

Welcome to the **EnvisionConcord: Bridge to 2030** Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis. This data has been compiled by the Concord Comprehensive Long-Range Plan (CLRP) Committee. The analysis is based on the six principles that the American Planning Association recommends for consideration in long-range planning. These include:

#	Principle	Description
1	Liveable Built Environment	Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreation, with a high quality of life.
2	Harmony with Nature	Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.
3	Resilient Economy	Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable urban development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build reliance on local assets.
4	Interwoven Equity	Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.
5	Healthy Community	Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods
6	Responsible Regionalism	Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

The same SWOT Information has been presented **three different ways**:

First, on the tab labeled "**By Category**" the elements of each principle have been collected into categories that are aligned with the way town committees may be used to thinking more topically: Land-use, Housing, Economic Development, Mobility, Cultural & Historic Resources, Open Space & Natural Resources, Public Facilities & Infrastructure, Sustainability and other cross-cutting issues.

Next, the same information is presented again on the tab labeled "**By APA Principle**" but the information is organized according to the APA systems thinking approach, which enables an individual committee or Town department to see how their work is integrated across the different aspects of what makes a healthy vibrant community.

Finally, the information is presented again on the tab labeled "**Summary**" but much of the detail is hidden, so you can focus on just the synopsis of how the CLRP Committee viewed each of the APA principles. If you have limited time, we suggest you use this version as a basis for responding to the following questions:

- 1 What's missing? What do you see as priorities or core values in these areas?
- 2 Are there opportunities or threats that we may have missed?
In addition, what pressing issues or tensions are of concern to your Board or Committee? Is there a project or achievement that your Board or Committee is proud to have accomplished from the last year or so?
- 3

Thank You For Your Time!

Envision Concord - Bridge to 2030			
Comprehensive Plan APA Sustainability Principles and other Guiding Principles			
updated 8/10 /17			
Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
1. Liveable Built Environment			
	Livable Built Environment BP 1.1 Plan for multi-modal transportation:	A multimodal transportation system allows people to use a variety of transportation modes, including walking, biking, and other mobility devices (e.g., wheelchairs), as well as transit where possible. Such a system reduces dependence on automobiles and encourages more active forms of personal transportation, improving health outcomes and increasing the mobility of those who are unable or unwilling to drive (e.g., youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly). Fewer cars on the road also translates to reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions with associated health and environmental benefits.	Concord has 2 transit stops for regional accessibility and senior vans for in town use but due to the historic layout of the town, its suburban character and limited sidewalks and bike paths, intra-town connectivity for all modes and users is very limited (the exception being driving age auto users). We have the ability to connect some of our existing park and open space trails and could incent some shared or pooled services like Uber or a bike program, but there are a variety of opinions on how to balance preservation of our towns historic and suburban character against options that increase connectivity. Opportunity to engage School District around busing abilities.
	Livable Built Environment BP 1.2 Plan for transit oriented development (TOD)	Transit-oriented development (TOD) is characterized by a concentration of higher density mixed use development around transit stations and along transit lines, such that the location and the design of the development encourage transit use and pedestrian activity. TOD allows communities to focus new residential and commercial development in areas that are well connected to public transit. This enables residents to more easily use transit service, which can reduce vehicle-miles traveled and fossil fuels consumed and associated pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It can also reduce the need for personal automobile ownership, resulting in a decreased need for parking spaces and other automobile-oriented infrastructure.	Concord has three centers of concentration accessible to the transit system but the majority of town is low density and auto is the principle means of transport. We can focus on mixed use or high density development with transit connectivity by adding development incentives and modifying our zoning densities. There is the opportunity for interaction with school busing resources in this area.

