



SECTION 1:

Demographics + Trends
and Vision for the Future



HIGHLIGHTS OF CONCORD'S DEMOGRAPHICS

Places change, people move, and new trends, employment opportunities, and job centers shape where people live. This Envision Concord plan addresses changes, looks at trends, articulates a vision for the town's future, and outlines strategies to achieve goals. To do this, the Envision Concord planning process started with a demographic analysis of the town and considered how shifts in population are changing the opportunities, challenges, and needs facing Concord today and in the future. The following are demographics of the community and highlights of observed trends by planning category. More detailed existing conditions are discussed in Section 4: Plan Elements.

The Town of Concord's estimated 2016 population is over 19,000 (based on the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) data). According to the Town of Concord's 2017 Town Census, however, the town's population is just under 15,600 people, which is based on households that self-report by submitting the annual Town census form and does not include the MCI-Concord (Massachusetts Correctional Institution) population. The population of MCI-Concord was approximately 1,500 in 2010 but has decreased to approximately 900 in 2017. While the US Census and ACS data have shown and estimated a steady increase in Concord's population (including the MCI-Concord's

population), the Town's survey has shown a more stable population, fluctuating between 15,500 to just under 16,000 since 2010 (and not including the MCI-Concord population).

For the purpose of comparing Concord's data with regional and state data, the following demographic highlights utilize the 2015 ACS data.

A Changing & Older Population*

- Approximately 9% increase in Concord residents age 65 and older from 2010 to 2015 compared to 6.5% in Middlesex County and 2.5% in Massachusetts.
- Almost 1 in 5 Concord residents is 65 or older compared to 1 in 7 for Middlesex County and the state.
- 9% of Concord residents are young adults (ages 20-34) compared to over 20% for Middlesex County and MA.
- Racial [diversity](#) has increased – 90% White in 2010 to 86% White in 2015 with slight increases to 6% Asian, 5% Hispanic/Latino, and slight decrease to 3% Black/ African-American residents.

*Source: 2015 American Community Survey data

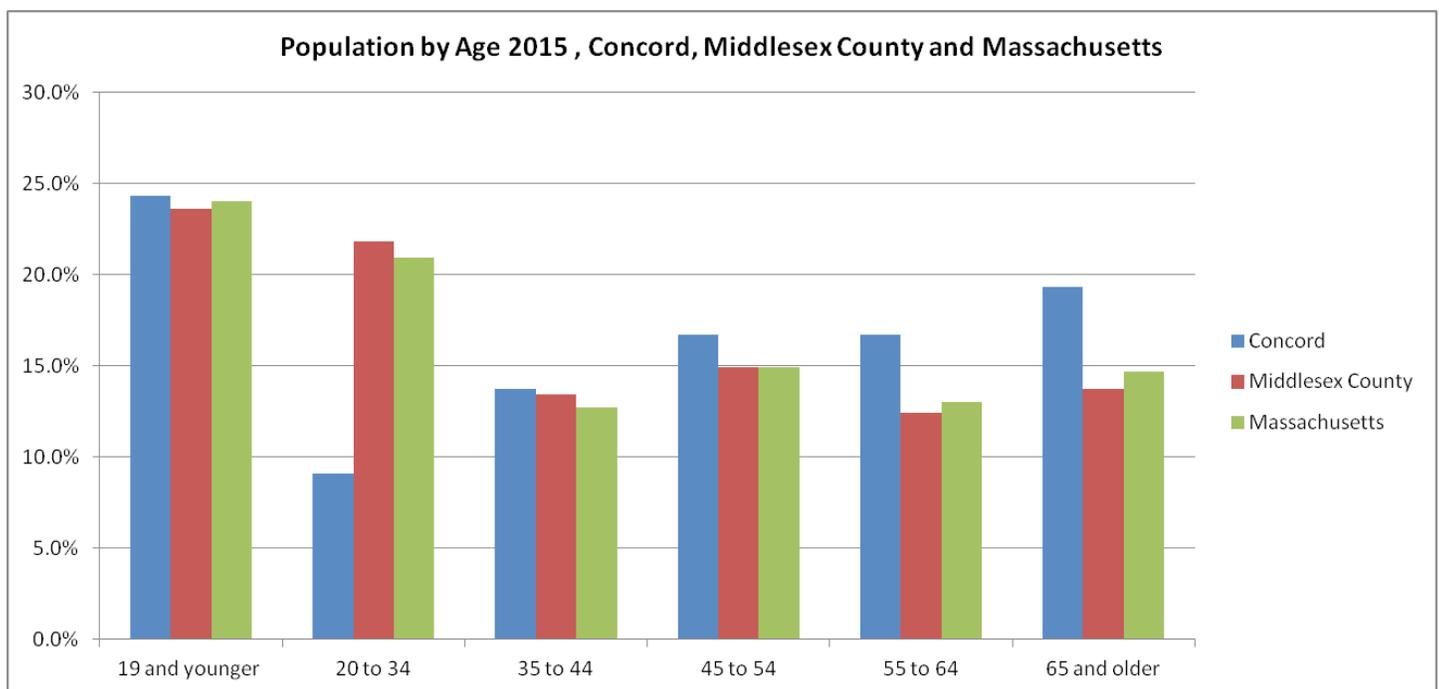


Figure 3. 2015 Population by Age for Concord, Middlesex County and Massachusetts (Source: 2015 American Community Survey Data)

CLRP Age-friendly communities

As Concord’s population ages and people stay healthy and active longer, our community must adapt. Well-designed, livable communities promote health and sustain [economic growth](#), and they make for happier, healthier residents — of all ages. This concept is known as being an “age-friendly community”. Age-friendly communities strive to better meet the needs of their older residents by considering the environmental, economic, and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults and to develop programs that seek to allow older adults to stay in their communities and “age in place.”

The World Health Organization (WHO) supports a framework of “active aging” through age-friendly cities and towns. This framework looks at the determinants of active aging (e.g., social, economic, behavioral, personal, etc.) along with other age-friendly aspects of communities (e.g. transportation, housing, social participation, outdoor spaces, etc.). Communities may consider several pathways to become more age-friendly, such a joining an age-friendly network or adopting evidence-informed models that support healthy aging across the lifespan. Each city or town may explore the approach that works best for its community.

One option that the Town is pursuing with its regional communities in the MAGIC sub-region is the [AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities](#), which is the U.S. affiliate of the WHO network. Concord has already applied for and been accepted into this network and will continue to participate with the MAGIC communities in researching issues, pursuing solutions and sharing information in a coordinated manner.

Table 1 summarizes several well-being indicators for Concord, Middlesex County, and Massachusetts with Concord exceeding the county and state for all measures. Concord’s overall well-being indicators show a prosperous town in comparison to the county and state.

Age-Friendly Communities

In February 2018, the Town of Concord joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, an affiliate of the World Health Organization’s Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program. Members of this network have made a commitment to actively work toward making their community a celebrated place for people of all ages and to follow recommendations for improving quality of life around eight domains:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communication and Information
- Community and Health Services

Indicator	Concord	Middlesex County	Massachusetts
Unemployment Rate, 2016 Annual Average	2.7%	3.0%	3.7%
Median Household Income, 2015	\$134,036	\$85,118	\$68,563
Poverty Rate - All Residents, 2015	5.6%	8.3%	11.6%
Child Poverty Rate, 2015	4.6%	9.2%	15.2%
Percent of Population 25+ with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	67.9%	52.0%	40.5%
Self-Employment Rate, 2015	12.2%	6.5%	6.1%
Employed in management, business, science, or arts occupations	74.0%	53.4%	44.2%

Table 1. Household and Resident Well-Being Indicators for Concord, Middlesex County and Massachusetts
(Source: 2015 American Community Survey data)

HIGHLIGHTS OF TRENDS IN CONCORD

These highlights are organized according to the Section 4 plan elements with the addition of Schools and Sustainability as separate categories.

