



## SECTION 3:

Big Ideas for Integrated Planning:  
The Systems Approach in Action



## A SYSTEMS APPROACH

Envision Concord is an ambitious plan to meet the future with innovation and optimism. The outreach process has illuminated many town goals and priorities. To achieve the goals articulated by residents, Town staff, nonprofits, and business owners, this long-range plan employs a “systems” approach that looks across disciplines and traditional planning categories to create efficient and mutually beneficial solutions. It is the intention of the Plan to identify issues that are the responsibility of different areas of government and external organizations (cultural, historical, business community, nonprofits), and to encourage the Town to engage these external entities in developing and implementing concepts that will benefit the community, but that are beyond the traditional means of the Town to develop alone.

The three Big Ideas and corresponding opportunities below encompass three high-priority sets of goals for Concord and explain ways to approach planning and implementation through a collaborative approach that aligns interests and actions. There are many other goals and related strategies in this plan. **These Big Ideas are not intended to overshadow other goals and priorities but rather, are the Committee’s identification of three equally important scenarios that address multiple high-priority goals for the Town and illustrate how a “systems” approach can be beneficial for all.**

Each Big Idea includes the following components:

- Description of the Big Idea
- The Opportunity
- What the Committee Heard from the Community
- Mutually Beneficial Systems-Based Solutions
- Planning It Out...a Narrative
- Recommendations/Actions

## BIG IDEA 1:

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

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### The Opportunity

Concord has a wealth of cultural, historical, and arts assets that differently represent the town’s history and present-day characteristics and people. The richness and diversity of these cultural narratives provide opportunities to enhance both residents’ understanding of the community in which they live and the attractiveness of the town for visitors interested in literature, American history, appreciation for natural areas and conservation, architecture, agriculture, and contemporary art. Unique to Concord is the town’s intellectual and literary history supporting preservation of nature; the works of Henry David Thoreau have been cited as the foundation for the modern environmental movement, documenting an appreciation and experience of nature that goes beyond the existence of natural spaces themselves. At the same time, Concord residents greatly value the independent businesses in Concord Center, Thoreau Street Depot Area, and West Concord. These three village centers have different characters and each boasts local businesses that offer unique retail, food, and service options for residents.

Ironically, both the nonprofit organizations that carry Concord’s historical, cultural, and artistic traditions forward and the independent businesses that contribute greatly to the town’s identity and quality of life have indicated that not enough attention is being given to their contributions, and, in the case of local businesses, their struggles to remain viable in the face of changing consumer trends. The businesses in the village centers are experiencing the national trends that are shifting consumer spending to online outlets and competition from large national and regional retailers. The arts, cultural and historical organizations, and nonprofits in town feel somewhat under-appreciated by residents and Town government. These

organizations need visitors, visibility, and coordinated support to preserve and maintain historic buildings, grow membership, and to continue the programming and services that benefit town residents and visitors. While most residents appreciate historic and cultural resources in a more passive way and value these resources because they contribute to desirable “community character,” many do not engage with them directly.

There is an extraordinary opportunity here to develop mutually beneficial strategies to support core values of residents and ensure that as trends and societal preferences continue to change, Concord is ready to meet future challenges while protecting the town’s character and the amenities residents have come to depend upon and love.

### What the Committee Heard from the Community

#### Values and Needs:

- Support local independent businesses.
- Preserve character of the town.
- Desire for more viable/visible support from residents and Town government for arts and cultural organizations.
- Provide greater visibility and connectivity between businesses and historic/cultural assets.
- Coordinate marketing for businesses – a business association in addition to the existing Chamber of Commerce.
- Encourage stronger collaboration between Town, businesses, and nonprofit stakeholders.

#### Concerns and Challenges:

- Increasing numbers of visitors may increase parking demand in commercial areas.
- Traffic congestion from visitors and through-traffic commuters is a problem.
- Tour buses bring visitors who don’t spend significant amounts of money at local businesses.
- Concern that large national and regional businesses (formula businesses) will replace local businesses.
- Commercial rents continue to rise and independent stores can’t afford these rents; property owners don’t want further regulation but may respond to policy-oriented incentives.

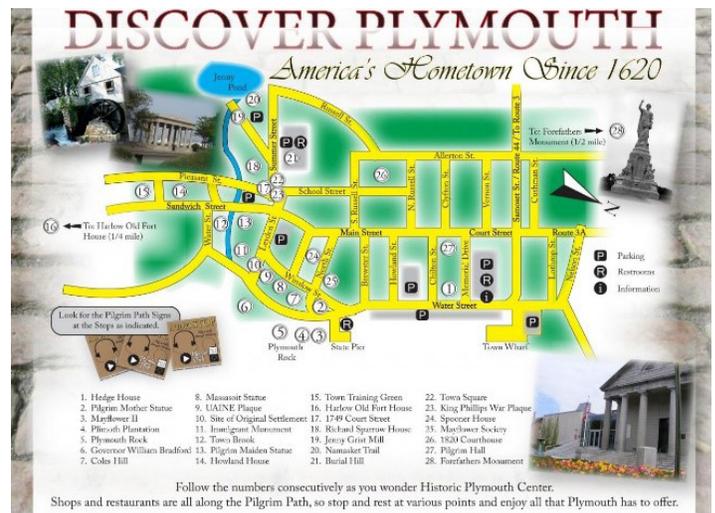
- Cultural programming is robust but not adequately coordinated – there is no single clearinghouse to see what is available and how to experience the many “stories” of Concord beyond the list available through the Chamber of Commerce website.
- Need for more regular communication and collaboration among cultural and historical organizations.
- Residents don’t want crowded restaurants, but restaurants need the steady patronage that visitors can provide.
- How can businesses capitalize on the visitor market to sustain their sales and remain viable?
- How will residents and visitors experience and learn about Concord’s authentic history and culture?
- People take historic resources for granted – assuming these resources will always be there.
- There is a need for more education of the public about what is historic and why. How to reach younger people in particular?
- Historical and Historic Districts Commissions feel constrained about how active they can be with community education and outreach and do not have adequate time or resources.
- Cultural and historical organizations need to find ways to be seen as an important part of resident’s lives because there is a perception that residents and visitors do not fully utilize or experience the quality, variety, and value of the town’s historical and cultural resources and may not understand the amount of work and resources it takes to maintain, preserve, and operate them.
- Preservation is “professionalized” in town and can seem intimidating. Historical organizations have professional staff, which can seem exclusive. Potentially interested people might wonder “What do I have to add? I don’t know enough to be involved.”
- Overcrowding of trails and parks leading to overuse of these natural resources and reducing the enjoyment residents derive from these Town assets.

## Potential Mutually Beneficial Systems-Based Solutions

- A public-private partnership to bring together arts/cultural organizations, businesses, property owners, and the Town to preserve, improve, and promote the Concord Center, Thoreau Street Depot Area, and West Concord village centers and cultural districts.
- A coordinated marketing effort to define and promote the Concord brand, which includes its cultural/historic areas destinations and experiences and local retail and dining:
  - » Concord Day Pass/Visitor card that includes entry to up to three attractions and offers discounts to local stores and restaurants for one package price.
  - » A branded message that attracts those seeking a “deeper dive” into Concord’s history and who have disposable income to support local businesses.
  - » A map showing overall destinations and also maps with itineraries that connect sites and narratives by “themes” (e.g., American Revolution, Abolition/ Drinking Gourd project, the Transcendentalists, etc.) so people can seek out experiences of their interest or be compelled to come back again and again – comprehensive in scope: sites, connections, history, culture, art, retail, restaurants.
  - » Focus on increasing visitor numbers during off-season and low-use times of day with extra promotions.
- » Employ marketing that ensures the town’s agricultural traditions and businesses are a part of the overall message, particularly to visitors.
- » Create a user-friendly website to host all of the above (a compelling visitor destination that is easy to navigate and encourage return visits) and clearly shows walking and bike paths, parking options including electric vehicle charging locations, and ride services.
- » Involve high school students and other youth organizations (e.g. Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts) in creating marketing ideas, maps, themes, etc.
- Festivals and events can be a big draw and support local businesses, particularly at off tourist peak times. These also invite people to stay multiple days. Ideas include new festivals as well as enhanced existing events:
  - » Literary festival (such as Concord’s Festival of Authors)
  - » Ag Day (existing)
  - » Tree lighting (existing)
  - » Riverfest (existing)
  - » Patriot’s Day (existing)
  - » Middlesex Jazz Festival (existing)
  - » Craft beer and Wine Festival
  - » Local Food Festival
  - » Others....

