



ENVISION CONCORD

BRIDGE TO 2030



BALANCING CHANGE WITH TRADITION

JULY 30, 2018

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ENVISION CONCORD – BRIDGE TO 2030

“Balancing Change with Tradition”

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Boards and Committees: Affordable Housing Funding Committee (AHFC), Agricultural Committee, Board of Health (BOH), Cemetery Committee, Commission on Disability, Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee (CSEC), Concord Historical Commission (CHC), Concord Housing Authority (CHA), Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC), Concord Municipal Light Board (CMLP), Concord School Committee, Council on Aging (COA), Finance Committee (FC), Historic Districts Commission (HDC), Hugh Cargill Trust Committee (HCTC), Natural Resources Commission (NRC), Planning Board (PB), Public Works Commission (PWC), Recreation Department, Select Board (SB), Tax Fairness Committee, 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee, West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC)

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And the many residents, community members, business owners, nonprofit organizations, and other representatives who attended meetings, workshops and hearings, thereby assisting and informing the Committee throughout the process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

In June 2016 the Concord Select Board appointed the 14-member Comprehensive Long Range Plan (CLRP) Committee and charged it with preparing a new comprehensive plan for the Town. The Committee, also identified as the Envision Concord Committee, was asked to complete its work over a two-year period, and this document is the culmination of that effort. The group consisted of 13 voting members and one member of the Select Board who served as an ex-officio member. Committee members represented a wide range and cross section of interests and talents. (see *Acknowledgements for a list of Committee members*) The Committee's charge from the Select Board was to examine traditional areas of planning to provide the basis for guidance, coordination and accountability for future decision makers, and to integrate these traditional principles with Concord's sustainability principles and policies in a framework that promotes collaboration and coordination. To achieve this latter goal, the Select Board asked the Committee to use the framework and organizing principles and processes identified by the American Planning Association's Sustaining Places Initiative, with the intent that future decisions would be made on a more integrated and holistic basis.

Traditional long range plans are organized along the following categories, as has been the case in Concord's previous long range plans, the elements of which are required for a community's master plan by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 41, 81D:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Natural & Cultural Resources
- Open Space & Recreation
- Facilities & Services
- Circulation & Transportation
- Implementation

In addition, the following principles for comprehensive long range plans recommended by the American Planning Association (APA) "best practices" framework were incorporated: (see *Introduction for more information about these plan elements*)

- Livable Built Environment
- Harmony with Nature
- Resilient Economy
- Interwoven Equity
- Healthy Community
- Responsible Regionalism

To these six APA recommended principles, the CLRP Committee added a seventh principle: High Performing Schools. The APA framework processes included the following:

- Authentic Participation by all segments of the community
- Accountable Implementation, with clear and delineated responsibilities and evaluation metrics

Concord's last long range plan was completed in 2005. Much has been accomplished, and significant progress has been made on many of the goals that were identified. The themes and community values of the 2005 CLRP remain strong in Concord in 2018, and still resonate with its citizens:

- Protect Concord's Assets and Character
- Enhance Quality of Life
- Balance Town Needs with the Ability to Pay

This plan is meant to be aspirational. It has not been constrained by the realities of budgets or finances, and the critical task of analyzing the economics of these recommendations has been left to the committees and departments that will take the lead on implementation. And though growth is referenced throughout the plan, population growth is not necessarily recommended as it could push schools and infrastructure beyond capacity and compete for open space. However, Concord is an attractive place to live and work and therefore is likely to experience the continued influx of population in the years ahead. Thus, the plan seeks to balance inevitable growth with the values, qualities, and culture that have served the Town so well.

The Process

The Committee, with the assistance of Concord's professional planning and finance staff, spent its first seven months collecting and assembling data. A planning consultant was hired in March 2017 to assist with analyzing and formulating the data, and in drafting the preliminary plan within the framework agreed upon by the Committee. Preliminary goals were established during this phase, with an effort to frame and prioritize the goals to allow integration with other municipal functions. The Committee viewed this integration as a critical step to optimize solutions and resources, and to achieve greater community support.

A robust community outreach effort was incorporated throughout the process, including the use of surveys, open houses, focus groups, interviews, listening sessions, and public hearings. The Committee held over 50 public meetings over the course of two years, including public hearings on the draft plan in November 2017 and April 2018. Public comment and feedback was invited and welcomed from elected and appointed board, committee, commission and task force members and the general public. Many of these comments are reflected in the pages that follow. The Committee used both this public input and the analysis provided by committee members, the planning staff, and the consultant to identify key goals and mutual benefits across departments, which resulted in the substance of this plan.

To illustrate the connection of traditional planning methodology with integrated systems methodology, the Committee used the following steps to establish the goals and recommended implementation elements:

Step 1 – Develop a “Vision” for Concord, based on public input and community values. (see *Section 1*)

Step 2 – Develop “Community Criteria,” which represent planning features specifically applicable to Concord for achieving plan goals. (see *Section 2*)

Step 3 – Based on the data gathered, develop three “Big Ideas” to illustrate the systems-based approach to planning. These ideas are cross-disciplinary. (see *Section 3*)

Step 4 – Develop “Plan Elements” that fit within the scope of the long range plan - including elements that support the three “Big Ideas” in Step 3, but also some stand-alone actions in support of Town goals. (see *Section 4*)

Step 5 – Align the “Big Ideas” with the “Plan Elements” – i.e., the goals and strategies of the big ideas identified in Step 3 were cross referenced with the plan elements in Step 4, to assure consistency and inclusion.

Step 6 – Apply “Community Criteria” (Step 2) to the “Big Ideas” and “Plan Elements” identified in Steps 3 and 4, to assure that the “Big Ideas” and “Plan Elements” were consistent with the overarching criteria for the plan.

Step 7 – Develop strategies for Implementation, including recommendations for decision-making and action. (see *Section 5*)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PLAN

Section 1:

Demographics + Trends and Vision for the Future

Concord's population, based on town records, has been relatively stable over the past 10 years in terms of overall numbers, with an estimated 19,000 residents (including the MCI-Concord population of approximately 900 in 2017). However, the age distribution of the population has changed considerably in recent years, and will continue to do so in the coming years.

Quick Facts + Trends

- The number of Concord residents 65 years or older increased by 9% since 2010, and currently make up almost 20% of the population. This number is projected to increase, so that by 2030, 34% of Concord's population will be 65 or older.
- Concord's school-age population was just about 20% of the total during the 2017-2018 school year, with flat projected enrollments over the coming decade.
- Concord's median household income in 2015 was \$134,036 compared with \$70,954 in the state.
- Concord's poverty rate in 2015 was 5.6% compared with 11.6% in the state.
- Concord's unemployment rate in 2016 was 2.7% compared with 3.7% in the state.
- Concord had a 12% self-employment rate in 2018 (twice that of the county and state).
- Concord employers rely on workers who reside elsewhere; while Concord's population is highly educated, the skills are not well-matched with Concord-based employers.
- Concord has the lowest tax rate per \$1,000 of property valuation among adjacent communities, but has the highest assessed valuation of property, resulting in Concord's median tax bill being among the highest in the area.
- Concord's current housing stock meets the State's Chapter 40B "affordable housing" standards, and continued efforts are necessary to maintain this 10% ratio and increase the number of truly affordable homes.
- Almost 95% of Concord's land is zoned for residential uses.
- Approximately 59% of Concord's land is public and privately-owned open space per the 2015 Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) with 39% of this land permanently protected from development (leaving approximately 20% unprotected). [note: the 2015 OSRP does not include water bodies in the calculation of Concord's total area and includes state and school land that is subject to temporary protection. If one applies the Town's total acreage of 16,640 acres to the land that is truly permanently protected, or 5,379 acres, then 32% of the Town's area is permanently protected.]
- An increase in congestion on Concord's major roads is due in part to increased use of navigational tools by commuters.
- Based on current transportation modes, there will be an increase in demand for parking availability in the village centers.
- The future of autonomous vehicles (AV) will likely change mobility and transportation patterns.
- Changes in development and population will have an impact on existing facilities and infrastructure, and must be considered in future planning recommendations.
- Social services and financial assistance providers are stretched thin with increasing numbers of requests, which are anticipated to increase as the population ages.
- The significant demographic trend of an increasing older population will require attention to housing, transportation, COA services and economic equity in distribution of Town services.
- The quality of schools has typically been the top priority in surveys of residents, and maintaining Concord's high quality public school education is an ongoing process and priority.
- Two-thirds of the Town's budget is directed towards the schools.
- The Concord Public School Committee has identified the need for a new middle school. Careful capital planning will be required to balance the Town's existing debt with the cost of a new middle school and other capital needs.
- Concord continues to maintain its Aaa rating from Moody's Investors Services, resulting in lower interest costs on the Town's long-term debt. To the extent that the Town plans to borrow in support of its future capital needs, a strong credit rating is a benefit to taxpayers.

