

**Town of Concord Land Use Working Group (LUWG)
Municipal Consolidation Subcommittee (MCS)
Report:**

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction. The Select Board has tasked the Land Use Working Group (LUWG) to evaluate parcels of land that are or may become available to the Town and to identify current town needs and recommend best matches between needs and available parcels. This report contains the initial (Phase 1) findings and recommendations of the LUWG's Municipal Consolidation Sub-group (MSG). It summarizes the evaluation criteria, data sources, and recommendations related to the opportunities to consolidate Concord's current municipal and school offices into a single location. This analysis does not include, but is related to, those of the other two Sub-groups focusing on Public Safety and Public Works.

Town administrative offices are now spread across 18 municipal buildings and a school administration building. As a result, information is not shared optimally and collaboration among staff is impeded. Furthermore, residents must navigate and travel across multiple locations to obtain in-person services.

The rationale for our analysis focused on the need to:

- Recognize economies of scale that reduce costs and optimize the value of available land
- Evaluate the options of repurposing and realizing potential revenues from existing Town buildings
- Improve communication, coordination, and collaboration among Town Departments and Town staff
- Allow for improved efficiency and uncover ways to consolidate overhead functions in the future
- Provide fewer touch points for residents and as a result to improve services

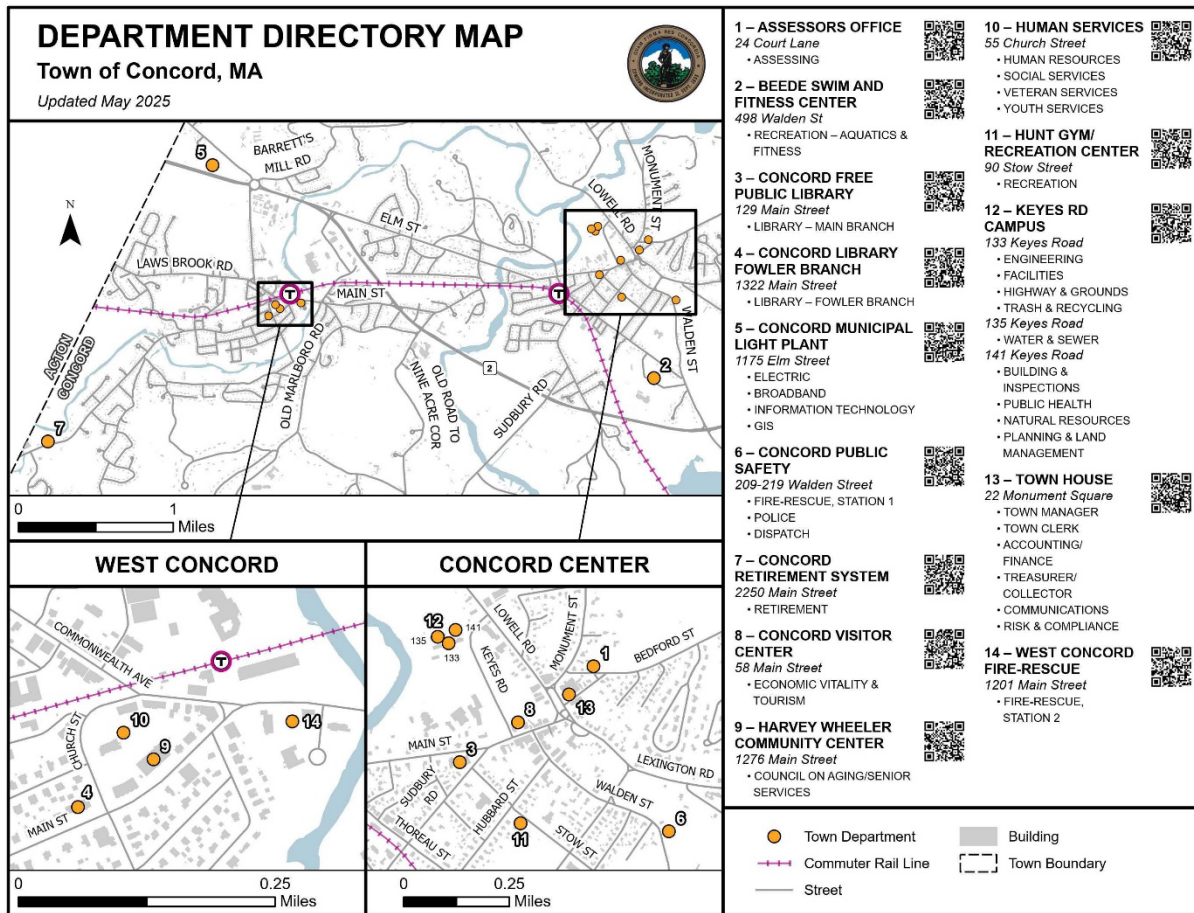
Consolidation Location Options. Several parcels of land that are or may become available to the Town as municipal offices' consolidation target sites include:

- Peabody School (existing building or newly constructed building on land)
- Ripley School (existing building or newly constructed building on land)
- Existing office building(s) (purchase and renovation)

Consolidation Candidates. The subgroup evaluated current municipal offices and program locations (see map below) and through discussions with the Town Manager and School Committee representatives, narrowed the candidates to:

- Existing Town buildings to be totally or partially vacated:
 - Total: (Assessors Office @ 24 Court Lane (#1); 55 Church Street (#10); Harvey Wheeler Community Center (#9); 37 Knox Trail), Town House (#13); 141 Keyes Road (#12); plus the Ripley School campus.
- Existing programs to be moved and co-located with municipal staff (Council on Aging and Concord Carousel Pre-School both @Harvey Wheeler; CPS Integrated School Classrooms @ Ripley School Building),

Figure E1



Data Acquisition and Preliminary Analysis. A large amount of information and data related to both the consolidation candidate locations/buildings and relocation candidates were collected from existing Town reports, Town and Department Managers, site tours of current municipal sites and conversations with staff, and inputs from knowledgeable outside sources.

Based on extensive sub-group discussion, discussions with staff, feasibility discussions, and analysis of needs, an overall assessment was conducted including:

- Numbers of Town and School administrative staff (ca. 125) to potentially be relocated
- Functions to remain at the Town House (archives and Clerk’s Office)
- Existing programs to be moved and co-located with municipal staff (Council on Aging, Concord Carousel Pre-School; CPS Integrated School Classrooms),
- Existing Town buildings to be vacated (Assessors Office @ 24 Court Lane; 55 Church Street; Harvey Wheeler Community Center; 141 Keyes Road; Ripley School; 37 Knox Trail)

Short list of Options. Based on our initial analysis of all information, five (5) options were selected for detailed financial analysis regarding consolidation of Town staff, School Administration staff and associated programs (pre-school classrooms; senior center) currently at those locations¹:

- Option 1: Status Quo – No consolidation
 - Sell: Peabody property for housing
- Option 2: Renovated Peabody School Building. Consolidate Staff and Programs into Renovated Peabody School Building
 - Sell: Ripley, 141 Keyes Road; 55 Church Street; Harvey Wheeler – for housing
- Option 3: New Building Peabody Site. Consolidate into Newly Constructed Building at Peabody Site
 - Sell: Ripley, 141 Keyes Road; 55 Church Street; Harvey Wheeler – for housing
- Option 4: New Building @ Ripley Site. Consolidate into Newly Constructed Building at Ripley Site
 - Sell: Peabody, 141 Keyes Road; 55 Church Street; Harvey Wheeler – for housing
- Option 5: Purchase and Renovate Existing Office Building. Consolidate into existing office building
 - Sell: Peabody, Ripley, 141 Keyes Road; 55 Church Street; Harvey Wheeler – for housing

Detailed Evaluation of Short-Listed Options. Each of the five (5) options received a rigorous analysis based on existing information. This analysis included both financial analysis and the application of non-financial criteria.

The financial analysis included operational costs of Town Buildings; cost of maintenance and anticipated capital expenses, costs of relocation; costs of renovations; costs of new construction; market value (i.e., potential revenues) of vacated properties under different residential zoning assumptions. A discounted cash flow model described in Section 8 was created to capture quantified benefits and costs. The model estimates future cash inflows and outflows under different residential zoning scenarios. Results are summarized in Table E1.

¹ See Appendix for staff locations, staff numbers, and programs to be consolidated

Table E1

Summary	Outflow	Inflow	Net
Status Quo costs over 10 years with no consolidation & Sell Peabody with AA Zoning	\$ (28,676,468)	\$ 3,714,905	\$ (24,961,563)
Status Quo costs over 10 years with no consolidation & Sell Peabody with B Zoning	\$ (28,676,468)	\$ 13,817,958	\$ (14,858,510)
Consolidate into Renovated Peabody with current A Zoning at Ripley	\$ (42,630,615)	\$ 36,144,422	\$ (6,486,193)
Consolidate into Renovated Peabody with B Zoning at Ripley	\$ (42,630,615)	\$ 45,569,950	\$ 2,939,334
Consolidate into New Bldg at Peabody with current A Zoning at Ripley	\$ (41,931,959)	\$ 36,144,422	\$ (5,787,537)
Consolidate into New Bldg at Peabody with current B Zoning at Ripley	\$ (41,931,959)	\$ 45,569,950	\$ 3,637,991
Consolidate into New Bldg at Ripley; Sell Peabody with AA Zoning	\$ (41,931,959)	\$ 27,848,271	\$ (14,083,688)
Consolidate into New Bldg at Ripley; Sell Peabody with B Zoning	\$ (41,931,959)	\$ 38,269,137	\$ (3,662,821)
Buy & Renovate NEWMUNI; Sell Peabody at AA Zoning; Ripley at A zoning	\$ (42,463,949)	\$ 46,513,265	\$ 4,049,316
Buy & Renovate NEWMUNI; Sell Peabody and Ripley at B Zoning	\$ (42,463,949)	\$ 59,705,721	\$ 17,241,772

The subjective, non-financial analysis included application and subjective scoring of the following criteria applied to each option included:

- Staff collaboration opportunities, inferred staff satisfaction, and operational efficiencies
- Convenience for residents (customer service)
- Sustainability considerations

Results. These analyses resulted an integrated assessment of the “Pros and Cons” of each option Table E2) and were also captured in a scoring matrix (Table E3).

Table E2

Option	10 Year \$\$ Inflows	10 Year Costs	Net \$\$	Pros	Cons
Status Quo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No consolidation Sell Peabody but keep playing fields 	With AA Zoning = \$4m ----- With B Zoning = \$14m	(\$29m) ----- (\$29m)	With AA Zoning = (\$25m) ----- With B Zoning = (\$15m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows Town to prioritize DPW and Public Safety needs No disruption of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costly to operate and maintain Missed opportunity to unlock revenues from vacated location No benefits from consolidation
Consolidate to Renovated Peabody <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovation to net zero Sell Excess Assets (Ripley, 55 Church, Harvey Wheeler, 141 Keyes) 	With AA Zoning = \$36m ----- With B Zoning = \$46m	(\$43m) ----- (\$43m)	With AA Zoning = (\$6m) ----- With B Zoning = +\$3m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of Consolidation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increased staff collaboration and satisfaction, b) reduced travel times, c) more convenience for residents d) increased operational efficiencies Flexible timing, i.e., can be done in stages Aligns with reuse sustainability goal Maintain unique distinctive architecture Some positive financial benefit compared to Status Quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town perception of the health of the building Life span of building Moving Costs FFE costs Not Central Location Temp. Services Disruption Uncertainties/Risks**
Consolidate at a New Building at Peabody Site (retain playing fields) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell Excess Assets (Ripley, 55 Church, Harvey Wheeler, 141 Keyes) 	With AA Zoning = \$36m ----- With B Zoning = \$46m	(\$42m) ----- (\$42m)	With AA Zoning = (\$6m) ----- With B Zoning = +\$4m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of Consolidation (see above) Longer lifespan than renovation Will be designed to meet Concord's specific needs including sustainability goals No disruption of services Flexible timing, i.e., can be done in stages Some positive financial benefit compared to Status Quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving Costs FFE costs Non-Central Location Temp. Services Disruption Uncertainties/Risks**
Consolidate at a New Building at Ripley Site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell Excess Assets (Peabody, 55 Church, Harvey Wheeler, 141 Keyes) 	With AA Zoning = \$28m ----- With B Zoning = \$38m	(\$42m) ----- (\$42m)	With AA Zoning = (\$14m) ----- With B Zoning = (\$4m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of Consolidation (see above) Longer lifespan than renovation Will be designed to meet Concord's specific needs including sustainability goals No disruption of services Less costly than status quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving Costs FFE costs Non-Central Location Temp. Services Disruption Uncertainties/Risks**
Buy & Renovate NewMuni Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell Excess Assets (Peabody, Ripley, 55 Church, Harvey Wheeler, 141 Keyes) 	With AA Zoning = \$46m ----- With B Zoning = \$60m	(\$42m) ----- (\$42m)	With AA Zoning = +\$4m ----- With B Zoning = +\$18m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of Consolidation (see above) Large Revenue potential from sale of excess space Rent revenue potential to balance operational costs Central Location Shorter term positive impacts (faster implementation) Flexible timing, i.e., can be done in stages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town becomes a landlord Moving Costs FFE costs

**Uncertainty and risks associated with estimates of cost to renovate and build new

Table E3.