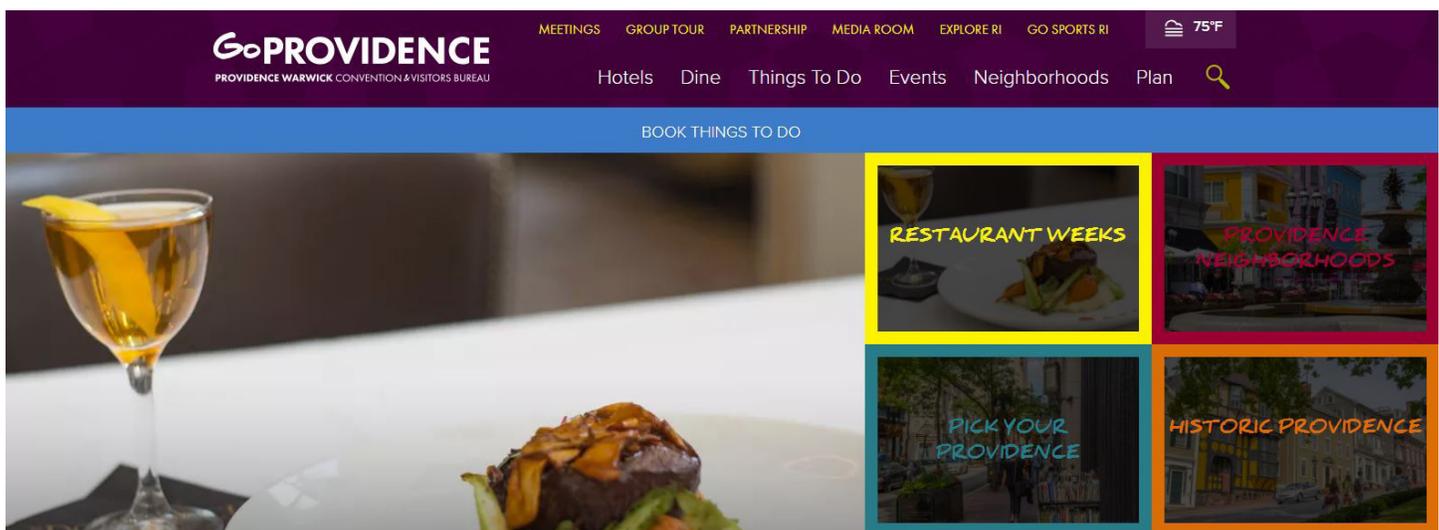


Concord Center for the Visual Arts (Source: John Phelan)



Plymouth, MA historical site mapping (Source: www.pilgrimpathtours.com)

- Assess feasibility of a “food and agricultural tour business” to bring visitors to selected farms and food-related businesses, highlight the town’s historical and current agricultural and food-related policies, amenities and resources (e.g., food tours in Portland, Salem, other cities, but Concord’s tours would be uniquely focused on connecting farm, food products and table).
- Assess feasibility of a “Wild, Historic River tour package” to bring visitors to the nationally designated wild, historic waterway with stays at historic B&B’s or farm-stays, and provision of maps with river access points and boat rentals. Concord’s tours would be uniquely focused on connecting eco-tourism (and perhaps agri-tourism) to the history of the unique wild, historic waterway. Partnership opportunities with Sudbury Valley Trustees, OARS, National Park Service (NPS), and others.
- Volunteer ambassadors for giving tours, providing information, i.e., directions to sites, friendly reminders about parking rules, suggestions for dining, etc.
- Preserve otherwise vacant or endangered buildings through active re-use that may support local businesses or cultural and historical organizations (in addition to possible careful extension of historic districts).
- Consider exploring other tools in addition to expansion of Local Historic Districts, such as “[Neighborhood Conservation Districts](#)” or a hybrid “Neighborhood Historic/Conservation District” to focus on preservation and local history (such as the neighborhood around Emerson Field or neighborhoods near West Concord Village).
- Assess the feasibility and benefits of Agricultural Overlay Districts to promote farms and related businesses.
- Transportation solutions that address mobility within town for visitors (and potentially the needs of younger residents and some seniors who may need door to door service), which supports the need to reduce traffic congestion, and parking demand.
  - » Remote parking for visitors (paid by day, paid through a “visitor card” purchase) or sponsored shuttles, buses and trains from Boston and/or Cambridge on weekends will reduce the traffic impact of increased activity in town...putting people on the sidewalks (where they are more likely to stop and make a purchase or get a bite to eat) rather than cars in the streets.
  - » Parking card for residents to allow pre-pay without “feeding” meters.
  - » Electric or other fuel-efficient ride service that is subsidized for seniors, low-income residents, and children under 18 and fee-based for other residents, and available to residents and visitors who pay for remote parking or who buy a “visitor card” for the day.
  - » Locations for bus parking for visitors within walking distance to village centers.



The Go Providence website provides a one-stop source for many different audiences. (Source: GoProvidence.com)

- » Transportation routes would include popular visitor sites and connections to larger loops serving resident populations in targeted areas, as well as schools, historic sites, and neighboring towns (similar to the buses available in Lexington).
- » Bike infrastructure including inter- and intra-town facilities and connections for residents and visitors. Maps would indicate bike-friendly routes, bicycle parking, bicycle sharing, and direct bike traffic to arterials, local roadways, and bike paths.
- Enhance connections, pedestrian experience, and public spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike:
  - » A pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment that provides safe routes with clear signage, including more pedestrian and bicycle connections between destinations and the village centers (e.g., connecting Concord Museum with Concord Center).
  - » Traffic calming/pedestrian-friendly improvements at key intersections/pedestrian crossings and dedicated bicycle lanes on certain roads to connect to available trails.
  - » Bicycle rental/share facilities.
  - » Gathering spaces with electrical and water hookups for events.
  - » Easy access to rivers served by sidewalks.
  - » Enhancements in spaces along the Assabet River in West Concord (e.g. clear access points with benches, kids fishing piers, canoe launches or where feasible, fish observatories).
  - » Maps to public access points on rivers for kayak/canoe launches, including rental locations.
  - » Strengthen pedestrian connections between destinations and trails and open space.
- Standardize and coordinate signage, including historical interpretation where appropriate and “you are here” maps. Trails marked, including map of destinations by theme:
  - » Thoreau trail
  - » Literary trail
  - » Agricultural spots
  - » Art and performance
  - » Recreation
  - » “Greenway” or “Riverway”
- Consider a wayfinding system of mobile applications, maps, and signs that allow residents and visitors to easily find their way around town (which requires cell connectivity and IT infrastructure to support it).
- Public art program (e.g. art gallery “crawls”) that supports local, regional, and international installations – attracting a visitor market with an interest in purchasing art.
- Local restaurant/café “art on the walls” program showcasing local artistic talent
- Day-long immersion experiences that benefit local destinations and organizations by attracting visitors who want a deeper history or cultural exploration of the town and who are environmentally-minded (they may stay longer and spend more dollars in local establishments) .
- Restaurants may offer picnic packages for day hikers, bikers, or kayakers.
- Strengthen connections to adjacent towns’ bike trails. Opportunity is to link our towns together as the Pacific Coast bike trail does in Southern California.
- Combine dinner options with an active live entertainment scene (music, comedy) to attract residents from Boston area communities to spend the evening in Concord.

## Playing It Out...A Narrative

A family or young couple has gone online to look for an enjoyable day-trip in the Boston area that has educational and recreational components and allows for quality time together. While surfing the web, they find “A Day in Concord” website and are excited to see that they can pick one of many experiences to explore the town’s history, outdoor recreational options, as well as enjoy local shopping and dining selections.

They download a map for their experience, sign up for the mobile app tour, and plan their day. Their preparations include making tour and dining reservations because there is a special package combining the two shown on the site. They learn that Concord offers convenient parking sites served by ride services that will pick them up and drop them off at sites of interest and that a Concord Day Pass will give them discounts at local shops and restaurants.

Upon arrival by train, they stop in the visitor’s center for more information and to get daily updates. Then they summon a vehicle that takes them and other visitors to Concord Center or West Concord to begin their day. Over the course of the day, activities they might enjoy include: a museum visit, a themed tour through the town ending in the bookshop, shopping at local stores, a performance at The Umbrella or 51 Walden in the evening, a visit to an art gallery, a trail walk, a paddle on a river, or a visit to a working farm.

During their visit, they meet several Concord families who are out enjoying the day and learning more about their town’s cultural and natural history and converse with a local store employee who recommends a great hiking trail and the best place to get a picnic lunch. It’s a beautiful summer day, so these visitors buy a picnic lunch package from a local restaurant and head to outdoor seating areas along the river and in town. A menu of offerings on the website entice visitors to return to explore other ‘stories’ over time. A Concord “scavenger hunt” might be offered to allow young visitors to track their progress as they explore different parts of the town’s history over multiple visits.