- The high cost of housing in Concord is a source of apprehension for many long-term property owners who have difficulty paying property taxes.
- A waiting list exists for people seeking affordable housing in Concord.
- Concord has a commitment to policies that promote environmental sustainability and provide effective long-term change in the community’s impact on the environment. The CLRP Committee recognizes sustainability as a Community Criteria (see Section 2) and a common thread throughout all components of the planning process.

Vision for Concord in 2030

The Town of Concord seeks sustainable growth and diversity that protects its historical and natural resources, while preserving its values, qualities and culture.

Essential components of a vision for Concord include:

- Maintaining the high level of services on which the community depends
- Strengthening environmental and fiscal sustainability
- Broadening the diversity of Concord’s population and housing stock
- Improving communications to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity for their comments to be heard and considered at all levels of Town government
- Prioritizing opportunities to provide financial and community services expenditures for all residents in an equitable manner, helping to assure the continued ability of all residents to remain in Concord

Section 1 of the plan includes a more detailed list of attributes essential to meeting the components of the vision and values statement.

Section 2:

The Vision in Practice—Community Criteria for a Systems Approach

The Envision Concord plan emphasizes collaborative decision-making through a broader “systems” approach. In the past, initiatives and decisions were frequently proposed or made by an individual department or committee, in isolation. A systems approach encourages departments, staff, and committees/boards to identify and consider from the outset the common and competing interests that exist, and to propose collaboration on joint resolutions that can meet and serve multiple goals. This more collaborative process will result in a broader base of public support, in the cost burden being shared among departments, and in improved staffing and financing efficiencies. The plan offers a framework for this systems approach.

Community Criteria

Community values, specific to Concord, were identified as being important to all planning decisions, regardless of planning approach—these are the “community criteria.” It is intended that these criteria be applied to planning goals and decision-making to ensure that the recommendations in the plan and in future implementation actions are aligned with these community values: *(see Section 2 for more details about the criteria)*

History and Character - All elements of the plan preserve the historical, architectural, cultural, and intellectual fabric of the vibrant village centers and woodland/agricultural environs while enabling Smart Growth in line with community values.

Livability and Values - Plan elements support continued investment in town amenities that make Concord an attractive place to live, while any associated increase in tax base also ensures diversity, vibrancy, and socio-economic equity.

Mobility/Accessibility - Transportation investments prioritize access to services for the most vulnerable members of the community with low-carbon options for future mobility needs.

Environmental Sustainability - All plan elements support carbon-neutral, carbon-sequestering, and water-efficient municipal services, are fiscally sustainable, and provide incentives for residents to pursue sustainable choices.

Fiscal Sustainability - Decisions about all plan elements are made with broad input after careful investigation and understanding of fiscal impacts with consideration of alternatives or savings, and examination of possible ancillary impacts.

Section 3:

Big Ideas for Integrated Planning: The Systems Approach in Action

The outreach process used by the CLRP Committee identified many goals and priorities that were articulated by residents, committee/board members, staff, business owners, and non-profit organizations. The Committee looked across departments and individual disciplines to identify and create efficient and mutually beneficial solutions for many of the goals. Three “Big Ideas” surfaced through this process, which encompass three high-priority sets of goals for Concord and suggest ways in which a collaborative approach to planning and implementation can both align interests and improve outcomes. ***These three “Big Ideas” are not intended to be exclusive or all-encompassing, but are illustrative of how the systems process can work, and how such an approach may benefit all parties.*** Many goals and related strategies support these “Big Ideas” and are suggested elsewhere in the plan (particularly in Section 4 “Plan Elements”, which also includes the more traditional long range plan elements). Most of these would benefit from use of the systems approach.

Associated with the “Big Ideas” are aspects that may be beyond the scope of municipal government services, but may benefit Concord through creative coalitions of interests including those with grant funding capability. Leveraging municipal funds through partnerships in business and state and federal agencies will enhance success with such initiatives, as is currently evidenced with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and public private partnerships (PPP).

For each “Big Idea,” the plan includes a description of the idea; discusses how the idea is an opportunity to meet many needs; enumerates input from the community over the past two years, including values, needs, challenges and concerns; identifies mutually-beneficial solutions; offers a narrative as to how the proposal would work in practice; and finally, offers specific recommendations and actions to bring the idea to fruition.

Big Idea 1:

Strengthen the sustainability of local businesses and commercial districts and the cultural, historic and civic assets in Concord by connecting businesses to cultural, historic, and civic resources, and developing coordinated strategies that serve cross-sector goals.

The Opportunity

Concord has a wealth of cultural, historic, and arts assets that add richness to Concord’s community character and enhance the experience and attractiveness of the town for residents and visitors alike. The three village centers include many independent businesses, which offer unique retail, food and service options for residents. Despite the value placed on these assets by residents, both non-profit organizations and business owners indicated that not enough attention has been given to the contributions that their respective groups provide to the quality of life, and they feel underappreciated. Citizens expect vibrancy and both groups need customers, visitors, visibility and support to continue to thrive in Concord and add to its cultural vibrancy.

Recommendations/Actions

Using the systems approach with various departments and community members, a number of possible action items were identified. Some of these are listed below, to illustrate the systems approach in action. (see Section 3 for the complete list and more detail)

- Create a single online clearinghouse of information about Concord’s cultural and historic resources
- Work with businesses/cultural organizations to establish coordinated goals for attracting residents and visitors
- Create and encourage special events/festivals to create a more spontaneous and inviting visitor destination
- Investigate zoning changes and a streamlined development process to encourage sustainable, mixed-use development within the three village centers to support increased density and provide a larger market for businesses
- Create a visitor-oriented map and assess/improve visibility and accessibility of destinations—signage, pedestrian connections, bike facilities, parking, historic sites, trails
- Study traffic and parking for visitor needs and tour buses, and at recreation areas and trails

- Identify areas where remote parking can be created; explore transportation services between train stations and remote parking areas and village centers/historic destinations
- Provide solar charging stations, seating/picnic areas, cell phone and camera recharging ports, water fountains/bottle refill features in public places; identify these on visitor maps and signage
- Provide public restrooms in each of the village centers
- Provide electric vehicle charging stations at all public parking areas

Big Idea 2:

Create strategies that provide more housing choices consistent with town character and sustainability principles.

The Opportunity

One key concern for residents is the need for greater housing choices in terms of housing size and types, at a wider range of home prices. New, large single-family homes on large parcels on the outskirts of town do not meet the needs of existing residents whose housing needs have changed, and who wish to remain in Concord, nor do they meet the needs of younger singles or families who wish to make Concord their home. An opportunity exists to create policies that support alternative housing types and further the Town's commitment to sustainability.