Cultural + Historical Resources

Concord is known regionally, nationally, and internationally for the sheer quantity and diverse range of historic and cultural resources in town. These assets are a large part of what sets Concord apart from its neighbors. The town is home to many cultural institutions, organizations, and programs that are wide-ranging, such as the Concord Chorus, 51 Walden, Concord Center for the Visual Arts, the Orchard House, Concord Museum, the Umbrella, and Concord Youth Theatre, to name a few.

The historical organizations and the Town's Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission are well-established and provide significant amounts of publicly accessible information. Commissions, organizations, and community members effectively manage preservation issues and share concerns regarding the possible unintended effects of new policies and programs related to infrastructure projects and private development.



The Umbrella Arts Center

Significant Shift in Household Composition Toward Senior Population

Concord had an estimated 6,876 households in 2015, a 13% increase since 2010, with an average household size of 2.52. The estimated number of households grew at a faster rate than population in part because the estimated average household size has declined (from 2.56 in 2010 to 2.52 in 2015). The smaller household trend supports the [Metropolitan Area Planning Council](#) (MAPC)'s population projection that by 2030, 34% of Concord's population will be 65 years old or older (up from 20% in 2010), and the school-age population will decrease to 14% of the population (from 20% in 2010). This significant shift will require special planning to address housing, transportation, and service needs as well as economic equity in distribution of town financial resources (e.g. more door-to-door transportation, housing options to downsize or age in place, additional COA space, and increased COA outreach and nursing services). See Plan sections 4-3, 4-5 and 4-7.

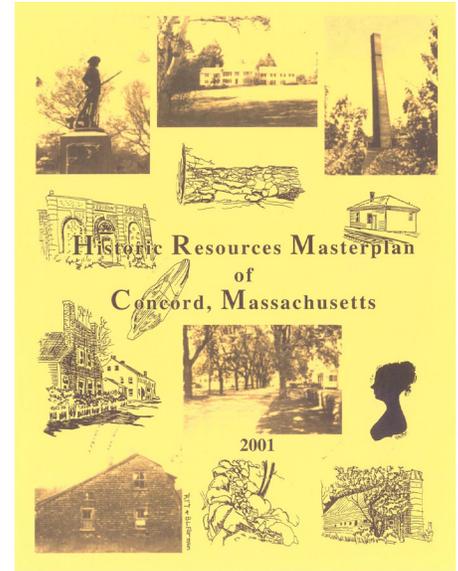
Key household characteristics for Concord are:

- Concord's estimated homeownership rate was 77% in 2015, compared to 62% for both Middlesex County and Massachusetts.
- Families constituted 72% of Concord households versus 64% for the county and state.
- Among Concord households, one-third included persons 18 or younger, compared to 31.3% and 35.1% for Middlesex County and Massachusetts, respectively.
- For households with a person over 60, the discrepancy in 2015 was greater with Concord's share at 48.5%, Middlesex County at 30.4% and Massachusetts at 37.1%.
- Concord stands out with 31% of households with incomes of at least \$200,000—far above 13.4% for Middlesex County and 8.9% statewide.
- Consistent with its high incomes, Concord's poverty rate is low at 5.6%, compared to 8.3% for Middlesex County and 11.6% for Massachusetts. Unlike the county and state, Concord has a lower child poverty rate (4.6%) than its overall adult poverty rate.

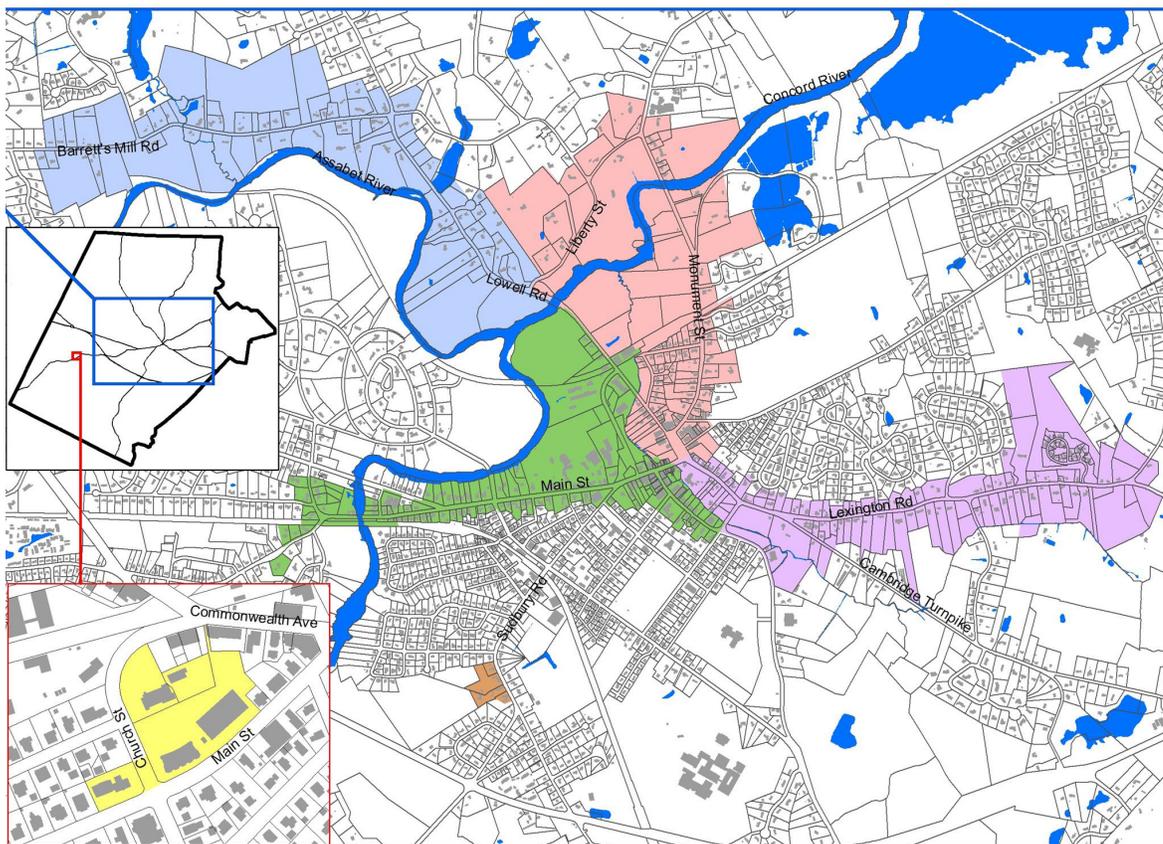
Source: 2015 American Community Survey data

According to the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) data maintained by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC):

- There are 1,925 historic resource records for Concord:
- of which 136 are multi-building areas and 1,635 are individual buildings
 - 104 are “structures,” such as bridges, mausoleums, fences, walls, gates, road/path systems, fields, etc.
 - Three Districts and 24 other sites are on the National Register, including six National Historic Landmarks.



2001 Historic Resources Masterplan



- Historic Districts**
- American Mile
 - Barrett Farm
 - Church Street
 - Hubbardville
 - Main Street
 - North Bridge/Monument Square



April 2016

Figure 4. Town of Concord Historic Districts Map. (Source: Town of Concord)

Other key highlights of Concord's historic resources:

- There are six Local Historic Districts (see map in Figure 4).
- The 2016 Demolition Review Bylaw covers buildings outside of the Local Historic Districts built before 1941 and on the National Register or State Register or in Concord's Survey of Historical and Architectural Resources, which is the Town's record of historic structures and areas of historic interest.
- Approximately 1 in 5 (20%) of Concord's 8,374* buildings are surveyed, listed, or protected in some way.
- Open spaces, farmland, and archaeological sites are included as historical resources.