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	Livable Built Environment BP 1.3 Coordinate regional trans. investments with job clusters	Coordinating regional transportation systems and areas of high employment densities can foster both transportation efficiency and economic development. This is important for creating and improving access to employment opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged populations without easy access to personal automobiles.	Concord has several areas of high employment density in place or in development—Emerson Hospital, Baker Avenue and Virginia Road areas. Transit connection to Emerson and Baker Ave are in place or planned. Virginia Road is a difficult connection and there are limited plans in the town for increased economic development. Schools potentially helpful here, but transit times for students and workforce tend to overlap.
	Livable Built Environment BP 1.4 Provide complete streets serving multiple functions	Complete streets are streets that are designed and operated with all users in mind—including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit riders (where applicable) of all ages and abilities—to support a multi-modal transportation system. A complete street network is one that safely and conveniently accommodates all users and desired functions, though this does not mean that all modes or functions will be equally prioritized on any given street segment. Streets that serve multiple functions can accommodate travel, social interaction, and commerce, to provide for more vibrant neighborhoods and more livable communities.	Concord's village centers are pedestrian friendly but not bike friendly, and outside the village centers the town is low density and dependent on the auto. We can connect our existing trail networks for pedestrians and bikers to some extent but there are limited plans to alter our existing road network to add bike lanes and sidewalks and other amenities that encourage their use. Creation of bike lanes that reach the middle and high schools will provide students a much safer way to bike to and from school.
	Livable Built Environment BP 1.5 Plan for mixed land-use patterns that are walkable and bikeable	Mixed land-use patterns are characterized by residential and nonresidential land uses located in close proximity to one another. Mixing land uses and providing housing in close proximity to everyday destinations (e.g., shops, schools, civic places, workplaces) can increase walking and biking and reduce the need to make trips by automobile. Mixed land-use patterns should incorporate safe, convenient, accessible, and attractive design features (e.g., sidewalks, bike street furniture, bicycle facilities, street trees) to promote walking and biking.	Concord is fortunate to have a zoning bylaw that allows for mixed-use development and some examples of such development (e.g. Brookside Sq. and Milldam Sq.) but the lack of pedestrian/bike infrastructure and amenities along with lack of awareness and motivation by Concord residents results in very few reduced car trips. There are also limited opportunities for new mixed use developments given the lack of available land.

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	Livable Built Environment BP 1.6 Plan for infill development	<p>Infill development is characterized by development or redevelopment of undeveloped or underutilized parcels of land in otherwise built-up areas, which are usually served by or have ready access to existing infrastructure and services. Focusing development and redevelopment on infill sites takes advantage of this existing infrastructure while helping to steer development away from greenfield sites on the urban fringe, which are more expensive to serve with infrastructure and services.</p>	<p>Concord has several opportunities to take advantage of infill development by increasing density within its existing village centers (including development of residential or commercial activities on second and third floors). There are also several areas (e.g. 2229 Main St., Virginia Road and Baker Avenue) that could further built out yielding tax benefits. Lack of availability and the high cost of "greenfield" development sites may further incent this process.</p>
	Livable Built Environment BP 1.7 Encourage design standards appropriate to the community context	<p>Design standards are specific criteria and requirements for the form and appearance of development within a neighborhood, corridor, special district, or jurisdiction as a whole. These standards serve to improve or protect both the function and aesthetic appeal of a community. Design standards typically addresses building placement, building massing and materials, and the location and appearance of elements (such as landscaping, signage, and street furniture.) They can encourage development that is compatible with the community context and that enhances sense of place. While the design standards will not be specified in the comprehensive plan itself, the plan can establish the direction and objectives that detailed standards should achieve.</p>	<p>Design standards are a major concern to the Concord community as evidenced by the strong priority annual surveys place on "Town Character" and by concern voiced over the scale and massing as well as the intensity of use of several recent developments. The Town has taken several steps recently to address this concern (e.g. WC design guidelines, demolition delay bylaw, and HDC guidelines. Additional efforts - such as consideration of form-based code or other zoning reform with attention to design standards - should continue to provide developers consistency, flexibility and avoid conflicting regulations.</p>
	Livable Built Environment BP 1.8 Provide accessible public facilities and spaces	<p>Public facilities play an important role in communities and they should be able to accommodate persons of all ages and abilities. Public facilities and spaces should be equitably distributed throughout the community. They should be located and designed to be safe, served by different transportation modes, and accessible to visitors with mobility impairments.</p>	<p>Concord consistently enforces ADA requirements during building and reconstruction and has taken steps to increase access to information online. Further progress is anticipated through the efforts of the Town Public Works Department and the Disability Commission. Given the cost of achieving access in an old, historic town and increasing demand for accessible services with an aging population, challenges remain. Schools are certainly involved in the needs for access to facilities.</p>