Recommendations/Actions

Concord's land values are high, and there are many competing interests for land use and re-use. There are concerns that increasing the number of residents will adversely affect Concord's character, and put a strain on the schools and public safety services. Some tradeoffs and cooperation will be necessary. (see Section 3 for the complete list and more detail)

- Encourage new housing in and near commercial areas/train stations, to support existing businesses, potentially through zoning changes and other incentives to encourage mixed-use development that includes residential units.
- Increase the Town's commitment to purchase appropriate property for housing
- Consider expanding opportunities to provide accessory dwelling units in some zoning districts

- Consider allowing two-family housing units by right in residential districts near village centers
- Assess and develop a strategic plan for best use of current town land holdings
- Identify existing housing parcels that may be ripe for tear-downs, and that are adjacent to farmland; offer incentives for redevelopment as farm worker housing
- Investigate and identify ways to connect recreational areas, schools, train stations, and village centers (shuttle services, bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, etc.)
- Ensure farmland remains committed to agricultural uses by instituting support for farm worker housing, and by attracting new customers to ensure long-term financial viability and growth of farm stands
- Focus denser development in areas already served by utility services (water, sewer, electric)

Big Idea 3:

Develop innovative ways to address transportation needs and challenges by aligning residents' direct needs with other goals such as supporting economic vitality, protecting the environment, and bolstering efforts to meet the Town's sustainability goals.

The Opportunity

There is a strong need to increase both the physical and social connectivity of isolated residents, and those residents living in denser housing areas outside of easy walking distance of the village centers. There is also a strong need to expand non-automobile options for all residents to travel in town, given the potential for rapidly changing transportation trends to create planning challenges. The Plan must address increased congestion and carbon emissions while increasing residents' connections to the town's cultural, recreational and commercial centers and to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Recommendations/Actions

(see Section 3 for the complete list and more detail)

- Identify potential remote parking areas for visitors
- Encourage large employers and commercial property owners to add bicycle parking facilities to their properties and promote the use of alternative transportation by their employees

- Identify sites for development of diverse housing adjacent to village centers to support walkability wherever possible, reducing traffic and the need for parking
- Give higher priority for land development on sites within walking distance of the village centers and commuter rail stations
- Explore the possibility of providing cross-town transportation and links to transit and recreation facilities
- Explore potential transportation links to regional cultural assets
- Provide bicycle parking at parks and walking trail entrances
- Evaluate opportunities for using town owned vehicles in multiple ways
- Increase door-to-door transportation options for seniors to Concord destinations and to Boston area medical centers
- Plan for opportunities that rapid change in automated vehicle capability may create

Section 4: Plan Elements

Many of the goals cited in the three “Big Ideas” included in Section 3 are priorities for the community and are conducive to the cross-planning systems approach. These will require support across multiple traditional planning disciplines. However, not every issue or policy discussed in this plan crosses multiple disciplines. Section 4 identifies issues and policies under the traditional planning categories/plan elements. This helps assure attention to single discipline issues and policies and provides a reference point for all issues and policies by traditional planning discipline.

For each plan element, the plan includes an introduction; enumerates input from the community that was heard over the past two years; delineates existing conditions; identifies goals; and offers specific policies, strategies and specific actions to bring the idea to fruition. Highlights of these goals follow. *(see Section 4 for the complete list, including specific action items and more detail)*

Section 4.1 Cultural + Historic Resources

Concord’s “unique character” is a result not just of its abundance of well-preserved structures that figure prominently in our nation’s political and literary history, but of the interplay between the various land uses, topography, architecture, landscape and clusters of businesses, institutions, and other uses interacting together.

Goals:

- Foster better collaboration between cultural organizations, historical groups, and local businesses.
- Promote education and awareness among residents, Town officials, the business community, and visitors about the presence, variety and value of Concord’s historic and cultural resources.
- Identify historical resources that are not adequately documented, not fully understood, or are yet to be discovered.
- Review effectiveness of regulatory tools to better protect and preserve historical character and cultural resources.

Section 4.2 Economic Vitality

Concord’s many economic assets that contribute to its economic vitality, historical, architectural, cultural and intellectual fabric, and quality of life include historical and cultural village centers, vibrant independent businesses, self-employed residents, entrepreneurs, and creative enterprises.

Goals:

- Renew and improve Concord’s village centers as vital pedestrian-friendly, economic, and social hubs that enable community engagement on a wider scale.
- Become a recognized and supportive community for business and social entrepreneurs to start and grow new businesses.
- Build local civic and government capacity for economic development with a special focus on (a) related arts, cultural and tourism activities; (b) medical and healthcare specialties; and (c) green/environmental businesses.

Section 4.3 Housing

Concord is a desirable residential community with natural beauty, good schools, rich history and traditions, proximity to Boston, and its access to highways and public transportation and a history of excellent town services. The Town seeks to balance the demands for a wider range of housing options with affordability for all residents.

Goals:

- Develop realistic, achievable targets for preserving or creating housing of all types. Develop additional, self-sustaining funding mechanisms to support achieving these targets.
- Bring together private and public groups from a variety of disciplines and interests with the goal of identifying solutions for meeting housing needs.
- Discourage the demolition of smaller homes and their replacement with larger, more expensive residences.
- Encourage renovation of existing single-family homes in all zoning districts,

- Identify opportunities to create accessory dwelling units within existing structures in all zoning districts,
- Consider zoning to allow cluster development and cohousing in designated areas.
- Identify regulatory tools and tax incentives to encourage developers to build housing the Town wants/needs, especially denser housing near town centers in ways that reinforce existing historical character and support sustainable development practices.

Section 4.4 Land Use

One of Concord’s most recognizable characteristics comes from the makeup of its land uses, including the historic and traditional town centers, concentrated commercial hubs surrounding its train stations, and the extensive amount of rural agricultural fields and conservation land. The majority of the town is composed of residential (mainly single family) uses. Immediately adjacent to the village centers, there are dense residential neighborhoods with homes of various ages and styles that largely define community character in those areas, as well as three industrial zones in Concord located along Route 62/Main Street, in West Concord by Baker Avenue/Route 2, and on the eastern side of the town adjacent to Hansom Air Force Base.

Smart Growth in the context of Concord specifically includes the community’s unique perspective on preservation of woodland/agricultural character of surrounding environs, protection of land and water that play roles in maintaining and increasing community resilience, with appropriately scaled upper-floor and infill mixed-use development and redevelopment in village centers. The *Smart Growth Analysis* contained in Section 4.4 explores the implications of certain development pathways, but does not advocate that any specific pathway be followed.

Goals:

- Preserve Concord’s current mix of land uses and consider design standards that preserve the town’s character.
- Explore zoning alternatives that enable higher density, mixed-use, more walkable and economically diverse neighborhoods within/near village centers.
- Encourage production of small-scale affordable and workforce housing.

- Support the expansion of commercial and industrial uses within the existing zoned areas, to improve the Town’s long-term financial sustainability through an expanded commercial tax base.
- Require development/redevelopment to meet or exceed environmental sustainability and resilience criteria.

Section 4.5 Mobility + Transportation

Preserving and improving Concord’s roadways must strike a balance between preserving historic character and modernizing the transportation network to promote alternative mobility options consistent with the Town’s sustainability principles.

Goals:

- Establish a central transportation planning function within Town government.
- Reduce motor vehicle dependence and traffic volume within Concord.
- Provide effective mobility options for trips within Concord, and to Boston and other regional medical centers and key destinations.
- Create safe, cost-effective walking and bicycling connections between key pedestrian and bicycle paths/trails to improve mobility around Concord.
- Improve coordination with regional partners in order to reduce traffic volume and congestion from commuter through-traffic.
- Develop an approach to parking that balances the principles of sustainability with the Town’s economic goals. Include managing existing parking spaces and consider providing parking options outside the village centers.