* Source: Town of Concord GIS data

The Town adopted the state's [Community Preservation Act \(CPA\)](#) legislation in 2004 to help preserve open space and historical sites and create [affordable housing](#) and recreational facilities. Since 2005, over one-third of the total allocation of CPA funds (over \$19.7 million) has been spent on historic preservation projects, which has been invaluable to preservation efforts in Concord.



The Old Manse

(Source: www.mass.historicbuildingsct.com)

Economic Vitality

The economic health of Concord includes not only the financial health of businesses and employees, but also the tax base contribution to the Town for supporting its services, programs, and policies.

Economic Base and Workforce

Concord's overall economic base from 2005 to 2015 was not as strong as compared to Middlesex County and the state. Concord also experienced shrinking employment in several key fast-growing regional sectors including Education and Health Services and Professional and Business Services. Its major areas of employment growth during this period were Leisure and Hospitality as well as Government.

Concord's labor force, on the other hand, is highly educated (68% have a bachelor's degree or higher) and concentrated in high-skill and well-paying occupations (74% work in management, business, science, and arts occupations), which contributes to the town's high household income distribution.

Other key observations about Concord's economy and workforce:

- The town lost 6% of its job base between 2005 to 2015 whereas the county grew by 11% and the state by 8%.
- Concord's 2015 employment is heavily concentrated in Education and Health Services (40%) compared to 24% for the county and state. Despite strong regional growth, Concord saw a decrease in employment in this sector.
- Professional and Business Services and Leisure and Hospitality account for another 30% of Concord's 2015 employment, with the former sector losing jobs and the latter sector growing.
- Concord has a 12% self-employment rate (two times that of the county and state).
- Concord employers depend heavily on workers who reside elsewhere.

The town's highly educated workforce does not match workers with the diverse set of needs of Concord's employers. Businesses and employers have found it challenging to attract needed workers from other communities in part due to limited public transportation options and services.

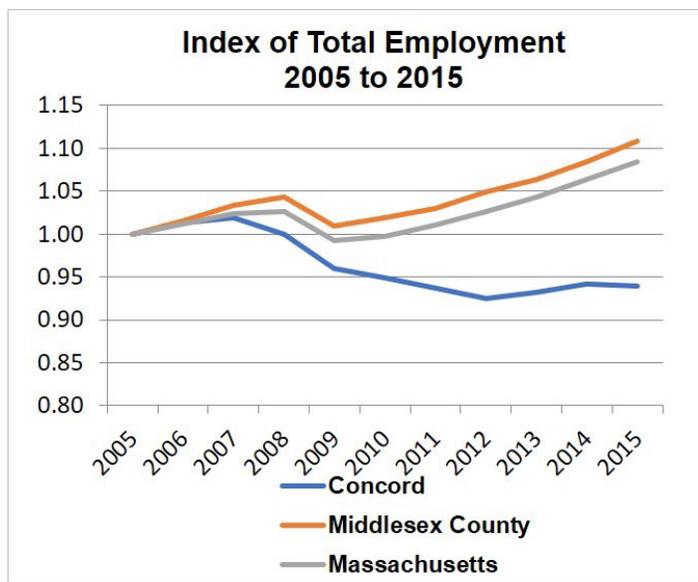


Figure 5. Concord, County, State Employment Index Comparison
(Source: 2015 Community Survey Data)

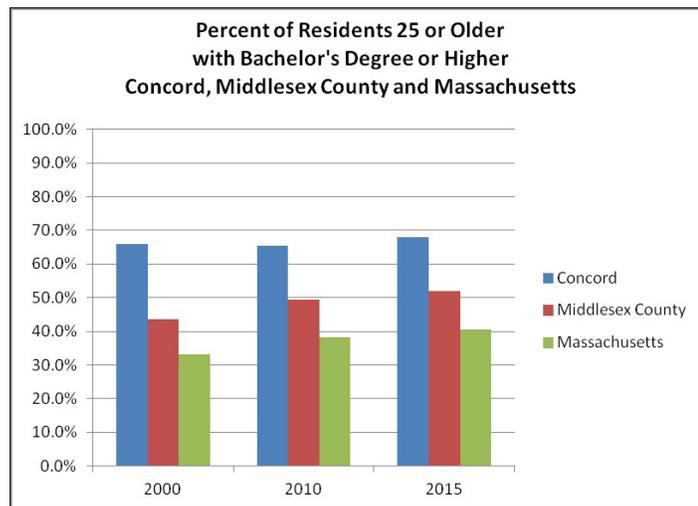


Figure 6. Education Comparison by Town, County, State

Property Tax Base

Concord has the lowest tax rate and highest FY2017 total assessed valuation among its adjacent communities (Acton, Bedford, Carlisle, Lincoln, Maynard, and Sudbury) for both residential and commercial property but has lagged its neighbors in the rate of growth in total valuation and Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property (CIP) valuation since FY2003. Other observations about the town's property tax base:

- Concord's assessed valuation is more than \$1.5 billion above Sudbury, which is the second highest among neighboring communities.
- Concord has the second highest Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property (CIP) valuation compared to neighboring communities, below Bedford which is 38% higher.
- Concord and Sudbury had the highest total assessment value growth from FY2003 to FY2017, both increasing by \$1.57 billion.
- Concord's rate of assessment growth, at 35.5%, was lower than all of its neighbors other than Lincoln, which grew by 22.1%.
- Residential property has accounted for almost all (98%) of Concord's assessment growth since FY2003.



The Bradford Mill shared Workspace in West Concord

Housing

As of 2017, Concord has approximately 7,300 units of housing. With the approval of Concord Mews in 2011, the Town is currently in compliance with the 40B requirements, having over 10% of its year-round housing stock as affordable housing. However, according to the Regional Housing Services Office, the town may fall below the 10% threshold by 2020 depending on the status of the Junction Village assisted living development. (It is important to note that while Concord currently has met the state 10% affordable requirement, not all counted units actually fall within affordable guidelines. For example, while 25% of Concord Mews units are affordable, all 350 units are counted on Concord’s subsidized inventory because they are renter-occupied. The actual number of truly affordable units in Concord is closer to 5.3%).

Key highlights regarding the 7,300 (approximate) total housing units in Concord:

- Approximately 77% of housing units are owner-occupied; 23% are renter-occupied.
- There are 74% single-family units, with approximately 140 accessory units (an additional dwelling unit within the existing house or on the same property as a single-family unit).
- 14% of units are 2–9-unit multi-family.
- 12% of units are 10+ unit multi-family.

Source: 2016 American Community Survey

Concord Area Median Income Limits (Boston-Cambridge-Quincy MSA)			
Household Size	80% AMI	100% AMI	120% AMI
1	54,750	72,380	86,850
2	62,550	82,720	99,260
3	70,350	93,060	111,670
4	78,150	103,400	124,080
5	84,450	111,672	134,000
6	90,700	119,944	143,930
7	96,950	128,216	153,850
8	103,200	136,488	163,780

Table 2. 2017 Area Median Income Limits by Household Size

Source: 80% AMI figures from HUD; 100% AMI figures from Community Preservation Act; 120% AMI figures adjusted from CPA - Concord is considered part of the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy Metropolitan Statistical Area

In concurrence with the aging demographics and continued high prices of housing in town, a greater diversity of housing price and size options was identified by the community early in the planning process as a significant issue for this Plan to address. Upon further discussion and additional feedback from community members, the concern about housing was clarified to be the desire to focus on retaining and creating housing suitable and affordable to young families, seniors, and those considered to be “workforce.”