*While the above may seem very visitor-centric, if carefully planned, strategies may also attract residents as well as visitors who are interested in quality, not quantity. The goal would be to provide in-depth experiences that are thought-provoking and allow visitors to integrate into town life for a day or longer, not simply go quickly through town, missing cultural and historical experiences as well shopping and dining opportunities.*



*A pre-packaged picnic to-go could be provided by Concord restaurants and food shops...encouraging visitors and residents to explore and helping manage demand for restaurant tables in the village commercial districts.*

*(Source: [www.ravinia.org/page/picnicbox](http://www.ravinia.org/page/picnicbox))*

## Some Ideas for Concord “Stories”

Day-long experiences that focus on individual aspects of Concord’s past and present attract specific demographics of visitors as well as offer unique experiences for residents. These stories would encourage visitors to stay longer than a day as well...to package these explorations for a weekend or mid-week visit. Stories that might be developed in visitor packages include:

- Literary history
- Transcendentalist writers and the landscape that inspired them.
- American Revolutionary War
- Historical landscapes and architecture
- “Day in the life of” tours connecting sites (buildings, open spaces, architecture, farms, restaurants, etc.)
- Art through time in Concord
- Glimpses of historic personalities: Thoreau, Emerson, Longfellow, Sanborn, Alcott, Hudner, Wheeler, Brewster, etc.
- Farms, food and drink: yesterday and today
- Other perspectives than just famous people: Industrial worker in West Concord, farmer, revolutionary war soldier, ghost tour, cemetery tours
- What can you do in ½ a day – arts, hiking, biking, dining, play, farming



(Source: [www.discoversaratoga.com](http://www.discoversaratoga.com))

## SARATOGA BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC TOURS

**Subject:** Saratoga Battlefield

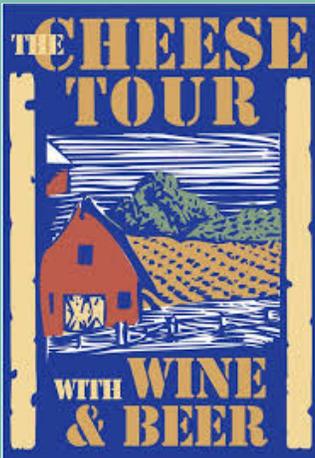
**Location:** Saratoga Springs, NY

**Length of Tour:** 2.5 to 4 hours

**Capacity:** 1 - 10 (additional charge for more)

**Cost:** \$80 (1-10) +\$8 f

**Itinerary:** Above the Hudson River, visitors will be lead on a guided caravan tour of two historic Revolutionary War battle sites – seen by some as the most important battles of the Revolution, and significant in the context of world history. Fought largely on rolling hills and pastoral fields, these two battles were a major turning point in the Revolution, signifying major victories and turning of the tides against the British. Visitors will learn about these battles in the context of the larger Revolutionary context, led by an Official Saratoga Battlefield Guide in full Revolutionary Uniform.



(Source: [www.thecheesetour.com](http://www.thecheesetour.com))

## THE CHEESE TOUR

**Subject:** Cheese! + Local Farms, Breweries, and Vineyards

**Location:** Washington County, NY

**Length of Tour:** 3 days, self-directed

**Capacity:** N/A

**Cost:** Free

**Itinerary:** On a self-directed journey through scenic Washington County, New York, dairy enthusiasts can tour various local artisanal cheesemakers, while getting an inside look at the facilities, animals, and products. After being provided digital and physical maps, tourgoers can structure their tour experience as they please. With open-ended programming including cheese tastings, book signings, and speaking events, participants can enjoy as much or as little of the tour as they like – freeing them up to spend time in the various communities of Washington County.



(Source: [www.libertyhillfarm.com](http://www.libertyhillfarm.com))

## LIBERTY HILL FARM & INN

**Subject:** Farm Life, Agriculture

**Location:** Rochester, VT

**Length of Tour:** Overnight

**Capacity:** 7 Inn rooms + 3-bedroom private “Harvest Home”

**Cost:** \$139-\$450 per night

**Itinerary:** Recognized by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources as a “Green Hotel,” Liberty Hill Farm and Inn is a fully operational farm and Cabot-affiliated creamery that plays host to an immersive bed and breakfast. After a farm-to-table breakfast, visitors can choose to remain on the farm and experience the daily routine or explore the nearby countryside full of historical and cultural sites, after which they can return to a hearty farmstead meal in the evening.



(Source: [www.thewarrenfarm.com](http://www.thewarrenfarm.com))

## WARREN FARM AND SUGARHOUSE TOUR

**Subject:** Maple Sugar/Syrup

**Location:** Brookfield, MA

**Length of Tour:** 90 minutes

**Capacity:** By group

**Cost:** \$12 - \$18 per person

**Itinerary:** Visitors learn about the history of maple sugar production, from its early roots in Native American culture, across colonial time periods, to the modern era today. Throughout the tour guests will see the various tools and methods used to refine tree sap into Maple Syrup. Along the way, visitors will see how syrup is prepared on-site, as well as have an opportunity to sample sap, syrup, and various maple products.

## Recommendations + Actions

The following is a list of actions that may result from systems approach dialogue with various Town departments and community members, that when coordinated, address multiple goals across categories to make the most efficient use of Town resources. Not all actions are meant to be performed by Town departments but include private businesses and entities, nonprofit organizations, and institutions. Funding sources must also be identified. These actions are listed using the conventional planning categories for illustrative purposes.

### Cultural + Historical Resources

- Identify, protect, and preserve the historical built environment, landscapes, working farms, and neighborhoods in a manner readily communicated to visitors:
  - » Focus on arts and art-related services as an attraction for visitors.
  - » Make connections to the same resources in surrounding towns.
- Develop strategies and materials to educate and draw in the public about what is historical and why, working to reach younger people, in particular.
- Provide the resources needed to have the Historical Commission become more involved with community education and outreach.
- Create a platform for citizens to mobilize around or participate in preservation activities outside of the formal town commissions, i.e., a citizen-run historical society. Recruit retirees who have a reservoir of experience, expertise, and interest in volunteer opportunities.
- Relevant preservation planning documents, such as the Historic Resources Master Plan and the West Concord Historic Resources Plan, are reviewed and referenced by Town Boards, Commissions, and Departments before making decisions that affect historic resources, including historic structures, cultural and historic landscapes and archeological sites.
- Consider discrete expansion of Local Historic Districts (such as adding Sudbury Road from the Library to Thoreau Street to the Main Street Historic District) or some version of design guidelines to help preserve

Concord's overall character while allowing necessary updates and renovations of buildings that may benefit local businesses (e.g., improved accessibility). The HDC, Historical Commission, along with other Town Departments, would need to work together to study the potentially affected properties.

- Create a single clearinghouse of information about Concord's historic resources by making information available on line.

### Economic Vitality

- Establish a public-private partnership charged to coordinate efforts to promote, manage, and improve Concord's commercial and cultural districts.
- Create new festivals and events (e.g., monthly arts market) to fill out a year-long calendar with one or two major festivals and several smaller events.
- Work with businesses, cultural organizations and business associations to establish a coordinated marketing and promotions approach, tools and packages.
- Articulate and accentuate the history and assets of Concord, including agriculture, indigenous cultures, and the historic rivers.
- Preserve the burial grounds and cemeteries in Concord by recording "stories" of people buried there and tie to the historical tours and interpretation in town. Use the cemeteries to tell stories of citizens (see Burning Coal theatre group in Raleigh, NC).



Food truck event.

(Source: [www.SOABoston.com](http://www.SOABoston.com))

- Create a Concord (or regional) Tourism Council to better inform and serve visitors and to link to Lexington and the NPS Minute Man National Historical Park.
- Think of the village centers as complementary and encourage different uses to help distinguish their identities.
- Encourage special events/festivals that include offering local affordable food and food trucks to create a more spontaneous and compelling visitor destination that is easy to navigate.
- Encourage cross-pollination for Concord's sustainable initiatives with cultural and historical resources and businesses.

### Housing

- Investigate zoning changes to encourage sustainable, mixed-use development within the village centers to support increased density/residents to provide a larger market for businesses and perhaps expanded hours for businesses.
- Streamline zoning such that village-center/dense housing is easier, not harder to build relative to "greenfield", distant housing.