Section 4.6 Open Space + Natural Resources

Concord values the many benefits of its open space and natural resources as a contributor to healthy living in the town. The abundance of natural areas and conservation land in Concord contributes to the biodiversity that is unique to a community so close to Boston. The Town has continually encouraged and offered an abundance of healthy recreational activities throughout the community. Concord’s history of farming activity has played a significant role in the growth of the Town. These are major reasons for the existence of open land in Town and a key to the preservation and enhancement of Concord’s rural character.

Goals:

- Determine the amount of conservation land and protected open space required to protect important ecosystems and natural systems and increase or maintain as necessary.
- Continue to protect rivers, wetlands, ponds, vernal pools, upland habitats, and other natural resources to preserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Provide responsible management of conservation lands, including protection, preservation and restoration.
- Promote ecosystem health and biodiversity as critical factors to achieve town-wide long-term sustainability and resiliency goals.
- Protect and promote local agricultural activities, land use, and traditions with sustainable practices.
- Ensure all Concord residents understand the value of conservation lands, natural resources, open space, agricultural activities, and recreational amenities.
- Enhance the connections and access to bike paths and walking trails between open spaces and the village centers, the locations of institutions and organizations, and recreation sites.
- Provide responsible management of recreation amenities, including programming of open spaces, public spaces, trails, and recreational facilities to encourage use by all residents.

Section 4.7 Public Facilities + Infrastructure

Public facilities and infrastructure are broad components that provide many basic support systems needed for the Town to thrive and function.

Goals:

- Continue to maintain and improve the Town’s existing public buildings, facilities, infrastructure, and service delivery at a level consistent with the Town’s fiscal sustainability.
- Evaluate cost-effectiveness of new or redevelopment of Town buildings and/or infrastructure (e.g., new middle school or new integrated Town services building).
- With provisions to maintain the rural character of select roads, fully consider sustainable, resilient “complete streets” principles and integrated planning into future design and construction of roadway, bikeway, and sidewalk infrastructure.
- Strengthen Town sustainability goals consistent with long-term climate change and resiliency planning goals.
- Make landscape and infrastructure resiliency a central planning priority for Town management operations, planning, and practices in order to minimize service disruption, and economic and environmental impacts.
- Identify ways to optimize the ability of Concord’s social service coordinators and private non-profit organizations and trusts to meet the growing demand for assistance.
- Establish cyber-security planning and reinforce the Town’s information technology infrastructure.
- Assess the responsibility for staffing the Town’s 66+ boards, committees and task forces from a limited pool of residents who are willing to serve as volunteers.
- Develop a strategy to anticipate acquisition of properties currently owned by federal or state entities within Concord’s boundaries, as they become available or are declared surplus, using an integrated planning process across Town departments.

Section 4.8 Fiscal Planning

The Town of Concord has always strived to meet residents’ needs for programs, services, and infrastructure while remaining fiscally responsible.

Goals:

- Establish a long-term (10 years) fiscal projection tool, including associated expenses for long-term capital spending.
- Establish a process for setting fiscal guidelines for expenditures that protects the Town’s ability to maintain a balance between expenditure levels and the values described in Section 2’s Community Criteria.
- Evaluate new spending opportunities using integrated planning principles with a view to achieving multiple objectives with any specific investment.
- Proactively strengthen Town-School fiscal coordination.

Section 5:

Implementation Actions

The CLRP outlines both the actions (the “what”) and the processes (the “how”) of plan implementation. The Committee strongly urges Town departments, staff, committees/boards, and residents to use the “systems” approach in order to identify mutually beneficial solutions across disciplines and interests. The plan includes two tools to be used together to facilitate this process (*see Section 5 to see both the Checklist templates and the Implementation Action Chart*).

1. The CLRP Systems Checklist – This Systems Checklist is designed to be a starting point to be used to review new initiatives, proposed actions, policies and projects, to coordinate, evaluate and identify mutual benefits of collaborative action and the sharing of resources, whenever possible. The template will be modified and refined, as needed, over time.
2. The CLRP Implementation Action Chart – The Implementation Action Chart is a consolidated and comprehensive list of proposed actions (as delineated in Section 4), categorized by major discipline/ area of interest. It is intended to be used together with the CLRP Systems Checklist to set priorities, encourage cross-disciplinary actions, and to ensure that implementation of the plan makes the best use of resources while embodying the values and goals of Town residents.

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GLOSSARY

Terms as used in the Envision Concord: Bridge to 2030 Plan

100-year Flood Plain – Areas of town that historically have had a 1% chance of flooding in any given year (or a chance of occurring once in a century).

500-year Flood Plain – Areas of town that historically have had a 0.2% chance of flooding in any given year (and therefore were likely to flood once per five centuries).

Accessory apartment – A second dwelling unit subordinate in size to the principal dwelling unit on an owner-occupied lot, located in either the principal dwelling or an existing accessory structure built before 1928.

Affordable housing – Housing priced so that those who earn 80% or less than the area median income (AMI, Boston area) spend no more than 30% of their income on housing. Housing priced for those earning 80% or less of the AMI may be eligible to be counted towards a town's subsidized housing inventory (SHI).

Carbon Neutral – (Also referred to as having “net zero carbon footprint”) Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to the extent that any residual emissions are balanced by other GHGs that are captured, utilized, or otherwise sequestered somewhere in the global carbon budget.

Cluster zoning - A development option in which density is determined for an entire area, rather than using a standard subdivision approach. Within the cluster development, there is greater flexibility in designing and placing structures while preserving open spaces.

Co-housing - An intentional community of private homes clustered around shared space. Each attached or single-family home has traditional amenities, including a private kitchen. Shared spaces typically feature a common house, which may include a large kitchen and dining area, laundry, and recreational spaces.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) – A Massachusetts law passed in 2000 that allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, and outdoor recreation. The Act is funded through a local property tax surcharge, and is matched (to varying degrees) by state dollars.

Complete Streets – A program for designing street networks that provide safe and accessible options for all travel modes – including walking, biking, transit, and vehicles – for people of all ages and abilities.

Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC) - A non-profit housing corporation established by the Town and overseen by the Select Board. Its board is comprised of residents whose role is to investigate and implement alternatives for the provision of affordable housing for persons of low, moderate, and middle income, and others whose needs may be identified from time to time in the town.

Conservation – Act of ensuring that historic, cultural, and natural resources are preserved for future generations.

Conservation Restrictions (CR) – A conservation restriction is a permanent deed restriction to preserve and protect land, recorded with the Registry of Deeds and binding on all future owners of a parcel.

Cultural Fabric – Refers to the various aspects or characteristics that together create a particular culture; in Concord these aspects include the devotion to liberty and intellectual thought as well as the human processes that created the historic resources over four centuries of habitation.

Demographic Growth – Growth or change in population or housing residency.

Density – In planning terms, refers to how many buildings, structures or units of housing per acre of land.

Diversity –An inclusion concept that encompasses the full range of the population--rich and poor, young and old, native and immigrant, racial and ethnic, disadvantaged and privileged.

Economic Growth – The increase in the inflation-adjusted market value of the goods and services produced by an economy over time.

Economic Vitality – Maintaining a positive economic environment for local, independent retailers, meeting/ providing for Concord residents' daily needs, and providing an interesting and visually appealing pedestrian experience in our village centers.

Energy Efficient – Reduction of energy use to maintain/ provide a system/service.