The [2015 Housing Production Plan](#) (HPP) identified four sites as housing development opportunity areas near Concord Center, in Thoreau Street Depot Area, and in West Concord. (See Figure 21 in Section 4.3: Housing.) The 2015 HPP did not identify specific potential areas where smaller housing development such as infill, upper floor residential, or [mixed-use development](#) could occur but included recommended strategies to encourage smaller-scale housing.

²Concord’s subsidized inventory has 11.73% as counted by the state based on 804 units. However, this number includes 83 units at Junction Village, which will not count until the application to DHCD for tax credits is submitted, and 357 units of market rate rentals. Of these rentals, most are rented at market rate, outside of affordable guidelines, but still count toward our subsidized inventory. Removing the non-affordable rentals and Junction Village units reduces Concord’s SHI to 5.31%.

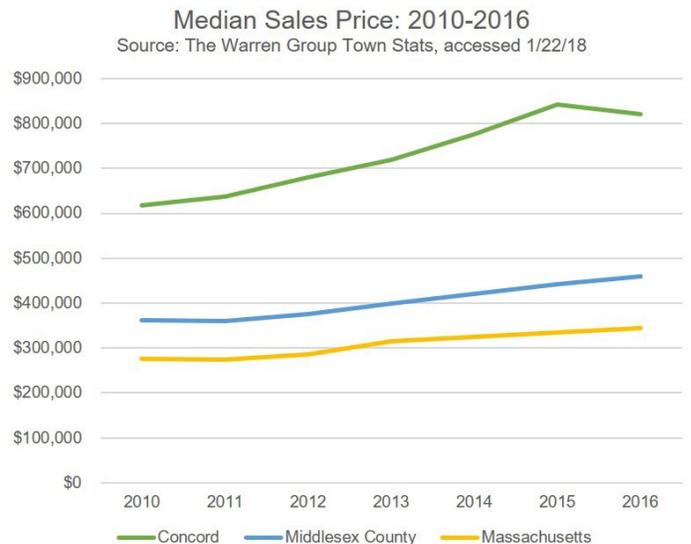


Figure 7. Comparison of Median Home Sale Prices

Land Use

Concord has long been considered a rural town composed of expansive natural resources and farmland that also includes more concentrated commercial, residential, and industrial uses near its transportation hubs – the Concord and West Concord rail stations and along major roadways. The general location of those uses has remained, though there has been more recent re-use of industrial land for commercial and residential purposes. Concord’s early zoning reflected the land uses existing in 1926, with zoning amendments made in response to comprehensive planning initiatives, changes in State infrastructure (construction of Route 2), and changing economic trends.

The Town of Concord’s zoning regulations have been regularly updated over the past ten years to match changing uses and community needs, as well as energy conservation and sustainability policies. The general allowed uses, however, have remained fairly constant.

Key highlights regarding land use:

- Although almost 95% of the town is zoned Residential:
 - » Less than 40% of land is used for residential.
 - » The [2015 Open Space & Recreation Plan](#) categorized approximately 59% of land as Public and Private-Owned Open Space (of which 39% is protected*).
- Just over 4% of land area is zoned for all Business, Medical, Industrial, and Limited Industrial uses.
- Existing land uses in Concord include natural areas/ open space and civic/institutional uses, as well as commercial and industrial uses, but do not exactly match existing zoning categories.

*Source: 2015 Open Space & Recreation Plan

Mobility + Transportation

Key transportation highlights include:

Traffic

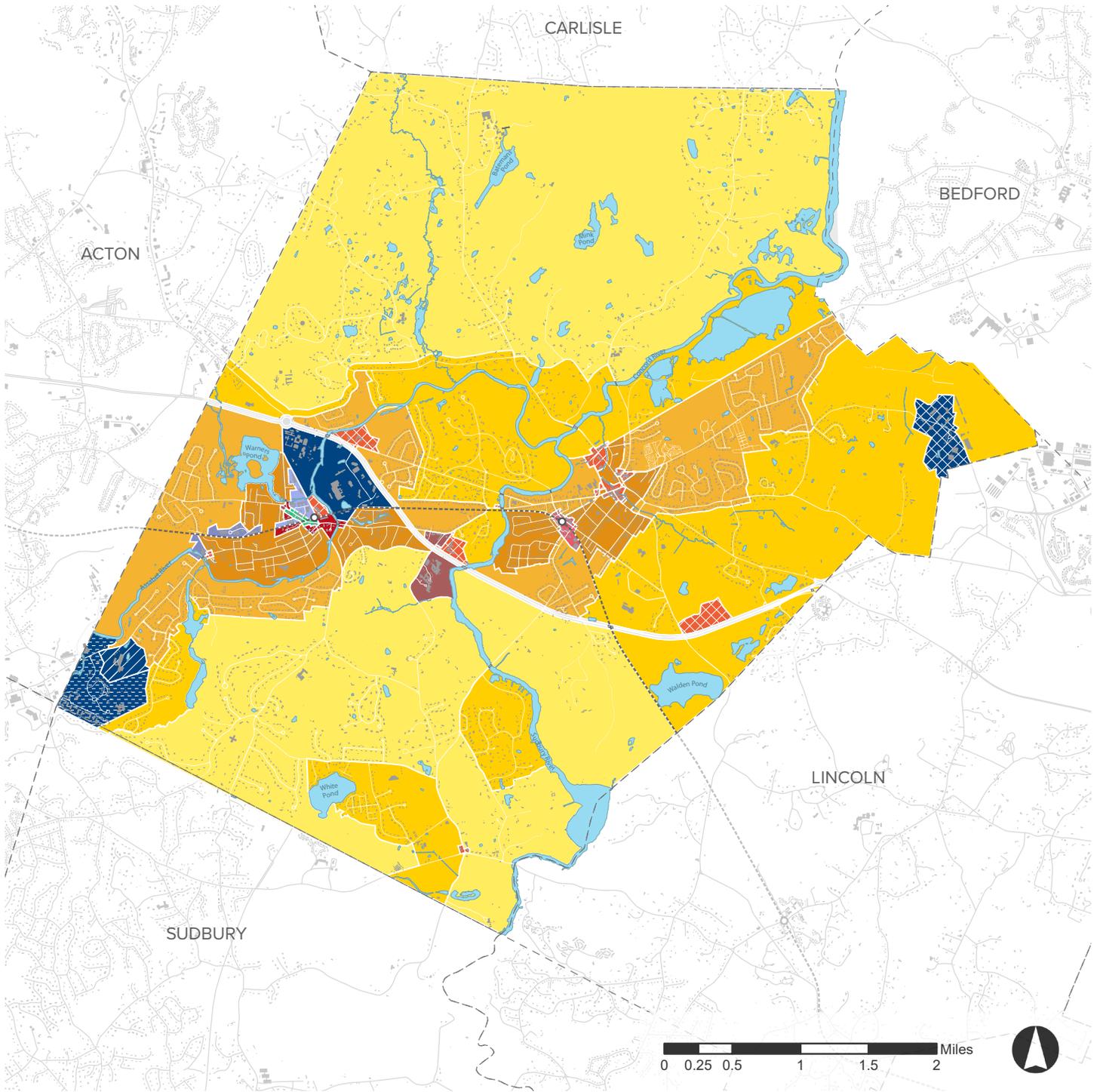
- Concord has excellent regional access through a strong roadway network consisting of Routes 2, 62, and 117, and major roads including Lowell Road, Elm Street, Cambridge Turnpike, and Lexington Road.
- Concord’s early road layout is based on the desire to bring traffic through the center of town (a spoke and wheel design). People perceive that there have been increases in congestion on major roads due in part to increased use of navigational applications (Google Maps, Waze, etc.) by commuters from neighboring towns.