### Land Use

- Investigate zoning changes to allow [energy efficient](#), higher density, more walkable and economically diverse neighborhoods including the commercial centers.
- Investigate zoning modifications to encourage sustainable, mixed-use development and re-development.
- Investigate Agricultural Overlay Districts to promote farming and related businesses.
- Investigate requiring "cooler" neighborhoods by increasing tree cover, white and green roofs, and green open space and green infrastructure to improve energy efficiency, livability, and preserve water resources.

### Mobility + Transportation

- Apply and adapt the *Complete Streets* policy to ensure the safety and mobility of all users of Concord's transportation system (pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers) while reflecting and maintaining the historical fabric.
- Create a visitor-oriented route map and assess visibility and accessibility of destinations to determine actions and improvements necessary – ADA, signage, pedestrian connections, bike facilities, parking:
  - » Link existing public transportation options.
  - » Support/provide zero-emission cross-town transportation to access cultural historical and civic assets and other destinations. Consider integrating with intra-town destinations for Concord residents in need of transportation options, including door-to-door service.
  - » Improve wayfinding signage and maps.
  - » Coordinate bike-share program throughout town to supplement existing bike rentals in village centers.
  - » Bike maps and road signage showing safe biking routes for visitors.
  - » Provide clear links to the rivers in Concord and improve signage to identify access points to them.
  - » Study traffic and parking for visitor needs and tour buses and at recreation destinations and trails.

- » Identify areas where sustainable remote parking can be created for visitor ride service and commuter rail stations.
- » Assess roads to determine standards (width, paving, curbing, shoulders) for maintaining the character of historic villages in the context of the Town's Complete Streets policy.
- » Assess roads that are appropriate for bicycle lanes and coordinate interdepartmentally to plan for future lane additions when roads are re-surfaced.
- » Reevaluate strategy for parking student cars at CCHS; possible off-peak use of lot for visitors.
- » Provide maps showing access points to regional bike and walking trails (BFRT, Bay State Trail, Assabet River Rail Trail, Minuteman Bike Path).

### Open Space + Natural Resources

- Strengthen communication between public and private entities focused on recreation.
- Provide public accessibility to trails and open space (when consistent with the intended purpose of the open space).
- Provide resources consistent with usage for the management of open space lands (i.e. if more people (residents and visitors) will be using/degrading them).
- Increase awareness of trail maps already available and consider how to make these more easily accessible, such as on-line.
- Include historical highlights and natural resource values on trail maps.
- Identify river access or pull-outs with parking areas on Town-owned lands for easier access.

### Public Facilities + Infrastructure

- Provide solar charging stations, seating areas with cell phone and camera recharging ports, and water fountains with bottle refill features in public places; incorporate locations into signage.
- Provide electric vehicle charging stations at all public parking areas.
- Provide public restrooms in each village center.
- Evaluate opportunities for each village center to be less dependent on fossil fuel.
- Evaluate cell coverage and IT needs to support Big Idea #1 services (e.g. reservation and ordering systems, online wayfinding, ride hailing/carpooling, etc.)
- Identify and implement programs that focus on cost-saving energy reductions and water use reductions for businesses and historical and cultural organizations.
- Assess the implications of locating all Town departments in one new public facility location in a net-zero building; and the potential adaptive re-use of remaining structures and property that will benefit and support the village centers.

## BIG IDEA 2:

*Create strategies that provide more housing choices consistent with town character and sustainability principles (both protecting, creating, and restoring natural ecosystems and reducing/eliminating emissions).*

### The Opportunity

A key concern for town residents is the need to provide greater [housing choices](#), as defined by housing types, such as small single-family homes, townhouses, accessory units, multi-family units, etc., as well as ownership and rental prices, ranging in appeal to residents of fixed, low, and moderate incomes to those who are down-sizing or just looking for lifestyle change. New, large, single-family homes on sizable parcels on the outskirts of town will not meet the needs of existing Concord residents whose housing needs have changed. Nor do smaller, affordable houses torn down and replaced with larger, more expensive houses meet their needs. Housing choice and the allocation of open space for a variety of needs also has collateral implications for public safety, social services, tax relief funds, sustainability, and the number of students in the schools, as well as support of historic preservation and town character.

Providing more affordable housing choices – in both price and size – and protecting Town Character were among the top concerns of stakeholders during the CLRP planning process. Housing choice in Concord is becoming more limited. The availability of moderately-priced and affordable homes is shrinking every day as demand for land increases, the supply dwindles, and smaller-sized homes are purchased for their land as tear-downs for redevelopment with much larger homes. Home development is also reducing the amount of open space and fragmenting the landscape. In addition, municipal land uses – including Town purchases of land to protect open space, conservation land, and agricultural land to provide recreation, build town and school facilities, protect water supplies, install solar farms, etc. – also reduces supply and unintentionally increases the price of remaining options. A systems based approach can seek to ensure that more affordable housing choices are not at odds with Town Character and other Town priorities.

Taking the opportunity to evaluate how to assure housing choice and provide affordable homes in conjunction with other concerns and goals will allow a long-range approach that assesses land suitability and sets specific goals for each priority with appropriate resources and policies. Alternative development approaches (both rental and ownership) have been succeeding in Concord in developments such as Riverwalk, Brookside Square, Black Birch, and Newbury Court. Unfortunately, with the exception of a few units preserved as affordable, most of these developments have seen unforeseen increases in prices due to their success and popularity. There is still demand for these new types of developments, and there is a parallel opportunity to create policies that support alternative housing types and further the Town’s commitment to sustainability and innovation. In particular, adding a range of housing choices including sustainable (passive or net-zero) young family/workforce housing, can set a model for all housing development in the town, and put Concord at the forefront of innovation in this area.



*Concord residents value the town’s open space and also wish to increase the availability of work force housing and provide a range of housing choices and prices.*

## What the Committee Heard from the Community

### Values and Needs:

- Concord's open spaces and natural resources are one of the most identifiable traits that make the town unique.
- There is a broad view of what constitutes a historic resource; it's not just buildings and collections of buildings, but the spaces between buildings, the traditional landscapes, agricultural lands, and archaeological resources.
- Housing that is smaller in size, on a smaller house lot and less expensive can accommodate seniors and retirees, empty nesters, young families, and Millennials.
- Housing that is near village centers with access to public transportation is desirable and also supports the Town's sustainability commitment.
- Housing that is priced as "workforce" housing, that is affordable to teachers, firefighters and police, health care workers, local business employees, farm workers, and others who have low to moderate incomes and cannot afford today's typical single-family homes in Concord.
- Housing for older residents and those who require more services should be physically and socially connected to neighborhoods and services.
- Location of housing is important to residents commuting to employment, accessibility for public safety and service providers, and overall sustainability – using existing infrastructure, reducing sprawl and preserving open areas remote from village centers.
- Transportation and traffic congestion need to be considered with any development.
- The Town is seeking non-carbon energy sources and would like to continue to build more solar panel installations/farms on available land.
- Land purchases by the Town should focus on providing land for recreation, conservation, and agricultural use.

### Concerns and Challenges:

- High land values.
- Development in existing/future flood-prone areas/ preserving the Town's resilience to floods.
- Maintaining a stable water supply.
- Significant increase in size and scale of new homes and manicured, irrigated lawns.
- Some residents would like to give priority to taking care of Concord residents first (in the provision of housing for the workforce, older residents, and young families).
- Concern that increasing the number of residents may change the town's character.
- More housing may strain capacity of schools, police, fire, sewer services.
- Given the recent investment in several new schools, planning for growth that will increase the size of the public schools' student bodies beyond the capacity of the schools is ill-advised.
- Developer speculation/tear downs has driven up prices of traditional starter homes – residents can't compete.
- Historic resources from the mid-20th century are particularly underappreciated and susceptible to tear-downs.
- How can building affordable, smaller housing be profitable?
- How can Concord reduce the carbon footprint of its housing stock?
- Limited land for development – redevelopment of most areas could change the character.
- Some residents believe that the most important and character-defining feature of Concord is the landscape and that land conservation should have priority over other uses; almost all the other goals, including creating new housing, can be in direct conflict with the preservation of the landscape.
- Historic preservation is at risk because of tear-downs, redevelopment, increased density, and change of character.
- Many competing interests – land conservation,

solar farms, parking lots, municipal buildings, farms, recreational open space, etc. with housing/economic development.

- Most residents love the landscape of Concord but don't realize what is required to maintain the health of that landscape (e.g., mowing open meadows, removing invasive species, managing forests) or that individuals can help with these efforts.
- Historic landscape protection involves farmland and open space as well as built features such as stone walls, dams, trails, old roads and orchards; these landscapes and features are constantly challenged by an economic environment that defines land's "highest and best" use as being development for human habitation.