Environmental Sustainability – A broader term that encompasses all four aspects of the town's sustainability framework (i.e. reduce dependence on fossil fuels, metals, minerals; reduce dependence on synthetic chemicals; reduce encroachment on nature; and meet human needs fairly and efficiently), and embraces the concept of meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) – A ratio of a building’s total floor area to the area of the parcel of land the building is situated on. This ratio helps determine the allowed volume for a building, not including height, which is generally limited by maximum height limits.

Fiscal Growth – Growth in overall town budgets, not necessarily just revenue or spending.

Fiscal Sustainability – Any single annual Town budget or sequence of successive annual Town budgets that are maintained without resulting in any unintended long-term alteration to the character of the Town.

Green Corridor – A thin strip of land on adjacent parcels that connects to larger natural areas and provides sufficient habitat to support wildlife. Common green corridors include railway embankments, river banks, and roadside grass verges.

Green Neighborhood Zoning – A type of zoning/land use for preservation of open space where new structures are sited together in areas that offer views of and access to preserved open space, thereby preserving open space for all residents without limiting the property rights of the individual landowner.

Historic Character – The sum of all visual aspects, features, materials, and spaces associated with the historic nature of a site, structure, or landscape; in Concord this includes: houses, barns, bridges, structures, sites, and objects that exist in the natural and agricultural landscape as well as the archaeological remains and the corridors for transportation including rivers, trails, roads, and railways.

Housing Choice – Availability of a variety of housing types, e.g., single-family homes, townhouses, accessory units, condominiums, or apartments, at a range of costs.

Infill Development - Infill development is building homes, businesses, and public facilities on unused and underutilized lands within existing developed areas.

Intellectual Fabric – Characteristics of the town’s historic tradition of intellectual thought and respect for natural resources (e.g. aligned with Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, etc.).

Low-impact Development – Refers to systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapo-transpiration, or use of stormwater to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat.

Mixed-use development – Mixed-use development allows both commercial and residential uses in the same building. An example of this would be a shop on the first level of a building, and an apartment on the second level.

Moderate income housing – Housing priced so that those earning between 80% and 150% of area median income spend no more than 30% of their income on housing. There is overlap between workforce and moderate-income housing, as defined for Concord.

Natural Character – Abundant open space and conservation land indicative of a rural/pastoral woodland community punctuated by agricultural fields, scenic vistas, and wetlands.

Natural Resources – The Town’s stock of geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms. Some natural resource assets provide people with free goods and services, often called ecosystem services.

Neighborhood Conservation District – A tool used to preserve, protect, and enhance significant areas within a community beyond what is specified in the zoning bylaw.

Net Blue – A similar concept to carbon neutrality for water resources, requiring that all new development results in no net increase in water use (from Town services or net withdrawals from aquifers).

Open Space – Open space is land that is primarily undeveloped (has few or no buildings or other built structures), is under public or private ownership, is permanently or temporarily protected from development and may or may not be publicly accessible. For the purposes of this plan publicly owned open space includes: conservation, agricultural, water supply, and recreational lands. Privately owned open space includes: Chapter 61 agricultural, forestry, and recreational lands (such as golf courses and sporting clubs), and properties with Conservation Restrictions. Private open space may or may not include public access, subject to landowner permission.

Permanently Protected Land - Permanently protected land is land that is restricted from further development in perpetuity (such as with a Conservation Restriction or Agricultural Preservation Restriction) or has been acquired with funds designated to permanently protect a resource. Such land cannot be reconsidered for development without Town Meeting and State Legislative authorization to remove the permanent protection. Protected land is essential to Concord’s appearance, economy, and well-being. Conservation land helps maintain the town’s character, provides adequate land area for outdoor recreation, and protects important wildlife habitat. Protected farmland provides a permanent base on which present and future farm businesses depend. Protected land also ensures clean water for wells and reservoirs supplying Town drinking water.

Resilience: The ability to anticipate, respond to, and recover from disturbance and change.

Resilient Landscapes – Open space and natural areas maintained in a way to diminish adverse effects of climate change and sustains other ecosystem services. These natural environments preserve forest, vegetation and soil health, and restore small water cycles.

Smart Growth – An approach to development that encourages a mix of uses and building types to provide diverse housing and transportation options with walking distance to neighborhood amenities, such as parks and natural resources. Smart growth focuses development within existing neighborhoods and encourages community social engagement. (Adapted from: Smart Growth America)

Sustainable – Having or relating to the long-term ability of a trend, system, resource, or organization to successfully function beyond the short-term.

Town Character – As demonstrated by the live voting exercise at the second Envision Concord Public Workshop, this term means different things to different people but generally includes three primary aspects: historic character, natural character, and village character. Each of these are defined in the Glossary and will be used throughout this report to reference the specific aspect of the more general term “town character” which will refer to all three aspects.

Transferrable Development Rights (TDR) - A voluntary, incentive-based program that allows landowners to sell development rights from their land to a developer or other interested party who then can use these rights to increase the density of development at another designated location.

Transit-oriented Development (TOD) – Concentrated housing units in mixed-use developments near a public transportation station or hub.

Workforce housing – Housing priced so that those who live in Concord and work in lower paying jobs, but jobs which are critical to a town’s functioning and health, can afford it. Jobs included in workforce housing would include those in education, retail, public service, public safety, and health.

Village Character – Small-town New England style village centers with a vibrant collection of small shops and restaurants that meet every day needs and contain a good balance between independent and locally-owned businesses, as well as formula businesses that meet specific community needs.

ACRONYMS

Acronyms used in the Envision Concord: Bridge to 2030 Plan:

AASHTO – American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

ACS – American Community Survey

AMI – Area median income

APA – American Planning Association

APR – Agricultural preservation restriction

AV – Autonomous (or automated) vehicle

CCHS – Concord-Carlisle High School

CCTV – Concord Community Access Television

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant

CHA – Concord Housing Authority

CHDC – Concord Housing Development Corporation

CIP – Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property

CLCT – Concord Land Conservation Trust

CLRP – Comprehensive Long Range Plan

CLRPC – Comprehensive Long Range Plan Committee

CMLP – Concord Municipal Light Plant

COA – Council on Aging

CPA – Community Preservation Act

CPW – Concord Public Works

CR – Conservation restriction

CWMP – Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (2003)

EV – Electric vehicle

FAR – Floor area ratio

FISH – Friends in Service Helping

GHG – Greenhouse gas(es)

GIS – Geographic Information Systems

HDC – Historic Districts Commission

HPP – Housing Production Plan (2015)

LID – Low-impact development

MACRIS – Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

MAGIC – Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination

MAPC – Metropolitan Area Planning Council

MBTA – Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

MCC – Massachusetts Cultural Council

MCI – Massachusetts Correctional Institution

MHC – Massachusetts Historical Commission

NCD – Neighborhood Conservation District

NPDES – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

NPS – National Park Service

NRC – Natural Resources Commission

NRPZ – Natural Resource Protection Zoning

OARS – Organization for the Assabet, Sudbury and Concord Rivers

OSRP – Open Space and Recreation Plan (2015)

PRD – Planned residential development

PROWAG – Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines

RETT – Real estate transfer tax

RHSO – Regional Housing Services Organization

ROW – Right-of-way

SWMP – Stormwater/Drainage Master Planning

SWOT – Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

TDR – Transferrable development rights

TIP – Transportation Improvement Program

TMG – Transportation Management Group

TOD – Transit-oriented development

VMT – Vehicle miles travelled

WWTP – Wastewater Treatment Plant

A Note about abbreviations and capitalization:

The first time a phrase or term is used in this plan, starting with the Introduction, it is used in full with the abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter, only the abbreviation is used.

When referring to the general town of Concord, as in “The community greatly values the rural and agricultural character of the town,” town is not capitalized. However, when “Town” is used to refer to the government of Concord or the entire town as an acting body, the word is capitalized, as in, “The Town enacted new zoning bylaws in the last decade.”

INTRODUCTION

WHY THIS PLAN NOW? HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The Comprehensive Long Range Plan Committee of the Town of Concord has produced this plan – Envision Concord: Bridge to 2030 – the town-wide comprehensive plan that seeks to understand the current and future challenges faced by the community, as well as opportunities to reinforce a collective vision for a strong future. The Envision Concord Plan includes a vision for the future of Concord to assist the Town in prioritizing needs of the community for the coming decade. The Plan also provides a menu of potential action steps and creates an implementation process for moving toward that future vision.

This plan comes at a critical time for Concord. The [2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan](#) accomplished much. The three themes of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan included:

1. Protect Concord's Assets and Character
2. Enhance Quality of Life
3. Balance Town Needs with the Ability to Pay

While these goals still resonate with town residents, it is appropriate to acknowledge significant changes to the Town's demographics, affordability, and development within the larger context of rapidly changing technology, societal expectations, and shopping patterns. In addition, the Town has embraced Sustainability, with the 2011 Town Meeting adoption of four Sustainability Principles, with the 2017 Town Meeting adoption of Warrant Article 51 that establishes town-wide GHG targets, and with the 2018 Town Meeting adoption of Warrant Article 23 that seeks to set new goals for climate [resilience](#). These goals and principles must be acknowledged and embedded within Concord's Long Range vision.

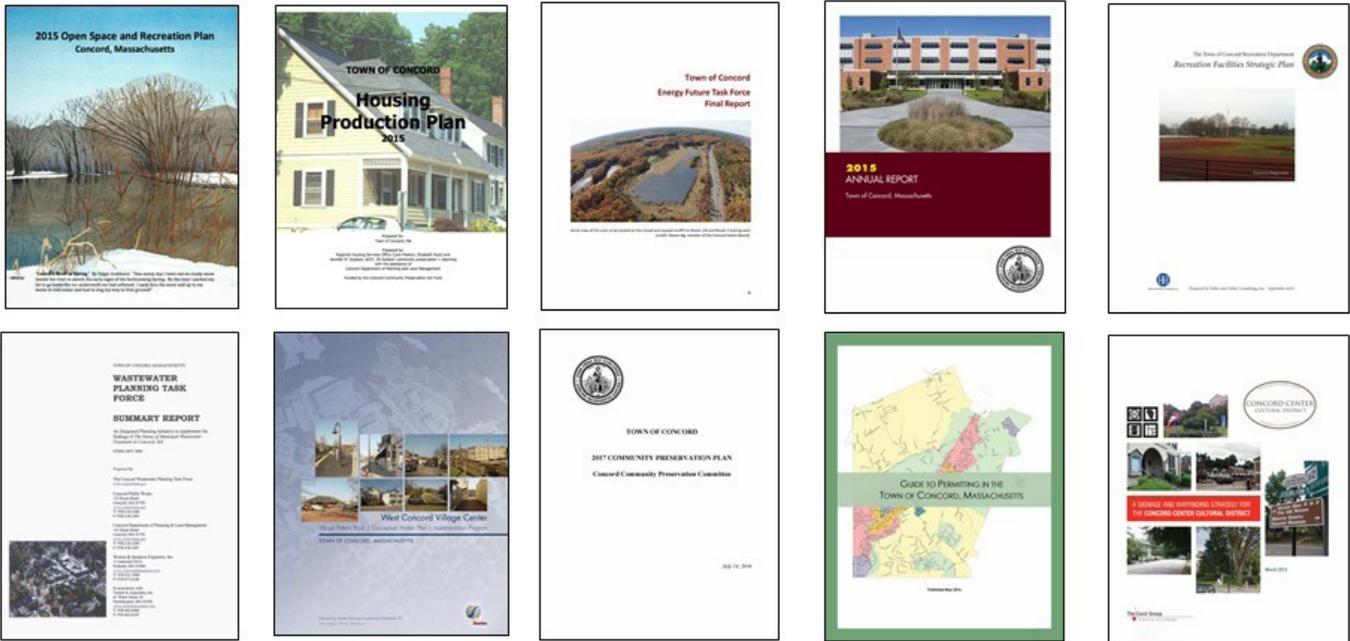
Since the 2005 CLRP was launched, the Town has successfully completed many initiatives. As noted in 2015, 64 of the 354 recommendations contained in the 2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan had been completed and approximately 164 action items were either underway or ongoing.

Some examples of actions taken to “Protect Concord's Assets and Character” included: purchase of the McGrath property and converting the existing house to 2 units of farmer/farm worker housing; legislative action to place significant areas of the Northeast Correctional prison farm under Article 97 land (permanently protected); collaboration with the MBTA and use of Community Preservation funds to renovate/restore the West Concord Depot; preparation of the West Concord Master Plan and Design Guidelines; and, reconstruction of the Warner's Pond dam near the Pail Factory Bridge.

To “Enhance Quality of Life”, some examples include: celebration of local farmers by designating a “Concord Ag Day” in September; installation of new playing fields at CCHS; consideration of parking needs and demand identified in the 2012 Parking Management Plan; continued design of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and participation in the Healthy Communities project funded by a grant from the Community Health Network Area 15 (CHNA15).

The following two projects exemplify ways the Town was able to “Balance Town Needs with the Ability to Pay”: acquisition of the October Farm land was a partnership between the Town's Water & Sewer Division, Natural Resources Commission and CLCT with additional funding from the Commonwealth; restoration of the Barrett Farm House was a multi-tiered effort to amend the Zoning Bylaw by the Planning Board that allowed the private non-profit Save Our Heritage, Inc. to acquire the Barrett Farm House and seek funding from various sources, including the Community Preservation Fund, to restore the house, which was then transferred to the Minute Man National Historical Park.

WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED SINCE THE 2005 CLRP?



FOUNDATION FOR ENVISION CONCORD - BRIDGE TO 2030

THE PLANNING APPROACH AND OVERALL FRAMEWORK

The Comprehensive Long Range Plan Committee (the Committee) and Town of Concord's Planning Division determined early in the planning process to consider different models of comprehensive plans that would assist the Town to become more efficient and holistic in its approach to planning and innovation while continuing to advance policies supporting conservation, sustainability, and preservation.

The Massachusetts General Law – Chapter 41 Section 81D describes the required elements of a municipality's master plan as nine components:

1. Identified goals and policies to guide future growth and development;
2. Land use plan;
3. Housing;
4. Economic development;
5. Natural and cultural resources;
6. [Open space](#) and recreation;
7. Public services and facilities;
8. Transportation/circulation; and
9. Implementation program.

While Envision Concord addresses the state's required master plan components, the Committee adopted the new approach to comprehensive planning proposed by the American Planning Association.

American Planning Association (APA) Framework: Principles and Processes

In 2015, the American Planning Association issued a report, *Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans*, as a new framework for how communities could address sustainability and resiliency in a more holistic way. The suggested framework offers a change from the traditional category-based comprehensive planning processes that treat the various disciplines or elements addressed in the plan as silos rather than integrated systems. The APA framework is organized into six principles and two processes.

The Committee, considering the Town's role as a forerunner in new sustainability policies, embraced the idea of viewing issues and solutions in an inclusive manner following the spirit of the APA framework while modifying certain aspects to respond to the unique qualities of Concord.

What are the APA Framework Principles?

