



## Town of Concord

# Weekly Operations Report

2024 Volume 28/August 2nd, 2024

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### General Administration

#### Legislative Update - Budget Highlights

1. The \$57.78 Billion state budget was signed into law on July 29<sup>th</sup>, almost a month after the start of the FY25 fiscal year.
  2. Local Aid
    1. The state budget included a 3% increase in unrestricted general government "local" aid (our favorite term UGGA) for a total of \$1.3 Billion. For Concord, the 3% increase will result in \$1.428 Million in local aid, up from \$1.386 Million from last fiscal year. Concord will also receive almost \$900K in PILOT revenue for state-owned land.
    2. Included in the FY25 state budget is Chapter 70 education aid funding for Concord Public Schools in the amount of \$4.240 Million, compared to \$4.038 Million from last year.
  3. MCI
    1. [Section 193](#) of the "outside" section of the budget describes the MCI Disposition Process whereby the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) must issue a report to the Legislature on the proposed disposition of Concord MCI Prison. DCAMM must hold its first public hearing within 45 days of the bill going into effect.
    2. Provides \$475,000 funding to the Town of Concord for MCI planning. <https://budget.digital.mass.gov/summary/fy25/enacted/exec-economic-development/massachusetts-marketing-partnership/70081116/>
  4. Other important sections:
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1. Expands home equity protections for home-owners delinquent on their property taxes:
    - i. It reduces the interest rate in tax title from 16% to 8%. Currently, as of July 24, 2024, the Town's base tax of property tax owed is \$339,000. A 16% current late payment rate would yield \$54,240 in additional payments to the Town and a proposed rate of 8% would yield \$27,120, or a reduction of about \$27,120.
    - ii. It delays the time that a municipality can file a foreclosure complaint from 6 months after a taking to 12 months.
    - iii. It requires the municipality to post the publication notice on all residential properties prior to the taking.
    - iv. It expands the Tyler vs. Hennepin US Supreme Court decision and requires that any "excess" revenue from the sale of a home taken by tax title be made available not just to the former owner but to any heirs of the former owner, and to any lienholders, and those lienholders' heirs or successors.
  2. This budget bill provides free community college for Massachusetts residents 25 years old and older.
  3. Continuing off the Governor's FY24 budget, the FY25 budget includes funding to make universal free school meals plan permanent.
  4. The FY25 state budget includes a spending plan for an anticipated revenue in FY25 of \$1.3 Billion in surtax on personal incomes over \$1 Million, also known as the Fair Share Amendment ("FSA"). FSA revenues must only fund education and transportation programs. FSA revenue during FY24 exceeded expectations and partially offset a reduction in actual vs projected FY24 revenues.

### **Grant Award - Shared Streets & Spaces Program**

In a four-town collaboration, the Towns of Acton, Concord, Lincoln, and Maynard were awarded \$187,450.00 to create and fund three years of a regional bike share program. Following the success of a smaller-scale, one season, pilot



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bike share program between Acton and Concord, the Minuteman Regional Bike Share program will establish a broad, accessible network of bike infrastructure across the region. The program will consist of 7 stations with a total of 42 bikes including 7 adaptive bikes to be used by renters as recreation, to improve access to services and amenities, and to commute to and from one of the 4 rail stations along the bike share's route.

### **Grant Award - Mass Office of Travel and Tourism**

A successful grant proposal to the Mass Office of Travel and Tourism has yielded a \$27,000 award for the installation of age-friendly benches that will support pedestrian movement from Thoreau Depot at Concord Center to the North Bridge in preparation for the 250th celebration. Congratulations to Mimi Graney, Elizabeth Hughes, Ann Clifford and Beth Williams for their work on this proposal.

### **Affordable Housing Inventory**

The Concord Housing Authority added its 919th unit to the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) bringing Concord's inventory to 12.8%. This represents the percentage of housing counted as "affordable" by the State. Find the complete list on the Regional Housing Services Office site at [Housing Inventory - Concord | Regional Housing Services Office \(rhsousing.org\)](https://rhsousing.org)

## **Police Department**

### **Calls for Service**

Thursday, July 25 - Wednesday, July 31, 2024

- Log items: **603**
- Traffic enforcement: **56**
- Motor vehicle stops: **73**
- Motor vehicle crashes and/or paper exchanges: **12**
- Arrests: **2**

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The Concord Police Department youth academy graduated after a very successful week on July 26th in which the students were exposed to the many facets of public safety. Sergeant Manchuso and her staff did a great job at providing a positive experience for the class.