### Potential Mutually Beneficial Systems-Based Solutions

- Set clear priorities for housing and land conservation based on suitability of land for each purpose (e.g., land outside service centers, with large undevelopable areas due to wet lands, topography, etc., should be in the conservation plan, and land that has few inherent barriers to development, that is connected physically to other neighborhoods and close to public services should be earmarked for housing, not conservation).
- Implement current policies and regulations already in place to thoughtfully assess how housing may be included on all purchases of land by the Town.
- Utilize deed restrictions/mutual housing association (affordability is locked in with future sales restricted to income-eligible buyers) to keep prices affordable and tie permanent affordability to zoning relief.



(Source: Zillow)

### CANTERBURY FARMS

**Location:** Amherst, MA

**Description:** Affordable, single-family homes were able to be pre-sold in this sub-development, which allowed the developer greater leverage in bank financing for the project. The project also preserved and restored an old farmhouse, as well as preserved contiguous open space and created trail connections from the subdivision into existing trail networks.



### MUIRHOUSE SQUARE

**Location:** Bo'ness, Scotland

**Description:** Courtyard grouping of small single-family homes overlooks a public garden used by nearby residents. Pedestrian use encouraged through a small shared green space, around which public seating is situated.

- Research and consider changes to zoning that allow smaller houses in denser development as opposed to large new houses on smaller properties in specific areas.
- Research alternative zoning measures (such as zoning of five-acre lots) in outlying areas to deter loss of open space and standard subdivision development.
- Encourage property owners with these large lots to add a Conservation Restriction with public access to permanently protect this open space/natural resource.
- Research and consider changes to zoning to protect 500-year floodplain or some other indicator to enhance resiliency and protect biodiversity. Assess the Wetlands Bylaw and determine if it should be updated based on changing conditions to protect natural resources and improve resiliency.
- Include BioMap 2, rare species mapping, and adjacencies to other protected resources when assessing whether land should be permanently protected.
- Consider that an accessory dwelling unit be tied to the principal dwelling or property and be automatically transferred from one owner to the next.
- Define the characteristics of new sustainable neighborhood clusters and connection to historical building patterns in Concord. Outline the requirements for creating a new “center” or “neighborhood.” The 2229 Main Street site (former StarMet) or areas near MCI Concord or Hanscom Air Force Base could be a demonstration project that includes live/work, open space/sustainability, innovation, along with:
  - » Housing choice
  - » Community amenities and services
  - » Inclusionary zoning (i.e., over 5 or 10 units);
  - » Meaningful open space and natural resources
  - » Some social services space
  - » Walkability
  - » Within ½ mile of transit or commercial center
  - » Sustainability guidelines
  - » Design guidelines
- Develop an agricultural landscape/farmer housing plan that preserves agricultural land and provides affordable accessory housing on agricultural lands for farmers. Identify lots adjacent to existing farms to be earmarked for redevelopment of small houses for starter homes and farm worker housing and provide incentives for same.
- Expand the tree warden position and align functions with Town’s resilience goals for natural resources.
- Consider Town purchase and issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to redevelop key sites that are under threat of subdivision with construction of larger homes to instead develop smaller house lots that have strict sustainability standards as a demonstration project for future development. These sites should include an open space component to permanently protect wildlife corridors and important natural habitats such as for rare and endangered species. Additionally, the development should be careful to not fragment the land further degrading it as a natural habitat and wildlife corridor.
- Consider active outreach and recruitment of developers (profit and nonprofit) specializing in sustainable development/open space and natural resource preservation projects that meet the goals of the Town.
- Research changing the senior means tested property tax abatement to include the Town’s first right of refusal to purchase these modest priced homes. This would help maintain lower cost housing stock throughout the town in established neighborhoods.

**New Model Open Space Design Bylaw/Ordinance**

- Based on Natural Resource Protection Zoning
- Accompanied by subdivision regulations & special permit regulations for density bonuses and shared driveways
- Will replace the current OSRD model in EEA’s Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit
- Addresses problems with application of Cluster, OSRD, Conservation Subdivision zoning

**Natural Resource Protection Zoning**  
A Model for Massachusetts (and elsewhere)

(Source: [www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit))

### Playing It Out...A Narrative

An older couple, having raised their children in Concord, wishes to stay in the community as they age. They find the perfect apartment in West Concord Village that is accessible, low-maintenance, in an intergenerational apartment building, and an easy walk to their favorite restaurant, market, bank, and coffee shop. A young professional just starting out wants a place of her own that she can afford on her entry-level salary. She finds an affordable compact condominium near the Thoreau Depot area within an easy walk to the commuter rail. A couple whose children have finished college wants to enable their older parents to move in with them, by creating an accessory apartment within their home.

People have housing choices with few impacts on undeveloped open spaces, allowing the preservation of natural resources and agricultural traditions of the town to continue. Houses at many sizes and price points are available, and people have choices to live within walking distance of village centers and have easy access to services. Residents in and near village centers support local businesses and help village centers flourish socially and economically, retaining their authenticity.

Land on a once-vulnerable parcel adjacent to an existing farm provides apartment living for farm workers in contextually-sensitive buildings while providing additional open space and agricultural land to enhance the adjacent existing working farm. Commercial farms in town are able to recruit summer college interns and workers by offering low-cost housing provided through the town-sponsored development.

There is a map of the relatively small number of sites that will work for housing and the Town commits to pursuing these more centrally located parcels for housing instead of land conservation. The Town has made a commitment to different policies and strategies for different types of housing:

- Accessory dwelling units (either in detached structures or within existing structures)
- Upper floor uses (with business uses on the first floor)
- [Infill development](#)
- Redevelopment of existing buildings
- ‘Brownfield’ development
- ‘Greenfield’ development



(Source: Washington Growers League)

### SAGE BLUFF

**Location:** Malaga, Washington

**Description:** Sage Bluff is a six-acre development built to provide migrant and seasonal workers with affordable and safe housing, composed of 41 housing units designed to house up to 270 people. Shared restroom, shower, and laundry facilities as well as secure parking located on-site. Security ensured by resident check-in booth and full-time on-site manager.

## Recommendations + Actions

### Cultural + Historic Resources

- Mapping of all known and predicted archaeological sites is an urgently needed first step toward producing a town-wide archaeological sensitivity map available to appropriate personnel and researchers and required for any project involving excavation. Further protection efforts must be adopted for selected sites, as needed (e.g., the Town conducted an archaeological investigation prior to opening new areas in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery because members of the Historical Commission were aware of a potential native American site).

### Economic Vitality

- Identify sites or districts in which combined live/work space is allowed.
- Explore a live/work program with large employers that provide financial incentives and aid for workers to buy or rent housing in Concord.
- Encourage new housing in and near commercial areas to support existing businesses.

### Housing

- Increase Town's financial resources available to purchase appropriate property for housing.
- Review the possibility of expanding the Chapter Land program (Massachusetts General Law program that provides a means to assess land at its current use - forest, agriculture, or open space/recreation - as opposed to its development value), including extending the Town's "right-of-first-refusal" to smaller parcels than currently provided.
- Amend the senior means-tested property tax exemption (passed in 2017) so that the Town has the right of first refusal when the property is sold. This would help preserve smaller homes.
- Encourage new models of sustainable small homes or [co-housing](#) opportunities, such as the Concord Riverwalk project.
- Link possible workforce housing to employers, such as Emerson Hospital but also including farmer and farm worker housing.
- Consider multi-family housing in A and AA zoning;

enable older Concord residents to age-in-neighborhood as an alternative to age-in-place. A starting point may be to review Residential Cluster Developments and Planned Residential Development bylaws.

- Consider expanding opportunities to provide detached accessory dwelling units in Residence B, A and AA districts (e.g., garage/barn conversions, 'granny flats', tiny houses).
- Increase density within a quarter mile of commuter rail stations and village centers by allowing two-family structures or townhouses; develop design guidelines to ensure these are attractive and appropriately spaced, that existing trees are maintained, and impermeable surfaces are not increased.
- Consider ways to link cluster housing/multi-family/age-in-neighborhood housing in A or AA zones to ride service to village centers and public transportation.
- Provide older residents with access to services, e.g. social and medical services.
- Encourage/Incentivize 1-10 unit 2nd and 3rd floor residential in business districts.
- Encourage re-development of 'brownfield' sites with affordable and sustainable (passive or net-zero) housing that is of smaller neighborhood-appropriate scale.
- Support the goals in 2015 Housing Production Plan.
- Consider new revenue streams for converting existing market rate homes to affordable, flexible, or workforce housing.
- Investigate possible linkage of demolition delay bylaw to Town (or nonprofit entity) purchase of property to renovate for re-use by seniors or as multiple units at more affordable costs.
- Create higher density, more walkable and economically diverse neighborhoods, but with street/neighborhood trees and nearby green spaces (including trail links).
- Investigate zoning changes and other incentives to encourage more mixed-use development within the village centers.
- Streamline zoning such that village-center/dense housing is easier, not harder to build relative to "greenfield," distant housing.
- Consider whether to allow two-family housing by right in residential districts near village centers.