The following principles are from APA's *Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans* (PAS 578) report with the exceptions as noted:

- i. Livable Built Environment – Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreation, with a high quality of life.
- ii. Harmony with Nature – Ensure that the contributions of [natural resources](#) to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.
- iii. Resilient Economy – Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate [sustainable](#) development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build reliance on local assets.
- iv. Interwoven Equity – Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.
- v. Healthy Community – Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.
- vi. Responsible Regionalism – Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.
- vii. High Performing Schools (not in original APA framework) – Ensure that Concord's Schools continue to focus on learning for mastery and critical thinking, and safeguarding the physical and mental health of Concord's youth.

What are the APA Framework Processes?

viii. Authentic Participation – Ensure that the planning process actively involves all segments of the community in analyzing issues, generating visions, developing plans, and monitoring outcomes.

ix. Accountable Implementation – Ensure that responsibilities for carrying out the plan are clearly stated, along with metrics for evaluating progress in achieving desired outcomes.

The principles and processes described above have shaped the goals, planning processes, and recommendations of Envision Concord. The Committee distilled comments from the project website, summarized public meeting input, and conducted extensive Strengths, Weaknesses, Strengths and Threats (SWOT) analyses using the APA principles to develop a vision for Concord in the coming decade that is presented in Section 1.

March 2017 – contract signed with selected planning consultant, CivicMoxie, LLC

May 31, 2017 – Public Kickoff event

June – August 2017 – Text Sign Questions located around town/website launched

September 2017– launch Envision Concord Town-wide Surveys

October 20, 2017 – Open House/Tables in Concord Center & West Concord

October 21, 2017 – Public Event

November 2017 - focus groups, interviews, and listening sessions conducted by planning team and Committee members

November 16, 2017 - Public Hearing on the Plan

March 5, 2018 – draft plan available for public review

April 25, 2018 – Public Hearing on the Plan

June 25, 2018 - public comment of final draft plan due

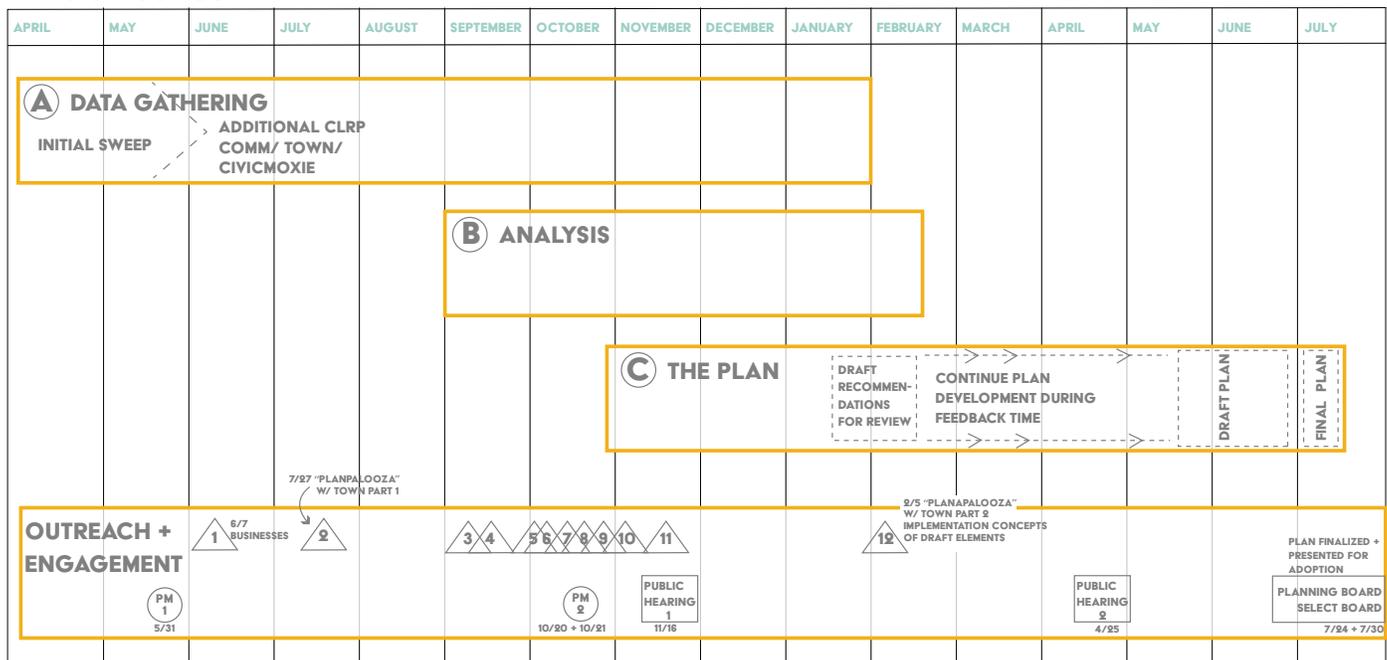
July 17, 2018 – Final plan delivered to Planning Board/ posted for public viewing

July 24, 2018- Planning Board - Presentation and adoption

July 30, 2018 - Select Board - Presentation and acceptance

As Figure 1 below demonstrates, the Committee adopted a planning timeline organized into three phases, including data gathering, analysis, and plan development.

ENVISION CONCORD TIMELINE



KEY

- PM # PUBLIC MEETINGS
- # FOCUS GROUPS

Figure 1. The phases of the master planning process

Data Gathering

The data gathering phase involved an extensive period of gathering input through many different sources, including:

- Public input at open meetings
- Letters and correspondence
- Website posts, text responses from town signs
- Town Survey
- Envision Concord Survey
- Town Committees and Boards feedback +memos
- Town professional staff
- Focus groups with teens; social services; arts, historical, cultural; business owners/interests
- Interviews
- Committee-led listening sessions:
 - Culture and History/Economic Viability and Vitality
 - Housing/Open Space and Natural Resources/Land Use
 - Transportation and Infrastructure/Housing/Social Services
 - [Town Character](#)/Culture and History/Diversity
 - Sustainability Goals and Policies/Town Resources
- This outreach resulted in:
 - 49 Committee meetings since appointments by Select Board (through June 29, 2018)
 - 477 unique comments posted on Envision Concord website
 - 1,022 respondents to Town Survey with special section on long range plan, 458 responses to Envision Concord survey, 133 participants in intercept survey
 - More than 60 participants in each of the three public workshops/hearings [or separate lines for public workshops and hearings]
 - Over 100 connections to town residents and commuters through one tabling event and other outreach during town events throughout the year
 - 16 Town boards/committees responded in writing to the Committee in November and 12 boards responded in April representing a full membership of approximately 105 individuals on those committees

Analysis

After collecting and assembling data for more than seven months, the Committee subsequently spent four additional months analyzing this information to shape the vision and goals for the future of our community. For this plan, the Committee sought to not merely develop a “wish list,” but rather, to frame and prioritize potential opportunities as optimized solutions that span all Town sectors and municipal functions and to provide implementation guidance for how Town staff, committees and boards can conceive ideas and undertake planning for potential projects in order to garner greater community support and improve outcomes for the whole Town.

Plan Development

During plan development, the Committee used public input and the planning team analysis to highlight key goals and make choices regarding strategies to achieve the plan objectives. Goals were evaluated within the larger framework of the plan and opportunities for mutual benefits across disciplines and proposed initiatives were identified. Implementation actions were articulated and evaluation criteria established to allow the Town to annually report on progress.

The steps involved in the development of the plan are outlined below.