Criteria	Weight	Option 1 No Consolidation - Sell Peabody		Option 2: Renovate Peabody		Option 3: New Bldg at Peabody		Option 4: New Bldg at Ripley		Option 5: Buy & Renovate NewMUNI	
		Score*	Weighted Score**	Score*	Weighted Score**	Score*	Weighted Score**	Score*	Weighted Score**	Score*	Weighted Score**
Financial Benefits	45	1	45	4	180	5	225	2	90	10	450
Staff Collaboration/Efficiency + Satisfaction	30	1	30	8	240	8	240	8	240	10	300
Convenience for residents	15	1	15	6	90	6	90	6	90	10	150
Sustainability	10	1	10	6	60	10	100	10	100	6	60
TOTALS	100	4	100	24	570	29	655	26	520	36	960
* Score Range 1-10											
** Weighted Score = Score x Weight											

Recommendation. Through the analysis described above including the overall assessment of “pros and cons” of each option, as detailed in the following sections, the LUWG’s MCS recommends to the Select Board that the Municipal Consolidation part of the overall Land Use strategy should focus on the implementation of

- **Option 5: Purchase and Renovate of Existing Office Building and Renovation.**

Based on data and information available at the date of this report, including best estimates, our analysis strongly supports this option.

Although there are uncertainties in the financial analysis (see Section 9) that can only be minimized through additional work Phase 2 (e, g, new construction, renovation costs and market analysis) we believe that the strength of the recommendation is unlikely to change with new information. The value (i.e. revenues) and the net financial benefits that can be realized by the Town through the execution of Option 5 align with the clear preference for this option based on non-financial criteria.

Next Steps and Timing Considerations.

Next Steps. Our recommendation must now be integrated with the recommendations and findings of the sub-groups looking at locations for DPW and public safety operations. Also, to gain confidence in our recommendations, we must do further study.

Since the financial benefits play a big role in the decision to consolidate or not, our confidence in our recommendation must be confirmed/refined via independent, objective study by knowledgeable consultants. These include:

- Study to refine estimates to renovate and bring Peabody up to code
- Study to refine estimate to renovate and bring the selected existing office building up to code
- Study to refine estimates to construct a new building at Peabody
- Develop a specific space plan for the proposed office building to ensure that space requirements can be accommodated

Timing . The timing of any or all of these potential moves needs to be discussed soon given the critical nature of the timing related to: a) the availability of the preferred office building and the need for Town approvals related to purchase, b) the need/desirability of the Town generation of revenue from potential sales of Town properties, and c) the potential impact on MCI negotiations if housing is build on vacated municipal land.

Public Involvement. Furthermore, our recommendations, and the assumptions behind them, must be held up for public scrutiny. We recommend our recommendation be presented to the public and that Town hire a professional firm with a solid track record of soliciting broad, public input and organizing it in a meaningful way for decision-makers.

2. Introduction

The Land Use Working Group (LUWG) was established to make recommendations to the Select Board regarding the best use of parcels as they become available. The Select Board tasked the Land Use Working Group (LUWG) to evaluate parcels of land that are or may become available to the Town and to identify current town needs and recommend best matches between needs and available parcels. The group initially focused will future municipal needs, particularly concerning the inadequate Public Works and Public Safety facilities and potential administrative consolidation. The LUWG was divided into three subgroups, each to focus on current and future facility and land needs related to: 1) Public Safety; 2) Public Works; 3) Consolidation of Municipal offices. This report contains the initial (Phase 1) findings and recommendations of the LUWG's Municipal Consolidation Sub-group (MSG).

The work was focused on the evaluation of current municipal offices including the school administration, their multiple (15) locations and condition of existing facilities in order to determine if consolidation of the staff and programs into a single location was feasible, desirable, and financially viable.

It summarizes the evaluation criteria, data sources, and recommendations related to the opportunities to consolidate Concord's current municipal and school offices into a single location. This analysis does not include, but is related to, those of the other two Sub-groups focusing on Public Safety and Public Works.

3. Current Roles of Municipal/School Offices in Concord

Town administrative and public school functions are currently distributed across multiple municipal buildings and the Ripley Administration Building. These facilities collectively support core governance, education, human services, recreation, public works, and community programming.

Municipal Offices (Figure 1)

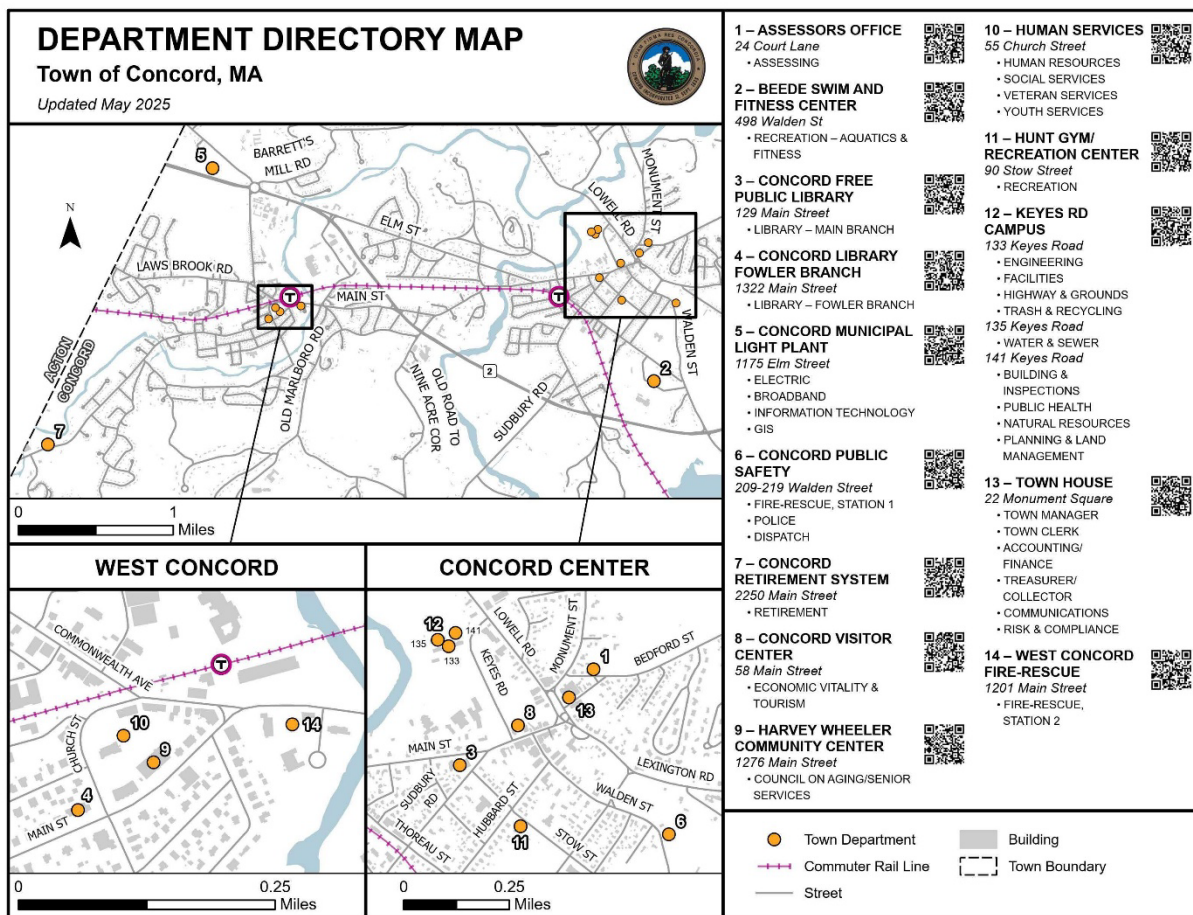
Municipal services are provided by the following facilities:

- **Town House (22 Monument Square, ~27,000 SF):** Historic municipal building housing central administrative offices and public meeting space.
- **24 Court Lane (~6,000 SF):** Small municipal office building currently serving the Assessor's Office.
- **1276 Main Street – Harvey Wheeler (~32,000 SF):** Multi-use community facility housing Recreation, Council on Aging, preschool, and community programs.
- **Hunt Gym (~10,000 SF):** Gymnasium supporting recreation and athletic programming.
- **50 Main Street – Visitor Center (~3,000 SF):** Facility providing visitor and tourism services.

- **55 Church Street (~12,000 SF):** Houses Human Services, Youth Services, Veterans Services, Community Services, and Facilities.
- **37 Knox Trail (~8,500 SF):** School transportation offices and Regional Housing (non-Town).
- **141 Keyes Road (~9,000 SF):** Planning and Land Management, Natural Resources, and Health.
- **133–135 Keyes Road (~36,000 SF combined):** Public Works administrative offices and operational facilities including Highway & Grounds and Water & Sewer.

These buildings vary significantly in age, layout, and condition, resulting in fragmented operations and limited opportunities for collaboration across departments.

Figure 1



School Administrative and Program Functions at Ripley

The Ripley Administration Building serves as the central hub for Concord Public Schools administration and specialized educational programs. Functions housed at Ripley include:

- Superintendent's Office, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, and Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
- Finance and Human Resources Departments
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Director
- Special Education Director
- CASE Collaborative Administration
- Concord Integrated Preschool
- STEAM and Innovation Labs
- Launch Special Education Transition Program

Concord Integrated Preschool provides inclusive early childhood education for preschoolers with learning disabilities and community peers, emphasizing kindergarten readiness, independence, and curiosity.

The **STEAM and Innovation Labs** function as maker spaces supporting hands-on learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math, including robotics, 3D printing, recycled art, and engineering challenges tied to curriculum.

The **Launch Program** serves young adults ages 18–22, focusing on functional academics, vocational training, life skills, and community experiences to support transition from high school to adult life.

Together, Ripley supports administrative functions alongside instructional and therapeutic programming, creating significant space and infrastructure demands.

4. Existing Conditions Assessment

School Administration Building (Ripley)

<u>Building</u>	<u>Existing Conditions</u>	<u>Cost & Plan for Maintenance</u>
Ripley Administration Building	Aging exterior envelope with deteriorating masonry and sealants; roof nearing end of useful life; outdated HVAC systems; electrical infrastructure undersized for modern loads; plumbing fixtures at or beyond expected lifespan; interior finishes worn; accessibility upgrades needed; life-safety systems require modernization.	<p>Immediate (0–2 yrs): Address roof repairs, masonry repointing, sealant replacement, HVAC controls, electrical panel upgrades, and life-safety items. <i>Estimated cost: ~\$1.2–\$1.5M.</i></p> <p>Short-Term (3–5 yrs): Replace roof, upgrade HVAC equipment, improve ADA accessibility, update lighting to LED, selective plumbing replacement, interior refresh. <i>Estimated cost: ~\$2.0–\$2.5M.</i></p> <p>Long-Term (6–10 yrs): Full HVAC replacement, major electrical upgrades, comprehensive plumbing renewal, exterior envelope improvements, interior modernization. <i>Estimated cost: ~\$3.0–\$3.5M.</i></p> <p>Total projected investment over 10 years: approximately \$6–\$7.5M, phased to prioritize building envelope, mechanical systems, and safety first.</p>

Municipal Facilities

Municipal buildings range from historic structures to mid-20th-century operational facilities:

<u>Building / Site</u>	<u>Existing Physical Conditions</u>	<u>Maintenance Requirements to Sustain Current Use</u>
Town House (22 Monument Sq.)	Structurally sound historic building with multiple floors and attic/basement spaces. Interior layouts reflect incremental modifications over time, resulting in inefficient circulation and limited functional storage. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems require ongoing maintenance and upgrades to meet current needs. Limited on-site parking and constrained service access.	Regular maintenance of historic fabric (roof, masonry, windows). Upgrades to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems as needed. Routine cleaning and minor repairs. Coordination for limited parking and deliveries. Periodic accessibility improvements.
24 Court Lane	Small, older office building with a compact footprint. Building systems are serviceable but limited by the size and configuration of the structure. Interior space offers minimal flexibility for reconfiguration or expansion.	Routine system inspections and preventive maintenance. Minor interior repairs and painting. HVAC and plumbing upkeep. Limited space means any operational change requires careful planning.
1276 Main St. – Harvey Wheeler	Multi-use community facility with varied interior spaces and phased renovations. Building systems and finishes vary by area. Some spaces are well-suited to current uses, while others reflect dated construction and limited adaptability.	Ongoing maintenance for multiple system types and finishes. Targeted renovations to keep high-use spaces functional. Scheduling and custodial care across varied uses. Monitoring aging areas to prevent service disruptions.
Hunt Gym	Single-purpose gymnasium structure designed for recreation use. Building is straightforward in layout with limited support or ancillary space. Physical condition supports continued use but offers little flexibility for alternative functions.	Routine HVAC, lighting, and floor maintenance. Safety inspections for gym equipment and structure. Minimal interior repairs, but high-use surfaces require frequent attention.

50 Main St. – Visitor Center	Small historic structure adapted for public-facing use. Limited interior space and storage. Building condition is generally adequate for current use, with inherent constraints related to size and age.	Preservation of historic elements. Regular cleaning and minor repairs. Mechanical systems require ongoing checks. Management of limited storage and visitor flow.
55 Church St.	Older multi-department office building with fragmented interior layouts. Building systems and finishes are dated in several areas. Physical configuration results in smaller office areas and shared support spaces, limiting efficiency.	Frequent maintenance of older mechanical and electrical systems. Repairs to worn finishes. Coordination of shared spaces. Updating safety systems as needed.
37 Knox Trail	Late-20th-century office building in generally good physical condition. Interior office spaces are functional, and building systems are serviceable. Site is largely developed, limiting expansion. Observed condition is stable, with no major structural concerns noted.	Standard preventive maintenance for building systems. Routine cleaning, minor repairs, and landscaping. Occasional modernization of office systems or finishes.
141 Keyes Road	Mid-20th-century office building on the DPW campus. Interior spaces are compact and shared among departments. Building systems are aging, and the layout provides limited separation between public and staff functions.	Regular system inspections and preventive maintenance. Interior upkeep to manage high-density shared areas. Minor remodeling for operational efficiency. Safety and accessibility monitoring.

Collectively, these facilities reflect incremental adaptation over time rather than coordinated planning, resulting in inefficiencies and increasing maintenance burdens.

5. Future Needs Assessment

The future needs of the school district are uncertain due to the types of specialty programs and potential increase in enrollment with more housing being built in the future. The current space needs and programmatic needs are listed below.

Current Ripley Program Spaces

Administrative space supports approximately 35+ FTE across HR, Finance, IT, Special Education, Teaching and Learning, Superintendent, DEIB, Facilities, Food Service, and CASE.

Ripley currently accommodates:

Specialty Spaces	Total Square footage needed
5 classrooms for integrated preschool	1,089 sq ft each
2 Speech and language rooms	190 sq ft, 432 sq. ft
2 OT rooms	1,089 sq. ft.
1 PT room	360 sq. ft
Preschool Psychologist room	360 sq. ft
Nurse's Office	250 sq. ft
STEAM lab	1,764 sq. ft
Indoor playspace/gym	3,060 sq. ft
Outdoor spaces	7,500 sq. ft
School Committee/Large space meeting room	1,782 sq. ft

Launch Space (1 Classroom)	1,184 sq. ft
Potential additional classroom space for housing growth (3 classrooms)	1,089 sq. ft each

Office Space Needs
3 conference rooms
HR space (3 FTE)
Finance department (6 FTE)
Offices, Facilities Director, Food Service Director (2 FTE)
IT department (6 FTE)
Special Education / Student Services (4 FTEs)
Teaching & Learning Dept. (5 FTE)
Superintendent's Office (2 FTE)
DEIB Director office (1 FTE)
CASE Administration space (6 FTEs)

The school district's planning for future growth and enrollment are not explicitly considered in this analysis

Current Municipal Needs

The current space requirements for staff and programmatic needs are summarized in Appendix 1. Consolidation planning includes approximately 90-100 administrative staff across all Town Departments (see Figure 1) except: Recreation Department (staff, Beede and Hunt)), Clerk's Office,

Town Archives, and Visitor Center. The staff and operations address multiple departments and functions.

The ability to accommodate growth, adapt to changing service models, and improve collaboration while central to long-term planning, are not explicitly considered in our analysis.

6. Peer Benchmarking & Best Practices

There are many examples of Massachusetts towns (and some cities) that have consolidated municipal departments or operations — whether through formal statutory consolidation, shared services, intermunicipal cooperatives, or reorganized internal departments. Many of these examples involve shared staffing, merged functions, or streamlined structures that cut across traditional independent departmental silos. Most examples center around the formation of a municipal complex where municipal offices and public safety operations were merged into a single complex. Examples include the Towns of Medway, Hubbardston, Lee, Tisbury and Reading and all involve new construction projects rather than the conversion of existing building into centralized municipal offices

However, such a “municipal complex” is not being contemplated in this report or in the LUWG as a whole.

More common has been the conversion of excess or decommissioned school buildings into municipal offices. Examples (source ChatGPT) include:

- The historic Ames Schoolhouse (built 1898) in **Dedham** was repurchased and *renovated to serve as the Dedham Town Hall and Senior Center*, with most town administrative offices moving into the building in June 2020
- In **South Deerfield**, the 1888 Building (originally a town grammar school built 1888) is undergoing major renovation to become municipal offices for the town.
- The building originally served as high school until 1957 and later elementary school; now it is repurposed for municipal office use in **Methuen**.
- **Granby** is moving forward with plans to renovate the former West Street School into a new town office building and senior center.
- **Royalston** is renovating the old Raymond School (WPA-era building) to house town administrative offices that are currently in Whitney Hall. The building will become the new municipal offices once upgrades (including energy system improvements) are finished.
- The **City of Watertown** has agreed to purchase the former Parker School building with the intention of using it to house municipal staff and relieve crowding in City Hall. This effectively converts a former school into municipal office space.

Although the scopes of these projects vary widely, the range of costs of these conversions have been cited as \$8-20+ million.

7. Methodology

Our overall methodology included the following steps:

- Gathered information on all current municipal facilities and staff therein
- Evaluated current information and data related to the operations of the current facilities (e.g., building footprints; staff numbers; costs of ongoing operations, etc.)
- Identify potential consolidation locations
- Discussed approaches and overall strategies with Town Manager
- Developed a list of facilities to potentially be vacated and consolidated and those that would remain at current locations
- Developed a long list of consolidation locations
- Pared down the list to a short list- of locations and consolidation options
- Conduct quantitative (financial) and qualitative assessments of the short-listed options.
 - A discounted cash flow model was created to capture quantified benefits and costs.
 - Subjective evaluation criteria were established; those criteria weighted and scored collectively by the SubGroup members; and a scoring and ranking “matrix” of options was established combining qualitative and quantitative results
- Conducted an evaluation of “Pros and Cons” of each
- Uncertainties in data were assessed
- Decided on recommendations and next steps to be presented to the Select Board

Benefits to consolidation are both quantifiable and hard-to-quantify. Quantifiable benefits include:

- Avoid operational and maintenance costs of vacated buildings, many of which are old, obsolete and/or energy inefficient buildings.
- Avoid necessary capital expenditures of vacated buildings.
- Realize revenues through the sale of vacated lots and use the proceeds to offset tax increases.
- Realize incremental property tax revenues from potential new housing under different zoning rules.

Qualitative (Hard-to-Quantify) benefits include:

- Improved staff collaboration/efficiency/satisfaction
- Convenience for residents
- More sustainable energy sources

Benefits are estimated using a variety of data sources* and professional opinions of town management and real estate professionals. We offset benefits with the cost to renovate or build

new at a target site, including the cost of demolition, to arrive at the net benefit to the town. We also include the cost of moving and fit-up for staff and programming at a potential target.

Date Sources – Data were gathered from discussions with staff as well as from written reports, specifically including:

- TBA Architects, *Concord Municipal Facilities Assessment and Masterplan*, July 2020
- Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects, Building Condition Assessment for Concord Public Schools, 2023.
- Current budget spending by department compiled by town staff.
- Tour of town facilities and conversations with staff.

8. Options Analysis

Although there were many land parcels and buildings potentially available as a consolidation target, a short list of options was developed by the MSG using the following criteria and principles:

- Scope of consolidation - the consolidation objective focused on nearly all municipal and public school administrative functions and staff. Along with these functions related “programs” (i.e., Council on Aging/Senior Center, Department of Recreation’s Carousel Pre-School; Concord Public School’s Integrated Pre-School were part of the objectives)
- Sufficient size – meeting these consolidation objectives required existing or new buildings of sufficient space (see Appendix).
- Ownership – the main consolidation targets were buildings and properties owned by the Town, of the potential for ownership
- Advantages of deferring future operating and capital improvement costs – All of the buildings under consideration will require significant operating costs as well as capital improvements if they remain under Town ownership
- Revenue opportunities – the buildings to be vacated offer revenue potential through sale of properties for “development”. “Development” was defined for this work as housing which included both the property sale market value and residential tax potential
- Renovation vs. new building costs – The uncertainty in the relative costs of renovation of existing structures versus new construction to accommodate staff and programs drove the need to consider both options.

We identified a short-list of scenarios/options that could yield net benefits from the consolidation of select town and school offices.

The Consolidation Sites included for this analysis include:

- Peabody school (potential target site)
- Ripley School campus (vacate)
- Purchase an existing building (potential target site)

Consolidation Candidates/Locations to be vacated partially or completely and consolidated include:

- Ripley School campus
- Assessors' Office, Court Lane
- 141 Keyes Rd, Division of Community Development
- 133 Keyes Road – Engineering
- Harvey Wheeler Campus
- 55 Church Street
- 37 Knox Trail
- Town House (partial)

Based on extensive discussions, review of building layouts, and preliminary financial considerations the MSG arrived at the following short list of five (5) options:

- Option 1: Status Quo – No consolidation, sale of Peabody property for housing
- Option 2: Consolidate into Renovated Peabody School Building
- Option 3: Consolidate into Newly Constructed Building at Peabody Site
- Option 4: Consolidate into Newly Constructed Building at Ripley Site
- Option 5: Purchase of Existing Office Building and Renovation

9. Results

Financial . A discounted cash flow model was created to capture quantified benefits and costs. The model estimates future cash inflows and outflows under different scenarios. Factors considered to estimate cash flows under various scenarios include:

- Avoid operating, maintenance and capex cost of vacated buildings. These figures were obtained from the 2020 TBA report as well as the FY26 approved town budget.
- Cash realized from the sale of vacated land. These figures were estimates from local real estate professionals.
- Cash realized from incremental property tax revenues from housing at various zoning requirement. These figures applied our current tax rate against the expected market value of new homes built.
- Cost to renovate/rehab or build new at a target site. These are estimates from architects and staff yet require a closer look.
- Cost to move and fit-up new facility for staff and programs. These were derived from costs incurred to move and fit up the recently built middle school.

Cash outflows are deducted from inflows to arrive at potential net benefit to the town over a 10 year period, discounted at a 2.3% discount rate to account for expected inflation.

The net cashflows under various scenarios are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Cash Flow Model Results Summary

Summary	Outflow	Inflow	Net
Status Quo costs over 10 years with no consolidation & Sell Peabody with AA Zoning	\$ (28,676,468)	\$ 3,714,905	\$ (24,961,563)
Status Quo costs over 10 years with no consolidation & Sell Peabody with B Zoning	\$ (28,676,468)	\$ 13,817,958	\$ (14,858,510)
Consolidate into Renovated Peabody with current A Zoning at Ripley	\$ (42,630,615)	\$ 36,144,422	\$ (6,486,193)
Consolidate into Renovated Peabody with B Zoning at Ripley	\$ (42,630,615)	\$ 45,569,950	\$ 2,939,334
Consolidate into New Bldg at Peabody with current A Zoning at Ripley	\$ (41,931,959)	\$ 36,144,422	\$ (5,787,537)
Consolidate into New Bldg at Peabody with current B Zoning at Ripley	\$ (41,931,959)	\$ 45,569,950	\$ 3,637,991
Consolidate into New Bldg at Ripley; Sell Peabody with AA Zoning	\$ (41,931,959)	\$ 27,848,271	\$ (14,083,688)
Consolidate into New Bldg at Ripley; Sell Peabody with B Zoning	\$ (41,931,959)	\$ 38,269,137	\$ (3,662,821)
Buy & Renovate NEWMUNI; Sell Peabody at AA Zoning; Ripley at A zoning	\$ (42,463,949)	\$ 46,513,265	\$ 4,049,316
Buy & Renovate NEWMUNI; Sell Peabody and Ripley at B Zoning	\$ (42,463,949)	\$ 59,705,721	\$ 17,241,772