Parking

- In the [2013 Parking Analysis](#) by Nelson/Nygaard, the existing number of parking spaces in Concord Center and West Concord Study Areas was deemed sufficient for the demand, with recommendations for improved shared parking and management.
- The community has noted changing parking needs in West Concord since 2013 due, in part, to recent local redevelopment projects.

Public Transportation

- The primary public transit option is the Fitchburg commuter rail line stopping at Concord Depot and West Concord Station and connecting to downtown Boston. There are ten bicycle spaces at each station.
- A private company – Yankee Line, Inc. – runs two commuter buses to downtown Boston and back on weekdays.



Zoning

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| ●● Business | Industrial Park B | Nine Acre Corner Business | Thoreau Depot Business |
| By-Pass | Limited Business | Residence A | West Concord Business |
| Concord Center Business | Limited Industrial Park 1 | Residence AA | West Concord Industrial |
| Industrial | Limited Industrial Park 2 | Residence B | West Concord Village |
| Industrial Park A | Medical Professional | Residence C | |

Figure 8. Zoning Map Source: (Town of Concord GIS)

Private vehicles

- According to the 2017 Excise Tax data, there are approximately 17,400 private vehicles in Concord, equating to more than 2.5 vehicles per household.

Pedestrians and Bicycles

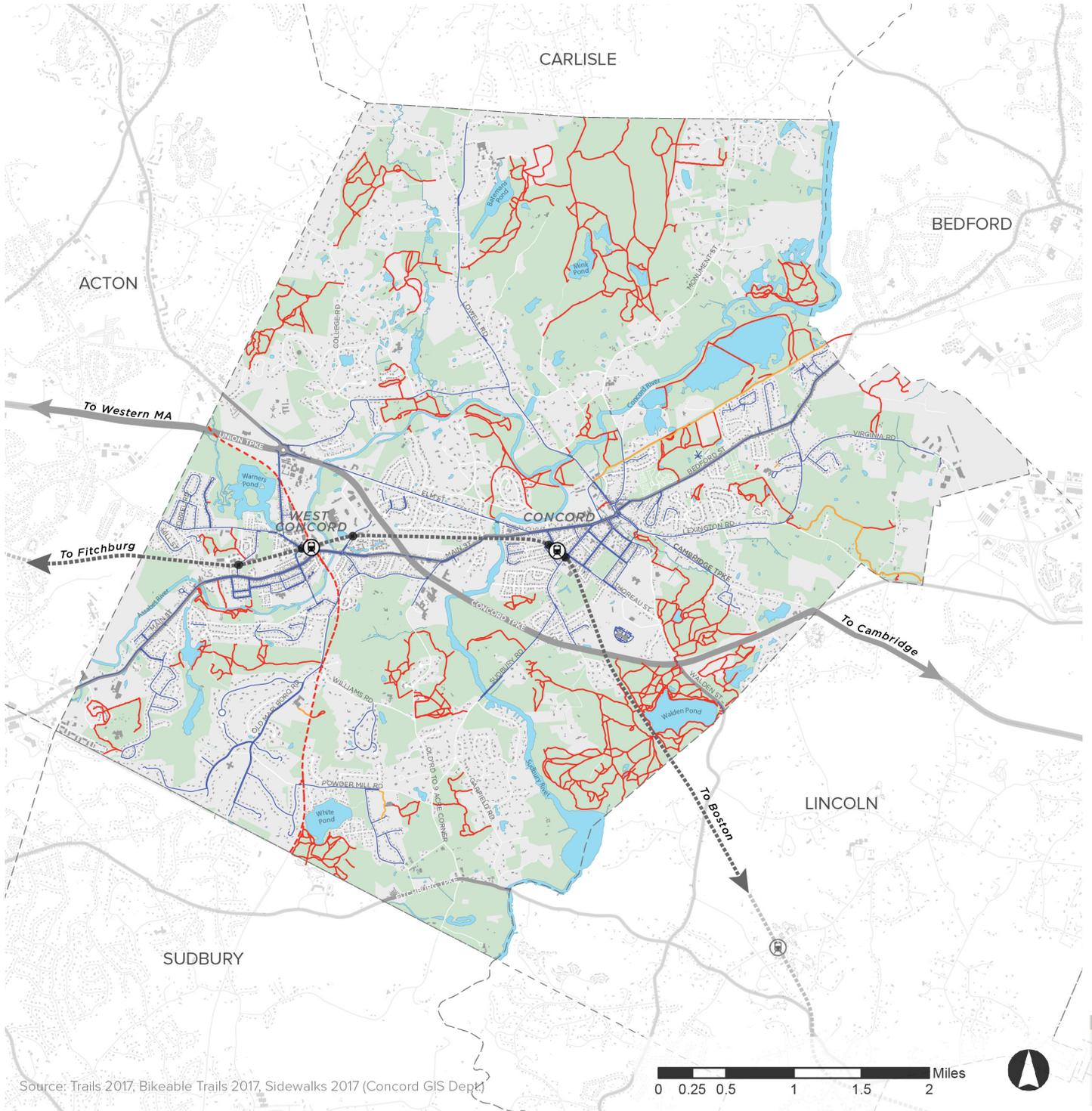
- The character and width of Concord's streets vary greatly throughout the town; only select roadways can be improved to accommodate [Complete Streets](#) design.
- Sidewalks exist along many roads but complete coverage is not provided in all neighborhoods.

Shuttles

- Concord's Council on Aging operates a weekday van/shuttle transportation service for seniors.
- MBTA's RIDE is available for those eligible to receive this service.
- FISH (Friends in Service Helping) of Concord is a volunteer-operated transportation service in Concord by appointment and available to those who cannot drive.
- There are other van/shuttle services run by nonprofit groups for clients or private transportation companies, e.g., Lincoln Concord Coach.
- There are local private shuttles in use for Emerson Hospital, MinuteMan ARC, and Newbury Court Senior Living Community.

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- Moving in and around Concord today is more than just accommodating single occupancy vehicles passing through town. While the town's rural and suburban nature means less [density](#) to support public transit, the community has recognized several transportation issues that, if addressed, may improve quality of life and [environmental sustainability](#):
- Reduce congestion due to through traffic.
- Improve intra-Concord travel (times).
- Expand mobility options to allow better accessibility for the non-driving population and to reduce vehicle trips.
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle connection improvements for accessibility and safety.
- Enhance parking availability and management near commercial centers.
- Increase sidewalk access for safety near schools.
- Adopt a Complete Streets approach when improving local roads.



Source: Trails 2017, Bikeable Trails 2017, Sidewalks 2017 (Concord GIS Dept)

Transportation + Circulation

- Commuter Rail (Fitchburg Line)
- Route 2 / Concord Turnpike
- Other Major Roads (Class 3)
- Trails*
- Planned Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
- Bikeable Trails
- Sidewalks
- 🚆
 Commuter Rail Station
- Railroad Crossing

* Source: Town of Concord Division of Natural Resources

Figure 9. Transportation and Circulation - Major Roads, Commuter Rail Access, Sidewalks, and Trails Map
 (Source: Town of Concord GIS)

Open Space + Natural Resources

Concord has an array of open spaces and corridors supporting a diversity of natural resources, with their benefits to the town varying depending on type of land and location. One of the defining characteristics that makes Concord unique is the abundance of natural resources due in part to its location within the floodplains of three major rivers, with Concord boasting a higher than average density of natural plant communities and rare species. Open agricultural fields contribute to the natural resources in Concord, providing sustainable food production, rural vistas, and a connection to Concord’s agricultural history.