On July 28th, Officers assisted the Gerow Sunset at Gerow park on Commonwealth Ave and with the paving of Walden Street which enabled the contractor to finish the project in one day.

Captain Goldman and Lieutenant Landers, along with members from the Fire Department and surrounding agencies, attended a training class sponsored by MEMA on developing incident event plans on July 31st.

## Town Engineer

### Road Construction

- **Pine St and Central St** – The paving contractor, Lazaro Paving has completed the road paving of Pine St and Central St and long line striping as of Friday (8/2). Miscellaneous work still remains including painting the crosswalks and stop bars, clean up of construction debris, and loaming and seeding.
- **Walden St** – Paving from Route 2 to Heywood St was completed on Saturday (7/27). Paving on Saturday was determined to have the least impact on traffic due to the reduced commuter traffic on the weekends. Additional coordination was needed between CPW, Concord Police and Fire Departments, and the paving



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contractor, Lazaro Paving, due to the public safety building being located within the limits of work and having limited access from their site at times. The remaining work to be completed is striping of the crosswalks, cleaning up of construction debris, and loam and seeding.

- **Highland St** – Reconstruction of Highland St started a few weeks ago but has been interrupted by the discovery of drainage blockages along the street. CPW Engineering continued its investigation into the drainage issues using a company to clean and video the drainage pipes as well as to cut tree roots that grew into the pipes and were impeding the flow of water. One section of pipe is impassable and needs to be excavated and replaced before proceeding with the street reconstruction.
- **Main St/Walden St Intersection** – Work continued on the installation of drainage and curbing for the creation of curbed bump-outs at the intersection. The street light pole in front of Footstock was relocated by CMLP. The project is scheduled to go back to the HDC to review pedestrian bollard lighting which is a safety feature for projects of this nature in an urban setting.

## **Sustainability**


### Fossil Fuel Free Building Demonstration Program (FFFBDP) amendments now effective

The Town was notified by the State Attorney General's Office on July 26, 2024 that approval was granted for amendments to Concord's participation in the DOER Fossil Fuel Free Building Demonstration Program (FFFBDP). The FFFBDP is a pilot program that allows ten municipalities in Massachusetts to prohibit the use of fossil fuel infrastructure in new residential and commercial construction and major renovations. The amendments were passed locally as Article 32 of the Consent Agenda at the 2024 Annual Town meeting. Although Concord's participation in the program was already approved, the new amendments include two key additions that align Concord more closely with other participating towns and increase the impact of the program: 1) the inclusion of major renovations, and 2) the inclusion of affordable housing. The amendments to the bylaw became effective in Concord on July 30, 2024.

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## Gas-powered, hand-held leaf blower ban now in effect

A ban on the use of gas-powered, hand-held leaf blowers on properties 1.5 acres or less is now in effect in Concord. The ban was approved at 2023 Town Meeting and took effect on June 1, 2024 as an amendment to the [Construction Noise Bylaw](#), and it applies to both homeowners and commercial landscapers. The ban does include two seasonal windows that allow for the use of gas-powered, hand-held leaf blowers to accommodate for periods of high landscaping activity – March 15-May 31, and Sep 15-Dec 30. A hand-held leaf blower is defined as any fully portable blower device designed for landscaping with a handheld nozzle, including backpack blowers. Any assistance from Town Departments with communicating information about the ban to residents and commercial landscapers is appreciated – questions and requests for an informational flyer can be directed to Eric Simms, Sustainability Director.



### Town of Concord


Prohibition on  
Gas Powered Leaf Blowers  
Effective June 1, 2024

The use of **gas-powered hand-held leaf blowers** on residential property of **less than 1.5 acres** in size is **PROHIBITED AT ALL TIMES**, except for March 15 – May 31 and September 15 – December 30.

Other conditions of the ban don't go into effect until 2028 and 2030, but the above condition is effective June 1, 2024.

#### Questions?

Contact Eric Simms  
Sustainability Director  
esimms@concordma.gov



## **Council on Aging**

### **Outreach**

The Council on Aging Social Services and Outreach team offers a wide range of services to meet the needs of residents aged 60 and above. Outreach Coordinators Valerie Bertsch and Amanda Wootan, along with Social Services Supervisor Nicole Saia, provide support, advice, assessments, consultations, and referrals to seniors and their support networks. In Fiscal Year 2023, the team addressed various types of assistance and topics, reflecting the evolving needs of the community:

