. Peter	VHB	Structural Engineering

**Jury Comments:**

- Capitalized on the historic characteristics of the tunnel structure while thinking outside the box.
- An important link in the rail trail system with immediate benefits for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Helps drive foot traffic to the downtown.
- The space is open and inviting - not something you would expect in a tunnel. The addition of natural light into the space was a great idea.
- From the visioning study through completion, collaboration and communication drive the successful support required to meet the project goals.

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*Questions and additional information can be found on PlanNH.org or by contacting the Executive Director of Plan NH, Tiffany Tononi McNamara at PO Box 1105 Portsmouth, NH 03802; via phone at 603-452-PLAN, or email: tiffany@plannh.org.*