The Natural Resources Commission has two primary goals— (1) to acquire land for conservation and passive recreation purposes, and (2) to steward the Town’s natural resources. Other Town commissions and committees, including the Historical Commission, Recreation Commission, Agriculture Committee, and West Concord Advisory Committee, have interests in the protection, accessibility, and appropriate use or non-use of the town’s open and natural spaces.

The benefits of Concord’s long history of conservation show that approximately 59% of the town’s land is considered open space, as described in the 2015 Open Space & Recreation Plan, with 39% of that open space permanently protected. The plan includes the Open Space Framework, which emphasizes the importance of seeing the big picture while also taking into account the finer details of the landscape. The town’s network of large open space areas and major corridors is shown in the map below and parcels identified as priorities for protection are primarily those that contribute to these large natural areas, large agricultural areas, or wildlife and water-protection corridors.

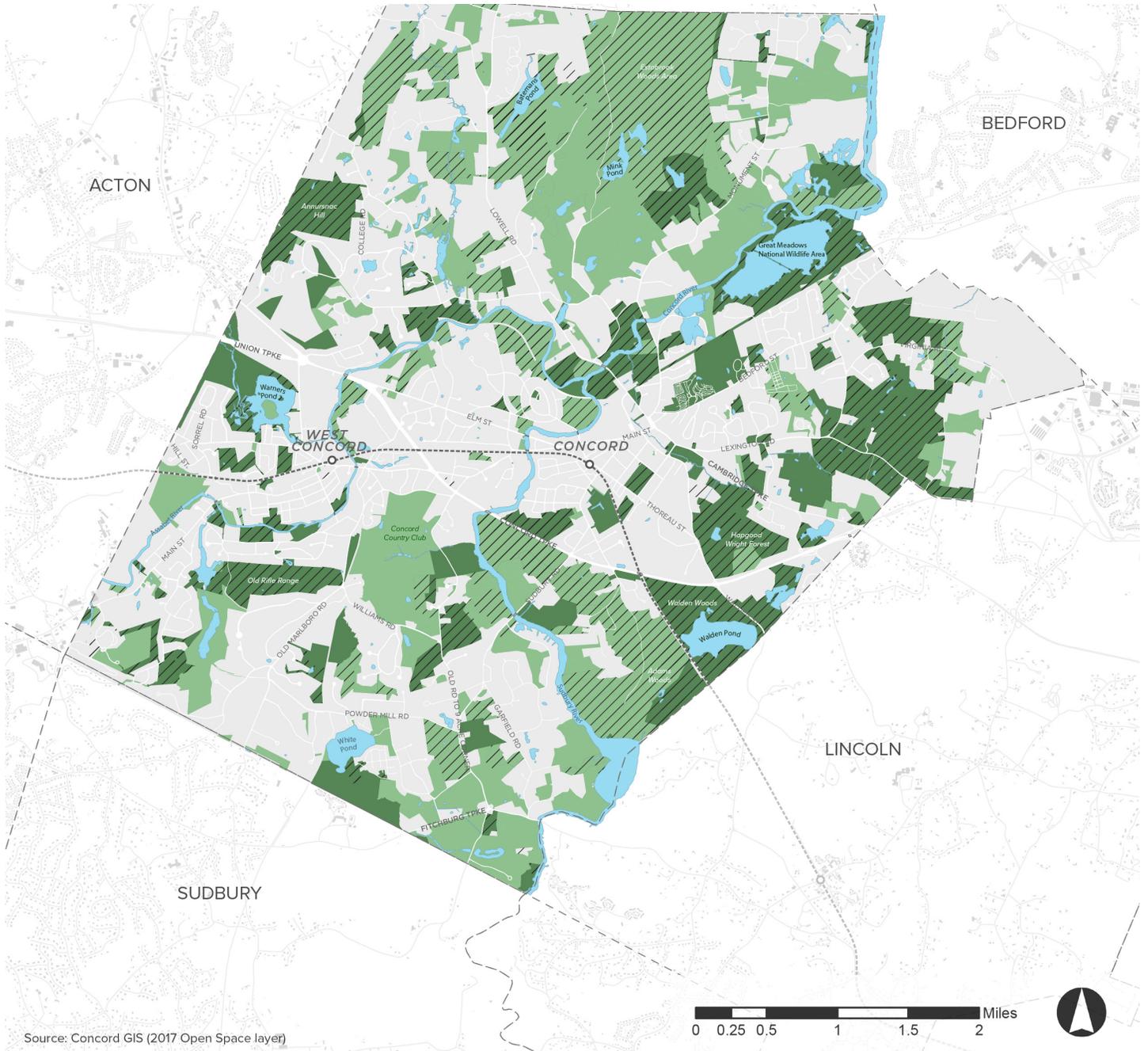
Open space is land that is primarily undeveloped (has few or no buildings or other built structures), is under public or private ownership, is permanently or temporarily protected from development and may or may not be publicly accessible. For the purposes of this plan publicly owned open space includes: 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 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.

How many acres are “permanently protected”?

There is a total of **5,379 permanently protected acres** in Concord (information compiled from 2015 Open Space & Recreation Plan plus acquisition and development since 2015):

- Federal land (Minute Man National Historic Park and Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge) **637 acres**
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Walden Pond State Reservation and Department of Corrections Article 97 land) **461 acres**
- Town of Concord – Natural Resources Commission **1,410 acres**
- Town of Concord – Recreation Commission **37 acres**
- Town of Concord – Concord Public Works Water Division **136 acres**
- Land with Agricultural Preservation Restriction (both private and public) **173 acres**
- Private land with Conservation Restriction **1,629 acres**
- Private Land Trust **896 acres**



Open Space + Public Access

- Publicly-Owned* Open Space
- Publicly-Accessible Open Space***
- Privately-Owned** Open Space

* Federal, State, Municipal, and Public Nonprofit lands.
 ** Ch. 61, Ch. 61A, Ch. 61B, Conservation Organization, Land Trust, Private Nonprofit, and Private for profit lands.
 *** Source: Town of Concord Division of Natural Resources

Figure 10. Open Space + Public Access Map (Data Source: 2017 Open Space Layer, Town of Concord GIS)

In addition to the scenic beauty that conserved lands and open space contribute to the Concord landscape, these spaces also contribute to the local ecosystems. Wetlands and woodlands play an important role in groundwater recharge and stormwater mitigation and many recent studies have suggested placing monetary value on such services. For example, intact wetlands serve a multitude of ecosystem services, which include filtering contaminants from surface waters, recharging groundwater aquifers, and reducing the downstream flood impacts of major storms. Additionally, natural areas serve as carbon sinks, sequestering carbon emissions that would otherwise further contribute to climate change. It is therefore important that natural lands and resources be considered for their potential to provide ecosystem services as well as the ecological, cultural, and recreational value that they offer.

Four major goals are identified in the 2015 Open Space & Recreation Plan, based on resident feedback, analysis of resources, and previously stated goals. These include:

- Protect water resources and biodiversity.
- Improve connectivity and access to recreational resources.
- Protect agricultural land including fields, meadows and orchards.
- Improve collaboration and management.



Concord is known for its abundance of agricultural land and preserved open spaces which contribute greatly to the town's character.

Public Facilities + Infrastructure

Comprehensive integration of public facilities/services and available infrastructure are important considerations for the Town. Changes in development, population, and/or use of properties in Concord will have an impact on existing facilities and infrastructure, so these factors must be considered in future planning recommendations.