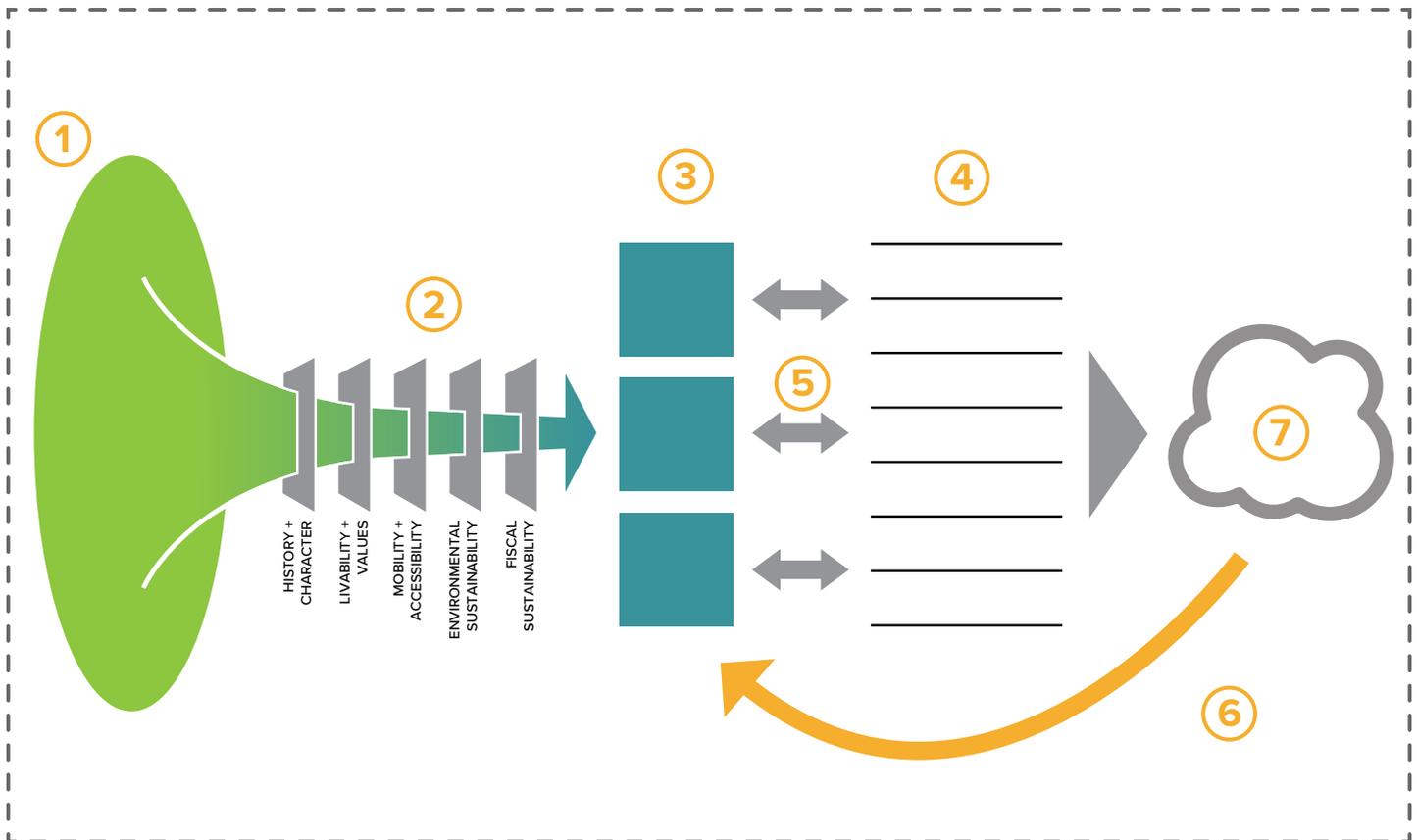


Figure 2. The comprehensive long range plan development process from vision to principles to criteria and strategies

The diagram illustrates the various components and process of the plan and includes:

Step 1: Establish “Vision” – the Committee developed a vision based on public input and community values as embodied in ongoing initiatives and Committee and Board work.

Step 2: Based on “Vision”, develop “Community Criteria” – specific criteria for plan goals and strategy recommendations were developed to guide all planning decisions. These criteria are based on the vision and overarching values of the community and are described in Section 2.

Step 3: Based on data gathered, develop three “Big Ideas” to illustrate a “systems”-based approach to planning – planning priorities, as identified from public input, were used to articulate three big ideas that are cross-disciplinary and touch on many of the needs and desires expressed during the planning process.

Step 4: Based on data gathered, develop other “Plan Elements” that fit within scope of CLRP – detailed goals were articulated for each of the plan elements (housing, land use, economic vitality, etc.).

Step 5: Align “Big Ideas” with “Plan Elements” – the goals and strategies of the three “Big Ideas” were cross referenced with the plan elements to ensure that the elements capture all of the parts of the big ideas and vice versa.

Step 6: Apply “Community Criteria” and iterate/revise “Big Ideas” and “Plan Elements” – the Envision Concord Committee reviewed the plan goals and strategies present in the big ideas and plan elements to ensure that they met the overarching criteria for the plan.

Step 7: Build out “Implementation Matrix” based on applying the criteria to the “Big Ideas” and “Plan Elements” – strategies for implementation were developed from these big ideas and plan elements including recommendations for applying a “systems”-based approach for decision-making and action.

Following this process, this plan includes a vision and integration of themes gathered from the public input, listening sessions, and the thoughtful contributions from Town Boards and Committees. The sections of the plan create the framework for the implementation plan to address optimal opportunities for Concord's future decision-making and actions.

Section 1: Demographics + Trends and Vision for the Future

To find optimal solutions to the many issues raised is not a simple task, but utilizing the rich public input received, Section 1 defines the vision of a future Concord in 2030. This section provides an overview of Concord's residents, businesses, and existing physical conditions that form the basis for every plan element. Trends in development, commerce, transportation, and other factors are examined to inform plan goals and strategies.

Section 2: The Vision in Practice: Community Criteria for a Systems Approach

Criteria for plan goals and strategies are outlined in this section as identified through an intensive process of collecting community feedback and applying the APA Principles. Section 2 describes the entire framework of the plan and presents a set of criteria to provide guidance for future decision-making and integrated actions

Section 3: Big Ideas for Integrated Planning: The Systems Approach in Action

Based on the vision in practice outlined in Section 2, this section presents three ideas that benefit from integrated, cross-disciplinary planning. These potential opportunities simultaneously achieve multiple goals on multiple fronts that will improve livability, sustainability, economic vitality, health, and equity in a spirit of regionalism. The three priority themes are highlighted in this section to illustrate how a systems-based approach to planning can be mutually beneficial across disciplines and use resources efficiently. The three ideas explored here are not the only ideas in this CLRP but they do represent priority goals as identified through the planning process.

Section 4: Plan Elements

This section identifies future goals in each of the more traditional areas of municipal governance, in ways that are aligned with the “Big Ideas” included in Section 3. Each of the plan elements listed below is described in detail in this section, including existing conditions, challenges and opportunities, and comments from the community. These plan elements are generally required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws Section 81D:

- 4.1 Cultural + Historical Resources
- 4.2 Economic Vitality
- 4.3 Housing
- 4.4 Land Use
- 4.5 Mobility + Transportation
- 4.6 Open Space + Natural Resources
- 4.7 Public Facilities + Infrastructure
- 4.8 Fiscal Planning

Sustainability is not listed in Section 4. Instead, because of its importance to the town, Sustainability is a key criterion articulated in Section 2 of this CLRP and is applied to all decisions and recommended actions.

Section 5: Implementation Actions

Section 5 is where planning moves to action. It describes the plan goals in terms of implementable actions with budget considerations and responsible entities. This section provides key information on the action steps and priorities to achieve the goals in this plan. Charts are provided indicating who has responsibility for each action and a checklist indicates that a systems-based approach has been used for optimizing decisions.

Taken together, the sections of this report provide a clear roadmap for the Town of Concord to achieve success in its priority goals for the next decade, making the best use of the town’s resources during decision-making and implementation.