Table 2 – Supporting Financial Data

Peabody				Notes
Assumptions	AA Zoning (2 Acre lots)	B Zoning (1/2 acre lots)		
Building lots/homes net of infrastructure space	4	16		8 acres that excludes 10 acres for playing fields and 2 acres for septic
Revenue when sold to a developer (net of demolition)	\$ 2,700,000	\$ 11,700,000		Assumes \$950k per bldg lot (AZoning) and \$800/lot(B Zoning) less \$1.1M demolition
Assessed Value of Lot and new House	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 1,500,000		Sales price = \$2.5 with 2 acre lots; \$1.5 with 1/2 acre lots
Tax Revenue Year built	\$ 132,600	\$ 318,240		Assumes 13.26 tax rate in Year 1
Tax increase per year	3%	3%		Assumes taxes grow at 3% per year
Ripley				
Assumptions	A Zoning (1 Acre lots)	B Zoning (1/2 acre lots)		
Building lots/homes net of infrastructure space	12	24		12 acres that excludes 6 for playing fields (18 acres total site)
Revenue when sold to a developer (net of demolition)	\$ 9,624,000	\$ 17,856,000		Assumes \$900k per bldg lot (AZoning) and \$800/lot(B Zoning) less \$900k demolition
Assessed Value of Lot and new House	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,500,000		Sales price = \$2.0 with 1acre lots; \$1.5 with 1/2 acre lots
Tax Revenue Year built	\$ 311,875	\$ 467,813		Assumes 13.26 tax rate in Year 1
Tax increase per year	3%	3%		Assumes taxes grow at 3% per year
Harvey Wheeler & Chruch St Complex				
Assumptions	Mixed Use Zoning			
Housing units	49			Per staff
Revenue from a developer	\$ 12,250,000			Assumes cost to developer = 25% of selling price
Assessed Value of Housing Units	\$ 1,000,000			Assumes 1,500 sq ft condos at a \$1m selling price
Tax Revenue Year built	\$ 649,740			Assumes 13.26 tax rate in Year 1
Tax increase per year	3%			Assumes taxes grow at 3% per year
141 Keyes Rd. (16,800 sq ft only)				
Assumptions				
Housing units	15			Per staff
Revenue from a developer	\$ 4,687,500			Assumes cost to developer = 25% of selling price
Assessed Value of Housing Units	\$ 1,250,000			Assumes 1,500 sq ft condos at a \$1.25m selling price
Tax Revenue Year built	\$ 248,625			Assumes 13.26 tax rate in Year 1
Tax increase per year	3%			Assumes taxes grow at 3% per year
Cost to Renovate Peabody	\$ 36,166,667			Avg of three estimates of \$28.5m, \$30m and \$50m
Cost to Build New at both Peabody and Ripley	\$ 35,000,000			Collaboration between Russ and Paul
Cost to Purchase and Update NewMUNI	\$ 36,000,000			Assumes \$6m purchase price plus \$400/sq ft for 75000 sq ft
Demolition Cost	\$ 1,577,000			Based on cost for demolition of Sandborn middle school
Cost to add Play area	\$ 300,000			Per Tracey

Subjective (Qualitative). A benefit that does not lend itself to straightforward quantification is still a benefit that is relevant to this analysis. To include these criteria in a meaningful way, we used a score and weight technique. To begin with, we assigned a weight to each benefit based on its relative importance. The sum of the weights must = 100. Next, we score a value of 1-10 for each scenario based on its ability to achieve a specific benefit. Finally, we multiply the score * weight and summarize for each scenario. The results are shown in Table 3:

Table 3 – Scoring Matrix Results

Criteria	Weight	Option 1 No Consolidation - Sell Peabody		Option 2: Renovate Peabody		Option 3: New Bldg at Peabody		Option 4: New Bldg at Ripley		Option 5: Buy & Renovate NewMUNI	
		Score*	Weighted Score**	Score*	Weighted Score**	Score*	Weighted Score**	Score*	Weighted Score**	Score*	Weighted Score**
Financial Benefits	45	1	45	4	180	5	225	2	90	10	450
Staff Collaboration/Efficiency + Satisfaction	30	1	30	8	240	8	240	8	240	10	300
Convenience for residents	15	1	15	6	90	6	90	6	90	10	150
Sustainability	10	1	10	6	60	10	100	10	100	6	60
TOTALS	100	4	100	24	570	29	655	26	520	36	960
* Score Range 1-10											
** Weighted Score = Score x Weight											

Overall Evaluation. The overall Pros and Cons of each option were assessment by the subgroup (Table 3)