- Investigate residential energy and building codes that incrementally but continually move toward increased efficiency and reduced emissions (consistent with 80% reduction by 2050).
- Investigate residential water use policies that incentivize natural landscape preservation and discourage lawn irrigation systems; investigate a ban on private wells for residential landscaping (farmers are precluded from using Town water to irrigate crops and often install wells for watering crops).

### Land Use

- Study realistic use of [Transferrable Development Rights](#) (TDR) in Concord. Work with other Town Committees and Departments to verify that there are acceptable areas for both the giving and receiving of additional development potential.
- Evaluate existing land that may be currently considered “open space” but is not; consider whether housing development on such land is the most appropriate use
- Town to assess its current land holdings and develop a strategic plan on how best to use this land (e.g. Keyes Road for residential development? Land abutting Rte 2 for Town services?).
- Encourage eligible property owners to enroll in Massachusetts Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B tax program whereby property owners receive discounted property taxes for land that is in forestry, open space or agricultural use in exchange for the Town being granted the “right of first refusal”.
- Study other potential development opportunity sites using updated criteria, similar to the developable areas map from 2005 CLRP.
- Identify existing housing parcels that may be ripe for tear-downs that are adjacent to farmland. Offer incentives for redevelopment as farm worker housing and starter housing or purchase parcels and issue RFPs with development requirements if these parcels are deemed suitable for controlled development.
- Identify existing “[green corridors](#)” and work with property owners to develop links to existing residential open space and larger natural areas utilizing Conservation Restrictions, which include public access, to permanently protect these corridors.

- Review how future precipitation projections due to climate change combined with historical data may affect Concord floodplain designations; regulate to 500-year floodplain or another indicator of flood resilience.
- Create a mechanism to look at Smart Growth and density as they affect long range planning in terms of how to balance a desire for density around the train stations with any corresponding strain on services in town such as schools, safety/emergency response, and human services.
- Expand use of [low-impact development](#) (LID) methods to reduce impacts of stormwater (e.g., increased volume or rate) by proposing a residential lot stormwater bylaw.

### Transportation + Mobility

- Require new development and/or redevelopment for housing to include traffic impact analysis relative to a historical baseline (10-20 year average, not just incremental relative to the most recent development), sustainable solutions for adequate parking and provision for ride service.
- Make provisions for connectivity (bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, ride service, etc.) between recreational areas, schools, train stations and village centers.
- Investigate ride services to provide transportation from residences to public transportation, to in-town and other destinations, and to medical centers in Boston area for non-drivers.
- Evaluate the potential use and cost of Autonomous Vehicles as ride services. Contact companies that are conducting low or no-cost beta testing in towns about partnerships and using Concord as a test site.



*Lexpress (Source: www.tourlexington.us)*

## Open Space + Natural Resources

- Continue to pursue purchase of farmland in the Chapter 61A program when it comes on the market.
- Explore strategies to extend landscape protection to areas of town where ecosystem services provided by the land holds significant value for preservation of “Town Character,” e.g. agricultural land, including fields, meadows, and orchards, where wetlands legislation does not apply; Consideration of BioMap2 areas, rare species mapping, adjacency to other protected lands should be given priority in this assessment.
- Inventory lands for open space preservation either to protect natural resources or for recreation using the criteria laid out in the OSRP Seven-year Action Map.
- Ensure farmland remains committed to agricultural uses by:
  - » Instituting support for affordable farmer/farm worker housing ideally located adjacent to the farm (see recommendation above)
  - » Retain Chapter 61A lands in agricultural production and encourage new enrollments
  - » Actively pursue the use of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions to protect agriculturally productive land through purchase of a permanent restriction or Overlay District zoning
  - » Supporting and allowing necessary farming infrastructure on the farmland
  - » Attracting new regular customers to ensure long-term financial viability and business growth (e.g., turning occasional visitors into regular patrons such as through community-supported agriculture programs or purchased farm ‘shares’, and increasing visibility to draw new customers).
- Explore opportunities for greater water efficiency within village centers and to protect/preserve outlying neighborhoods including:
  - » Promote changes to state law that would allow implementing use of gray water systems.
  - » Adopt a [‘Net Blue’](#) program.
  - » Consider policies to improve efficient water usage in new development.
  - » Look at mechanisms to reduce lawns that require irrigation and encourage alternative landscape opportunities.

## Public Facilities + Infrastructure

- Focus denser development in areas already served by existing services (water, sewer, electric). Use of existing infrastructure will need to be fully coordinated with available resource supply and wastewater treatment capacity.
- If creation of a new “center” is found to be viable solution, consider implementing a decentralized approach to wastewater management and district heating and integrate sustainable principles such as stormwater re-use and renewable energy, if applicable.
- Identify ways to fully evaluate impacts on existing public services (police, fire, schools) for all new development strategies and proposals.
- Adopt sustainable business models for both electric and water utilities that provide a greater range of individual consumer choices in line with environmental sustainability goals.

## BIG IDEA 3:

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*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.*

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### The Opportunity

Concord residents are committed to preserving the character and rural/agricultural nature of the town and at the same time embracing innovation regarding sustainability. Current transportation challenges offer an opportunity to address key priorities in the Envision Concord Plan by using a systems-based approach linking interest areas and disciplines.

There is a strong need to increase the physical and social connectivity of isolated residents, including seniors, and those living in denser housing areas outside of easy walking distance (½ mile) of the village centers. There is also a need to expand non-automobile options for students and teens to get around town to reduce congestion and carbon emissions while increasing their connection to the town's cultural, recreational, and commercial resources. The decentralization of residents, the need to support the village centers to retain independent businesses, and the desire to provide environmentally sustainable low-carbon mobility choices for residents and visitors all create opportunities to consider transportation across multiple needs and strategies. Innovative mobility solutions may also address transportation needs of visitors to Concord and the increased congestion and parking demand resulting from visitors and through-town commuter traffic. Town-owned vehicles could be multi-purpose serving different needs and different segments of the population at different times (e.g. an accessible van transporting commuters from the train station early and late in the day could also provide door-to-door transportation to seniors in the middle of the day.)

### What the Committee Heard from the Community

Values and Needs:

- The larger numbers of older residents will need increased mobility options and door-to-door pick-ups around town and to Boston medical centers.
- Mobility options are needed for teenagers and middle schoolers and others not served by private vehicle ownership.
- The disabled need better mobility options in town.
- Employers need transportation for workers who do not live in Concord.
- The community wants more economic diversity, but that population tends to use transportation solutions beyond private vehicle ownership.
- First- and last-mile transportation solutions are needed for commuters wanting to use public transportation (e.g., commuter rail stations and bus stop).
- More parking at commuter rail stations.
- More parking at recreation destinations, balanced with capacity of these areas.
- More sidewalks where possible to create more pedestrian friendly routes.
- Bike lanes and bicycle facilities.

Concerns and Challenges:

- High schoolers won't take the bus because it's not cool. Need to motivate students to take the bus (e.g., using the 'green' bus).
- More visitors to town will make parking and congestion problem worse.
- Perception that historical character has limited sidewalk construction because it is not in keeping with rural character of the town...must continue to balance character with connectedness and safety.
- Challenge of adding sidewalks or other Complete Street design elements due to existing roadway widths, topography and trees.
- Waze and other traffic apps are perceived to have increased the level of cut-through commuter traffic on local Concord streets, compounding the level of traffic congestion.
- Location of existing denser housing outside the centers and near the town borders creates challenges for public safety, connectedness, and the transportation needs of those residents living there.
- There are major challenges regarding peak congestion and parking availability with student transportation and private cars at the high school; simply creating more parking is in contradiction to the sustainability principles of the Town.
- Many older residents will be unable to walk, wait, or carry packages to shuttle stops and will need door to door ride services
- Carbon footprint of current transportation modes is high.

Potential Mutually Beneficial Systems-Based Solutions

- Increase dialogue and cooperation between Boards, Commissions, Committees and Town departments to ensure historic preservation characteristics including landscapes and trees are considered before making physical and infrastructure improvements.
- Understand the relationship between dependence on automobiles and carbon emissions from transportation systems and propose a new blend of transportation services to address community needs in a more sustainable manner.
- Work with developers to arrange service to and from commuter rail stations and larger housing developments or densely developed neighborhoods, large employment areas, and satellite parking lots (i.e. high-volume routes that can support investment costs).
- Collaborate with major visitor destinations such as Minute Man National Historical Park regarding siting remote parking at any of these locations and providing access to transportation to other town sites and commercial centers.
- Consider existing regional transportation districts and assure that Concord is connected to these districts in a manner that serves its needs (e.g., participation in the CrossTown Connect Transportation Management Association).
- Provide connections between parking, train stations, and intra-town infrastructure for residents and those visitors who want to take the train or drive to Concord and then walk and bike in town.