Public Facilities

Concord still maintains the public facilities identified in the 2005 CLRP (see appendix Q) and has added additional properties since then, including:

- New School Bus Transportation & Maintenance Center (214Y Main St./37 Knox Trail).
- New solar array project located at 777 Walden Street.
- 55 Church Street office building (Council-on-Aging, Human Services, and Recreation).
- New regional high school and playing fields.
- Assessor's office building at 24 Court Lane.
- Cemetery office building at 361 Bedford Street.
- Marshall Farm at 171 Harrington Avenue.
- Barretts Mill Farm at 449 Barretts Mill Road.

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- As technologies advance and demand for services increase and/or change, the existing facilities may need to be upgraded or reconfigured.
- Town offices and facilities buildings are dispersed and could be reviewed for more efficient operations.

Energy + Power

The Concord Municipal Light Plant (CMLP) has been providing electricity for developed properties in town since the 1890s. Along with providing power, the CMLP has been working to add additional services, such as broadband. The Town also has two solar installations providing local renewable energy sources: one near Knox Trail Road on the Concord/Acton border, and the second at 777 Walden Street. Concord is working to enhance sustainability through its sourcing choices. In 2017, the Light Board voted to move to 100 percent non-carbon power by 2030. Today, about 12% of Concord's power supply portfolio is renewable energy. CMLP is now shifting its supplies from conventional to carbon-free power such as solar, hydro, wind, nuclear, and others. For example, CMLP purchases wind energy from Spruce Mountain and hydro energy from Brown Bear, both in Maine. As gas-based energy contracts expire, new contracts will provide opportunities to incorporate non-emitting electricity sources. While the share of green energy in the power supply grows, CMLP will also purchase Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) to offset emissions from remaining conventional power. The purchase of RECs and the addition of renewable energy to the local power supply adds value to CMLP's service and demonstrates CMLP's commitment to sustainability.

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- Establishing a rate schedule that enables the purchase/retiring of RECs
- Consideration of future business models that decouple cost recovery from volume of sales
- Enabling additional distributed grid services to consumers (e.g. demand management, onsite storage, green power sales) while retaining overall grid reliability and management



Concord Municipal Light Plan - Completed August 2017

Wastewater System

The centralized sewer system in Concord includes eight wastewater pumping stations, 33 miles of sewer mains, and the Concord Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). Just over one-third of the developed parcels in town are connected to the centralized wastewater collection system.

The first phase of recommended sewer extensions from the [2003 Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan](#) (CWMP) have been designed and constructed. The Town also completed an Integrated Planning Initiative in February 2009 to confirm potential future flows and projections from potential future redevelopment in sewer serviced areas and Village Overlay Districts.

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- While the Town’s Wastewater System has been able to maintain high levels of service to date, it may not be able meet future demand without implementation/ construction of phased recommendations from the CWMP.
- There are opportunities to explore using graywater where possible, which would reduce demand on water and reduce reliance on sewage treatment.

Water System

Concord has an extensive drinking water supply system with approximately 95% of the developed parcels connected to the centralized water system and a well-established water conservation program.

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- Continue education and other efforts to encourage water conservation.
- Consider resiliency implications in water system planning to ensure equitable use of limited water resources.

Stormwater + Drainage System

The Town has completed a Stormwater/Drainage Master Planning (SWMP) effort and is currently in a five-year implementation phase. It also has integrated requirements for stormwater management (water quality and quantity) into project reviews for proposed development and re-development submittals.

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- Integrate concepts of resiliency planning

Roadways + Sidewalks

Concord has 141 miles of roads within the town, including state roads (from Town GIS data), and almost 60 miles of sidewalks. Concord Public Works maintains 107 miles of roadway and follows a regular schedule for update and repair, looking to add Complete Streets design features, where possible, for increased safety and multi-modal capacity. The State is responsible for maintaining approximately 12 miles of roadway (Routes 2 and 2A).

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- While there is a desire to create a more walkable and bicycle accessible town, the historical character of some roads may not lend themselves to design improvements.
- Develop a Complete Streets policy

Social Services

Beyond the physical infrastructure within the town, the ability of the Town and nonprofit organizations to support a network of social services and financial assistance for residents is integral to the health of the community. Concord has a rich yet informal network of public, nonprofit, and private groups and organizations that provide an unusually wide range of social services and financial assistance. Several providers have shared immediate concerns and trends:

- Social services and financial assistance providers are stretched thin with increasing numbers of requests. These groups are anticipating a surge in demand for services as the town's population ages and remains in the community.
- While it has been a long-standing goal to help people remain in town, there is a disconnect between simply providing affordable housing and the social and health services that can make this goal a reality.
- Transportation and connectivity should be a major consideration for location of housing and services. Lack of transportation options as well as social isolation impacts all age groups.
- Desire for diversity must be coordinated with services and infrastructure to support varied community needs. Isolated development on the outskirts of town can also impact public safety service and response times.

Schools

Quality of schools is typically the number one concern/issue in surveys of town residents. The School Districts have identified the need for a new middle school, a yet-to-be-determined use of the remediated land at the High School, and ongoing maintenance needs of school facilities. The Finance Committee and School Committees meet several times annually as budgets are developed. Collaboration on strategies to balance resources among Town needs, including maintaining Concord's high quality public school education, is an ongoing process. This plan supports the collaborative efforts between Town Departments and the School Districts to constantly define the appropriate balance between needs and resources and to plan proactively for future capital needs.

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- Understanding the relationship between a strong school system, property values, and tax rates.
- Concord and Concord-Carlisle have made significant infrastructure investment in the two school districts; it is generally accepted that the quality of the elementary schools and the high school far exceed that of the aging middle schools.
- Careful capital planning is required to balance existing debt service with other capital needs including a new middle school.
- A community consensus on the path forward for a new middle school is a high priority.
- Exploring opportunities to share resources between the town and the schools.
- The schools are at capacity in 2018; managing or addressing growth or decline in school population in the future.³

³ Student enrollments are projected to remain relatively flat over the coming decade according to the New England School Development Council; however, ACS survey data presented earlier suggests a larger demographic shift that may reduce the fraction of total population that these student enrollments represents.

Fiscal Planning

The Town of Concord has been diligent in remaining fiscally responsible in light of significant changes in demand for services, programs, and infrastructure, as well as the adoption of new policies and technology, and continues to maintain its Moody's AAA rating. The 2016 Town Government Survey indicated that while residents are satisfied with the quality of services, public facilities, and infrastructure, there are significant concerns regarding the high cost of living in Concord. Strong and continually rising property values, particularly for residential uses, are a result of the high demand and desirability for housing in town but are also a source of apprehension for those long-term owners who have difficulty paying property taxes on significantly appreciated homes.

The high quality of the schools in Concord is a key factor in the town's appeal to families. With over two-thirds of the Town's budget directed towards the schools, balancing Town and school budgets while providing equity in Town services for all age groups of residents is an annual discussion point as there will be a significant shift towards a senior population.

Concord has continued to adopt new policies, particularly in regards to environmental sustainability, as highlighted in the Sustainability section here and in Section 2. These policies have been adopted to provide effective long-term change in the community's impact on the environment. While a majority of the policy recommendations are projected to create cost savings, there may be short-term, immediate costs that need to be planned and budgeted for without impacting other necessary Town services and infrastructure.