Table 3

Option	10 Year \$\$ Inflows	10 Year Costs	Net \$\$	Pros	Cons
Status Quo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No consolidation Sell Peabody but keep playing fields 	With AA Zoning = \$4m ----- With B Zoning = \$14m	(\$29m) ----- (\$29m)	With AA Zoning = (\$25m) ----- With B Zoning = (\$15m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows Town to prioritize DPW and Public Safety needs No disruption of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costly to operate and maintain Missed opportunity to unlock revenues from vacated location No benefits from consolidation
Consolidate to Renovated Peabody <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovation to net zero Sell Excess Assets (Ripley, 55 Church, Harvey Wheeler, 141 Keyes) 	With AA Zoning = \$36m ----- With B Zoning = \$46m	(\$43m) ----- (\$43m)	With AA Zoning = (\$6m) ----- --- With B Zoning = +\$3m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of Consolidation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increased staff collaboration and satisfaction, b) reduced travel times, c) more convenience for residents d) increased operational efficiencies Flexible timing, i.e., can be done in stages Aligns with reuse sustainability goal Maintain unique distinctive architecture Some positive financial benefit compared to Status Quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town perception of the health of the building Life span of building Moving Costs FFE costs Not Central Location Temp. Services Disruption Uncertainties/Risks**
Consolidate at a New Building at Peabody Site (retain playing fields) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell Excess Assets (Ripley, 55 Church, Harvey Wheeler, 141 Keyes) 	With AA Zoning = \$36m ----- With B Zoning = \$46m	(\$42m) ----- (\$42m)	With AA Zoning = (\$6m) ----- --- With B Zoning = +\$4m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of Consolidation (see above) Longer lifespan than renovation Will be designed to meet Concord's specific needs including sustainability goals No disruption of services Flexible timing, i.e., can be done in stages Some positive financial benefit compared to Status Quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving Costs FFE costs Non-Central Location Temp. Services Disruption Uncertainties/Risks**
Consolidate at a New Building at Ripley Site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell Excess Assets (Peabody, 55 Church, Harvey Wheeler, 141 Keyes) 	With AA Zoning = \$28m ----- With B Zoning = \$38m	(\$42m) ----- (\$42m)	With AA Zoning = (\$14m) ----- --- With B Zoning = (\$4m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of Consolidation (see above) Longer lifespan than renovation Will be designed to meet Concord's specific needs including sustainability goals No disruption of services Less costly than status quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving Costs FFE costs Non-Central Location Temp. Services Disruption Uncertainties/Risks**
Buy & Renovate NewMuni Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell Excess Assets (Peabody, Ripley, 55 Church, Harvey Wheeler, 141 Keyes) 	With AA Zoning = \$46m ----- With B Zoning = \$60m	(\$42m) ----- (\$42m)	With AA Zoning = +\$4m ----- --- With B Zoning = +\$18m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of Consolidation (see above) Large Revenue potential from sale of excess space Rent revenue potential to balance operational costs Central Location Shorter term positive impacts (faster implementation) Flexible timing, i.e., can be done in stages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town becomes a landlord Moving Costs FFE costs

**Uncertainty and risks associated with estimates of cost to renovate and build new

10. Trade-Offs and Uncertainties

Our financial modelling includes many assumptions. Many of these are based on solid data and/or have a relatively insignificant impact on the results. Others, however, have a relatively significant impact on our results and need more study to gain confidence in our projections. A summary of all the assumptions used to quantify cost and benefits:

Assumptions that need further study include:

- Cost to renovate Peabody
- Cost to build new at Peabody or Ripley
- Cost to purchase and update an existing building

Finally, the scenarios that assume changes to zoning regulations of vacated parcel is critical to forecasting expected revenues from the sale of these parcels and the incremental property tax realized from incremental, new housing units. These zoning changes require approval at town meeting.

11. Recommendations

Through the analysis described above including the overall assessment of “pros and cons” of each option, as detailed in the following sections, the LUWG’s MCS recommends to the Select Board that the Municipal Consolidation part of the overall Land Use strategy should focus on the implementation of

- **Option 5: Purchase and Renovate of Existing Office Building and Renovation.**

Based on data and information available at the date of this report, including best estimates, our analysis strongly supports this option.

Although there are uncertainties in the financial analysis (see Section 9) that can only be minimized through additional work Phase 2 (e, g, new construction, renovation costs and market analysis) we believe that the strength of the recommendation is unlikely to change with new information. The value (i.e. revenues) and the net financial benefits that can be realized by the Town through the execution of Option 5 align with the clear preference for this option based on non-financial criteria. Our recommendation include the selection of this option plus moving forward on the next steps as summarized in the next section.

12. Next Steps

Our recommendation must now be integrated with the recommendations and findings of the subcommittees looking at locations for DPW and public safety. There may be some synergies or conflicts among our findings. For example, a recommendation to buy a new existing building at a location near DPW or public safety could further enhance the benefits of improved staff collaboration and citizen convenience. On the other hand, a recommendation to vacate a certain parcel may not have public support. To gain confidence in our recommendations, we must do further study.

Since the financial benefits play a big role in the decision to consolidate or not, our confidence in our recommendation must be confirmed/refined via independent, objective study by knowledgeable consultants. These include:

- Study to refine estimates to renovate and bring Peabody up to code
- Study to refine estimates to build new at Peabody
- Study to refine estimate to renovate and bring an existing building up to code

- Develop a specific space plan for the proposed office building to ensure that space requirements can be accommodated

Most importantly, our recommendations, and the assumptions behind them, must be held up for public scrutiny. The ideas presented here will have lasting impact on the town. Public outreach via forums, surveys, hearings, focus groups, etc. must be conducted to hear from our citizens. We recommend the town hire a professional firm with a solid track record of soliciting broad, public input and organizing it in a meaningful way for decision-makers.

Appendix 1 - Summary of Space Needs

Land Use Working Group - Municipal Consolidation Indoor Space Requirements (Dec 18, 2025)							
Municipal Properties		Staff/Staff Support Space		Specialized Program Spaces (To Support Programs/COA/Schools, etc.)		Specialized Outdoor Spaces	
Bldg.	Functions	Staff No. (For Muni Consolidation)	Estimate of Required Staff Space (@150SQFT/Staff) (Includes Offices, Conf Rooms, Bathrooms, Kitchenettes, IT, Storage, Corridors)	Required Program Spaces (From Note A List)	Required SQ FT Needed for Programs	Description	Required SQ FT Needed for Outdoor Spaces
24 Court Lane	Assessors	4	600				
141 Keyes Road	Planning, Health, Natural Resources, Building Inspector	21	3150				
133 Keyes Road	Engineering, Facilities, Cemeteries	10	1500				
37 Knox Trail	Facilities	8	1200				
Town House (22 Monument)	Offices, Finance, Accounting, Economic	18	2700				
Ripley School	School Admin; CASE Program; STEM; Integrated School	35	5250	Note A	16,000	Playground	7,500
55 Church Street	HR, Public Health, Nurse, Archive	10	1500				
Harvey Wheeler	Council on Aging, Concord Recreation/Carousel	11	1650	Note B	12,750	Playground	7500
CMLP (IT amd GIS)	IT and GIS Staff Only	8	1200				
Totals		125	18,750		28,750		15,000
							47,500 Indoor
							15,000 Outdoor
Note A	From T. Marano 12-17-2025 (Not including 3000 SQFT of future needs based on Town Growth)						
	5 classrooms for integrated preschool						
	2 Speech and language rooms						
	2 DT rooms						
	1PT room						
	Preschool Psychologist room						
	Nurse's Office						
	STEAM lab						
	Indoor playspace/gym						
	School Committee/Large space meeting room						
	Launch Space (1 Classroom)						
Note B	COA programming and Concord Carousel - Estimated at 15 x existing space (8,500 SQFT) - To Be Confirmed						