(Source: www.charmcitycirculator.com)

CHARM CITY CIRCULATOR

Location: Baltimore, MD

Description: The first fleet of hybrid Shuttles in the United States services Baltimore residents and visitors along 4 routes. Service is free, with shuttles arriving every 10-15 minutes at designated stops.

Fleet: 30 hybrid shuttles

Schedule: M-Th 7:00AM-8:00PM; F 7:00AM-12:00AM; Sat 9:00AM-12:00AM; Sun 9:00AM-8:00PM

Cost/Fare: Free

- Make it easier and safer for people to walk or bicycle to reduce traffic within a mile of village centers through provision of better wayfinding and signage, traffic calming, improved crosswalks, etc.
- Explore grants or subsidies for transportation services (such as federal bonds to upgrade fleet to electric vehicles) to be available to the Town or perhaps employers or some combination of public, nonprofit and private entities. Study funding mechanism for Lexington's bus service, Lexpress, and similar models.
- Collaborate with existing employers to identify ways to cost-share or utilize their existing employee shuttles to provide greater overall benefit across Concord and consider ways to expand use of medical-related shuttles for employees and clients at Emerson Hospital, Baker Avenue, medical offices, and retirement facilities.
- Explore ways in which town vans and other vehicles can also be utilized to provide door-to-door transportation to seniors.
- Look for links to sustainability grants and possible qualified energy conservation bonds.
- Create educational messages and infographics about benefits of using shared ride services, focusing on cost of car ownership and maintenance versus cost of shared services
- Purchase small contiguous lots for parking of shared-use vehicles.
- Consider public-private partnerships for acquisition of land around Hanscom Air Force Base, MCI Concord, or the 2229 Main Street/former StarMet site as another innovative, sustainable center of live, work, and play, pending possible reuse of available sites (a larger version of what this might be is Gateway Hills in Nashua, NH).
- Include transportation accessibility and provision of alternative transportation options as additional criteria for potential development sites (i.e. subdivisions, PRDs, cluster development, etc.).
- Consider changing traffic patterns to address cut-through traffic caused by traffic and wayfinding apps. Ensure that any proposed change in traffic patterns are studied and coordinated with adjacent neighborhoods and towns to prevent unanticipated impacts.
- Strengthen local pedestrian connections outside of the core village centers.
- School transportation:
  - » Study commuting habits and connections to afterschool programs to identify possible ride share options/shuttle routes with high demand.
  - » Develop community campaign or recognition for students not driving to school.
  - » Encourage carpooling/bus use through incentives (off-campus privileges, designate parking for HOV's, etc.).

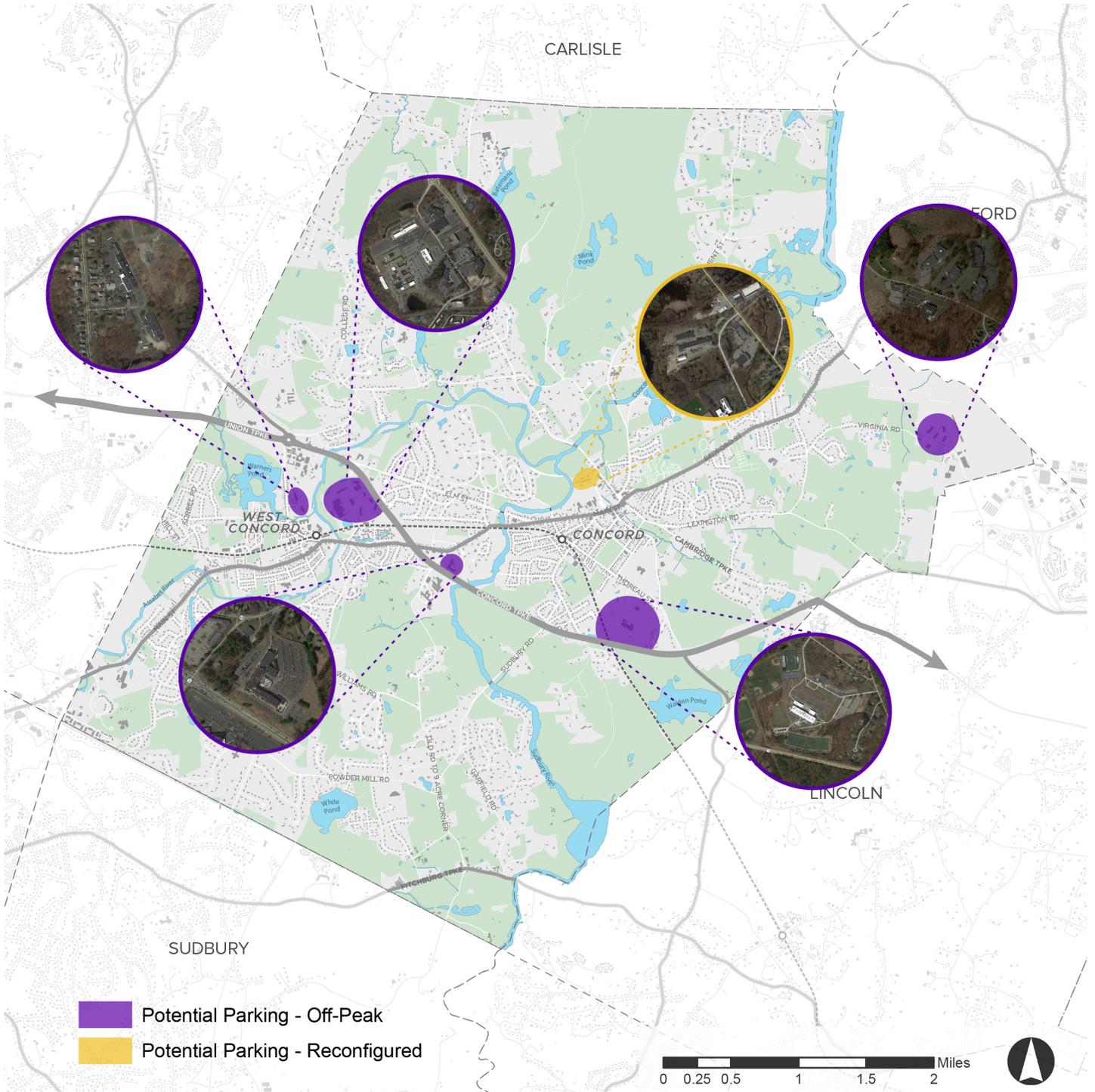


Figure 12. Potential Shared Parking Opportunities (Off-Peak and Weekends)

## Playing It Out...A Narrative

The Town sets transportation policy using the sustainability principles as a guide and this creates changes in priorities. Bus transportation, bicycle use, and carpooling are incentivized at the schools. School buses, equipped with wi-fi, are the mode of choice for high school students as student parking is limited at the school. Other students choose to carpool as three or more students in a car garner a coveted parking spot on campus (for a fee). After school, a shuttle bus (or shared ride service) serves the campus and connects to major destinations in town that are determined each year by survey of the local student/family population. Bicycle facilities are expanded and bike lanes connect the schools to the village centers and a major public information campaign informs residents about bike safety and goals of the program. Safe bicycle crossings of Route 2 (grade separated) are initiated. Enhanced bicycle facilities are provided in the village centers and at major destinations in a design and in locations that are sensitive to the historical character of the town.

Subsidized door-to-door transportation services are available throughout town with ride prices adjusted to resident need. Scheduled bus or van routes are available to bring people between common destinations (train stations, Commuter bus stops, business centers, hospitals, Schools, recreation sites, etc.). Levels of service, types of service, and pricing schemes would be tested and adjusted. Primary factors in judging and adjusting the service would be economic, sustainability, environmental sustainability, traffic impact, parking impact, and feedback from riders and sponsors.

For those same families, first and last mile commuter rail connections are improved through newly identified on-street bike routes and fully accessible sidewalks with crosswalk signage for improved safety. Parents can use the school bus with their children, and get off at the commuter rail station or in village centers.