Some issues or areas of focus include:

- The need to understand the full impact of new policies and requirements to ensure that decisions are made with the best and most complete information including near term and long term fiscal implications.
- A longer-term perspective is needed for annual budget planning that recognizes the future budget impact of one-time costs as they are carried forward and compounded over a decade or more (including staffing and retirement expenses) but also savings that only accrue over a decade or more.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability has several different definitions with the most familiar being environmental sustainability. However, sustainability is better viewed as a more comprehensive term, requiring qualifiers including economic and [fiscal sustainability](#) as well as sustainability of housing and social services, infrastructure, and other Town services and programs. Envision Concord considers sustainability to be a common thread through all components of its planning process. For this reason, there is no separate plan element in Section 4 articulating sustainability facets of the Plan. Each element, as well as actions and strategies, have been assessed through a sustainability criterion as described in Section 2 – The Vision in Practice: Community Criteria for a Systems Approach.

The Town of Concord prides itself on being a frontrunner in advancing environmental sustainability policies that influence town services and decision-making. The Town's aggressive environmental sustainability goals include a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2020 and an 80% reduction by 2050 from 2008 levels. Additionally the Town has a goal of 100% non-carbon emitting electricity by 2030. While the Town has been rapidly working towards its energy conservation goals, the positive and negative fiscal impacts on the Town and community must be continually studied and evaluated.

In addition to setting the ambitious climate goals above, the position of Director of Sustainability for the Town was created and a director was hired in 2017. In 2018 the Climate Action Advisory Board (Advisory Board) is being established to advise the Director of Sustainability and the Town on strategic implementation of these energy goals and town-wide climate goals.

Concord has several existing sustainability initiatives in addition to the Light Plant initiatives described above:

- Solar PV rebates; electric heat weatherization rebates; free home energy audits
- Hybrid vehicles in the Town fleet
- BigBelly Trash Compactors
- Concord Solar Farm at capped landfill (777 Walden Street)
- Composting operations and paint recycling at capped landfill (777 Walden Street)
- Water savings rebates
- Retrofit programs for lighting; Discounted HVAC equipment
- Plastic Water Bottle Ban, Plastic Bag Ban, and Polystyrene Ban Bylaw

The Director of Sustainability is expected to manage existing initiatives and advance proposed initiatives, which include:

- Analyze and report on the Town's greenhouse gas emissions; work with Town departments and committees to develop climate action plans to achieve short- and long-term climate goals,
- Develop plans to reduce environmental impact of the built environment through community engagement, zoning and other policy changes, incentives and rebates, etc.,
- Work closely with Concord Municipal Light Plant to increase renewable energy production, reduce emissions from the electricity supply and incentivize electrification of vehicles and heating and cooling, and
- Identify the community's vulnerabilities to climate change and work with Town staff, committees and community members to identify and implement solutions to improve Concord's climate resilience.

In 2018, the Climate Action Advisory Board was established to focus on strategic implementation of GHG emission reduction and town-wide climate goals including climate resilience goals and initiatives in Concord. Addressing climate change in Concord will require both mitigation (reducing GHG emissions) and adaptation (ensuring the town is resilient to impacts due climate change). Many climate actions have both GHG-reducing and climate resiliency benefits and are influenced by decisions of many boards, committees, departments, agencies, and community groups.

Resilient communities are those that learn constantly, rebound quickly, fail gracefully, operate flexibly, and ensure spare capacity of vital resources.



Concord-Carlisle High School Green Information Wall

(Source: www.concordconserves.org)

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Vision for Concord in 2030

Concord has long been regarded by residents as an excellent community in which to raise a family and remain engaged throughout their lives. Underlying this is the community's strong focus on preserving the town's historical and intellectual character, maintaining a strong public school system, and protecting open space and agricultural and natural resources. Success in these goals has been possible due to Concord's highly effective and participatory governance structures, careful management of fiscal resources, and the strong sense of volunteerism on its many boards and committees.

Essential components of a vision for Concord over the coming decades include:

- Maintaining the 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 inclusion of the voices of all citizens, and
- Prioritizing opportunities to provide financial and community services in an equitable manner for all citizens.

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

Specifically, Concord in 2030 will have the following attributes:

- Concord's town character is maintained by protecting and nurturing historical and cultural resources, by actively maintaining open space and agricultural land use, and by preserving independent businesses in the three historic and vibrant village centers.
- Concord maintains a first-rate school system (i.e. one that continues to focus on learning for mastery and critical thinking and fosters the physical and mental health of Concord's youth) as well as a spirit of lifelong learning in all citizens.
- Concord actively fosters a healthy community for all ages by enabling local facilities to provide healthy foods, safe streets and paths, easy access to recreation, and quality healthcare.
- Concord enhances participatory governance by embracing technologies that reduce bureaucracy and enable remote participation, electronic voting, online collaboration, and more transparent deliberation and communication.
- Concord's Sustainability Principles - adopted in 2011 - are fully integrated within municipal operations and planning with a commitment to "lead by example" and achieve complete [carbon neutrality](#) of municipal fleets, buildings, and operations. The Town has adopted sustainable business models for both electric and water utilities that provide a greater range of individual consumer choices in line with environmental sustainability goals. Concord actively pursues education of citizens and utilizes fiscally sustainable incentives to change individual behavior to adopt environmentally beneficial and sustainable behaviors in all sectors, paralleling the Town's efforts to "lead by example".

- Concord actively promotes the enjoyment of the town’s natural bounty through stewardship of its wild and scenic rivers, conservation land, trail networks, and rural vistas, and pursues policies to maintain the natural environment and protect trees within neighborhoods, to increase resilience to climate change and associated problems. This includes protecting, creating, and restoring natural ecosystems and supporting the biodiversity on which the Town depends and which is required to stabilize the climate.
- Concord’s fiscal policies result in financial equity for all citizens. Expenditures for schools, open space, and other town services and amenities are balanced by expenditures for affordable housing, senior and agricultural tax exemptions, home health services, senior transportation, and other forms of assistance to maintain and support socio-economic diversity and to assure that the most vulnerable citizens have coordinated social supports to prevent their being “priced out” or “taxed out” of the town they call home.
- Concord is committed to fiscal sustainability, frugality, and self-reliance in its affairs, giving priority to investments that yield greater efficiency and provide lasting value. Every expense and procedure is examined based on necessity and efficacy. Increases in Town and school budgets take all citizens’ ability to pay into account.
- Concord’s housing retains its current character, and increasingly attracts young families and a mix of ages, ethnicities, and financial backgrounds, seeking a range of sustainable housing types, provides [workforce housing](#), and provides seniors with opportunities to downsize or age in place with adaptive floor plan revisions/[accessory apartment](#)s and improved access to services, without compromising the Town’s commitments to open space or neighborhood character.
- Concord’s transportation system provides excellent regional connectivity, multi-modal intra-town connections between town centers and populated areas, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by substantially replacing the use of personal autos running on fossil fuels with sustainable and personally-operated electric vehicles, bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit opportunities.
- Concord continues to invest in its Town-owned utilities, communications infrastructure, and public media to ensure autonomy and continuing alignment with Concord’s values of fiscal independence and free speech, ongoing investments in public works, Town-owned facilities, museums, attractions, and monuments continue to attract visitors and residents.
- Concord zoning/land use policies support a vibrant and diverse economy, including significant commercial, industrial, and technology ventures that provide local employment, reduce the need to commute, contribute significant tax revenue, and sponsor cultural and charitable endeavors. These include maker spaces, artisan live-work spaces, and startup incubators that sustain Concord’s identification with innovation, intellectual culture, and creative talent.
- Concord is a travel destination known for its revolutionary and literary histories. Visitors are vital to the economic well-being of Concord’s retail, dining, lodging, and businesses and they support Concord’s historical, cultural, and agricultural amenities and its recreational and natural attractions.