## Recommendations + Actions

### Cultural + Historical Resources

- Improve dialogue and cooperation between Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Town departments to ensure the inclusion of the historic preservation criterion in decision making regarding transportation issues. Create a forum for this cross-pollination of historically-oriented issues, such as the former monthly “Historic Issues Coffees” that provided an opportunity for this dialogue.
- Review the current Road Policy (“in reconstruction or construction of roads, the Town of Concord seeks to maintain those aspects of the existing environment which enhance the historical, scenic and agricultural properties of the roadway consistent with public safety, and, in addition to consider alternative transportation accommodation(s) on the Town’s road consistent with this policy and public safety”) to determine expansion and/or clarification of Town goals as they relate to roadway improvements.
- Collaborate with cultural resources and key destinations such as the Minute Man National Historical Park to identify potential remote parking areas for visitors and joint marketing campaigns.

### Economic Vitality

- Incentivize large employers and commercial property owners to add bicycle parking facilities to their properties and promote use of alternative transportation options for their employees and customers.
- The Town and employers should explore supplemental transportation services, routes and schedules that help employers more readily attract and hire needed workers.
- Sponsor an ideas/business competition for alternative transportation solutions/businesses.
- During peak visitor times, ensure either shuttle service to farms or encourage a “single-stop” “Taste of Concord” Farm Market in or near a commercial center to ensure visitors have access to local produce and are supporting Concord farms.

## Housing

- Identify sites for development of diverse housing options adjacent to village centers to support walkability wherever possible thereby reducing the need for parking and reducing growth of traffic.
- Fund the preservation, modernization, and redevelopment of existing CHA scattered site low-income rental housing units for seniors and families with particular attention to developments that would decrease the demand for parking in the town centers and reduce the volume of personal vehicle traffic.

## Land Use

- Give higher priority for land redevelopment/development on sites that are within ½ mile of the village centers and commuter rail stations over other potential future uses for these sites.
- Reduce parking requirements for businesses and new development in Concord Center, West Concord, and other sites that implement alternative transportation options that reduce employee and customer auto use.
- Promote full service, amenity-rich village centers for “one stop shopping.”

## Transportation + Mobility

- Review and adapt the Complete Streets policy to help ensure consideration of the safety and mobility of all users of Concord’s transportation system (pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers) taking into consideration challenges in topography, physical constraints, and historical context.
- Maintain scale of roadways consistent with public safety while considering and accommodating historical, scenic, natural and agricultural character and the incorporation of the Complete Streets program.
- Consider utilizing 2229 Main Street as a transportation hub and/or truck/bus maintenance facility, and/or remote parking, and/or new combined Town public facilities.
- Provide incentives for more efficient vehicles and improved infrastructure for electric cars.
- Provide cross-town transportation and links to public transit and recreation facilities.
- Explore efficient ways to also utilize town shuttle vans and other shared-ride vehicles to provide door-to-door transportation for seniors.

- Provide transportation links to regional cultural assets (such as Walden Pond State Reservation or the Minute Man National Historical Park).
- Develop a multi-modal and efficient transportation infrastructure.
- Optimize parking requirements through shared parking arrangements, by calculating parking requirements using a shared parking credit schedule, or by providing alternative transportation services or infrastructure.
- Provide a coordinated bike share program at the Visitor Center or increased marketing of existing rental programs.
- Consider limiting visitor parking during peak commercial hours such as weekends and holidays to encourage visitor use of remote parking areas and ride services.
- Install a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Assabet River to connect Baker Avenue businesses with West Concord Village.
- Explore opportunities to reduce or manage tour bus and truck traffic in town.
- Explore long-term potential of rail-with-trail multi-use path connecting West Concord Depot and Concord Depot, that also links to new Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (and beyond, such as linkage to the Assabet River Rail Trail in South Acton and the Mass Central Rail Trail in Wayland and Sudbury).
- Recruit Ride-Share and Automated Vehicle Companies to make pitches for first/last mile solutions for Concord.

## Open Space + Natural Resources

- Provide bicycle parking at parks and trailheads.
- Explore opportunities to connect existing trails (both Town and privately owned) to improve walkability in Town while preserving the historical landscape and introduce residents and visitors to Concord’s open spaces as well as connecting river access to bike access and parking.

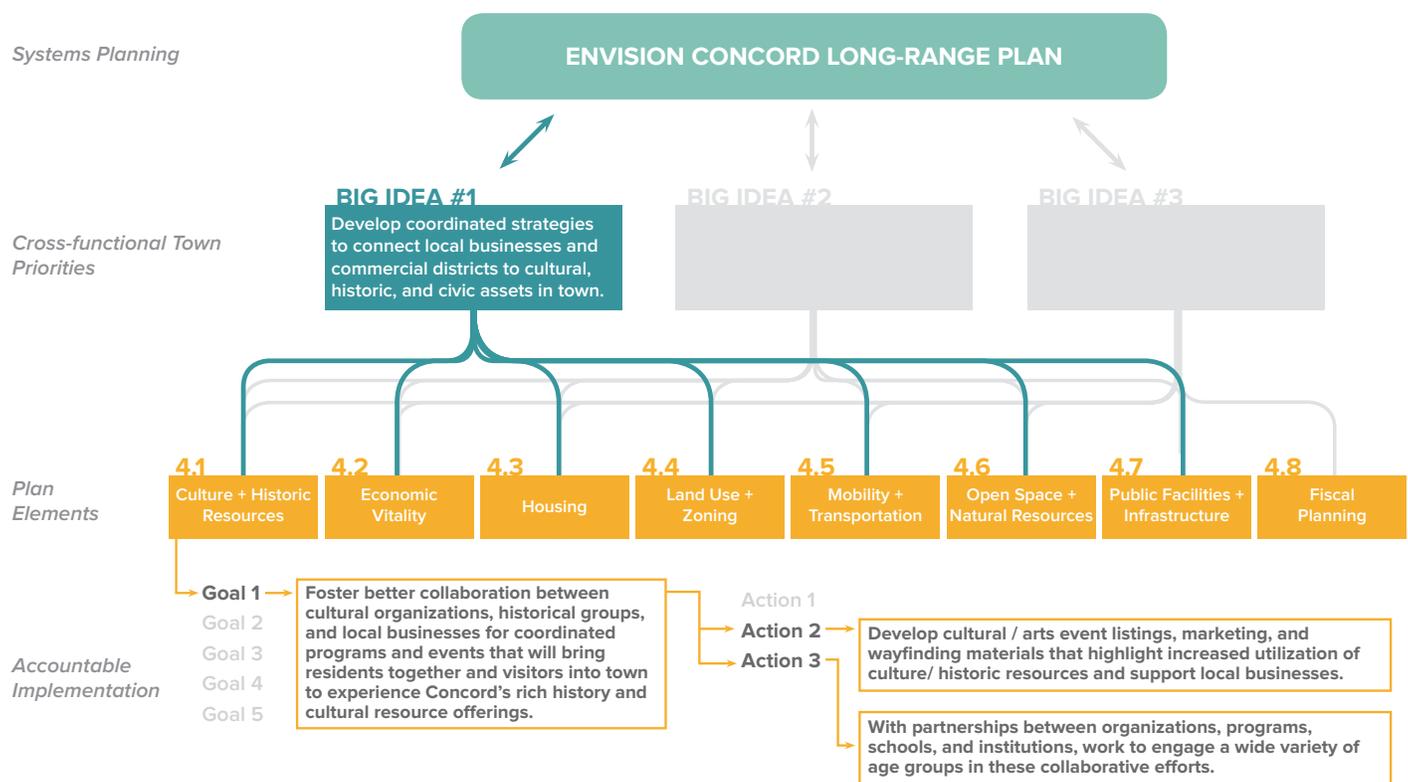
## Public Facilities + Infrastructure

- Consolidate and optimize facilities for all Town departments to remedy space constraints in a net zero facility. Consider reuse of former facilities to increase housing choices.

## MAKING USE OF THE ENTIRE PLAN

The three big ideas presented above illustrate how priorities identified during the planning process can be packaged and viewed across multiple disciplines, resources, and interests to achieve multiple benefits. Each of these big ideas draws from every element of this long-range plan and will require many different department heads, advocates, commission members, and others to sit down, roll up their sleeves, and collaborate, negotiate, and innovate to achieve

the best possible outcomes. The diagram below illustrates how Big Idea #1 plays out for one single action. In fact there are multiple actions and each creates exciting possibilities for solving tough problems and identifying resources to make things happen. The systems approach embraced by this plan makes good use of limited resources to achieve ambitious goals.



**Figure 13.** The diagram above illustrates the process by which two actions are identified to achieve the goals of Big Idea #1. In reality, each idea has multiple goals and with many actions across all of the plan elements...making good use of collaborative problem solving and innovative thinking to achieve exciting results for the town.