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	Livable Built Environment BP 1.9 Conserve and reuse historic resources	<p>Historic resources are buildings, sites, landmarks, or districts with exceptional value or quality for illustrating or interpreting the cultural heritage of a community. They can include resources eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, a state inventory of historic resources in association with a program approved by the secretary of the interior, or a local inventory of historic resources in association with a program approved by a state program or directly by the secretary of the interior (in states without approved programs). It is important to address the conservation and reuse of historic resources due to their cultural and historic significance to a community and the role they play in enhancing a community's sense of place, economy (through tourism and other economic activity), and environment (by reducing the need to construct new buildings that consume land and resources).</p>	<p>Given the leadership role that the Historic Districts Commission has played and the presence of so many national and historic landmarks, historic conservation and re-use is a strength in Concord despite the economic challenges of preservation. While it is a challenge to re-use old buildings and structures to meet modern uses in an energy-efficient way, care should be taken to coordinate historic preservation with sustainability goals, and to align modern needs, uses and tourism opportunities with specific structures (i.e. aligning preservation efforts with cultural needs and economic opportunities; e.g. utilization of spaces for educational programs, cultural or arts programs rather than just museums).</p>
	Livable Built Environment BP 1.10 Implement green building design and energy conservation	<p>A green building is characterized by design features that, if used as intended, will minimize the environmental impacts of the building over the course of its lifespan. The goals of green building design are energy and resource efficiency, waste reduction and pollution prevention, and occupant health and productivity. Energy conservation refers to reducing energy consumption through energy efficiency or behavioral change.</p>	<p>Concord has adopted sustainability principles, become a MA "green community", established a comprehensive sustainable energy committee and commissioned an energy futures task force; all with this principle in mind. These past actions - along with good examples of sustainable design (e.g. Riverwalk) and potential zoning opportunities (e.g. a net-zero building bylaw)-all bode well for future progress but will require awareness raising and consideration of who will bear the cost of financing increased capital investment for some of these sustainability features. Concord School District has built progressively more sustainable buildings beginning with Willard up to and including the HS which is the greenest HS in the State. Many building improvements have been done over the years all with an eye toward sustainability. Continued focus on sustainability will be at the forefront of decision making going forward.</p>

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	Livable Built Environment BP 1.11 Discourage development in hazard zones	<p>Green building designs that meet the standards of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or similar rating system are energy and resource efficient, reduce waste and pollution, and improve occupant health and productivity. Energy conservation refers to measures that reduce energy consumption through energy efficiency or behavioral change. Together these approaches reduce energy costs and improve environmental quality and community health. They can be implemented through strategies such as code requirements, regulatory incentives, and investment programs (e.g., grants to homeowners for weatherization of their homes).</p>	<p>The primary types of "hazard zone" where Concord needs to avoid future development include areas vulnerable to future flooding under climate change and brownfields that have been partially remediated. Concord needs to strengthen its planning for flood vulnerability by incorporating some form of climate projection data in adaptation planning, strengthening our currently strong emergency response to address future flood hazards in a regional manner. Brownfield development requires robust planning and regulatory coordination.</p>
2. Harmony With Nature			
	Harmony With Nature BP 2.1 Restore, connect, and protect natural habitats and sensitive lands	<p>Natural habitats are areas or landscapes—such as wetlands, riparian corridors, and woodlands—inhabited by a species or community of species, and can include those designated as rare and endangered. Sensitive lands, including steep slopes and geographically unstable areas, contain natural features that are environmentally significant and easily disturbed by human activity. These resources provide important environmental benefits. Restoring degraded habitat can reestablish natural diversity and associated ecosystem services.</p>	<p>About 35% of Concord is open space, protected by local land trusts, the Town (including agricultural land), state and federal agencies, and private land owners. Concord's open spaces and protected natural resources are an important part of Town character. Increasing cost of land will make it difficult to protect these resources from development or through open space acquisitions. Concord should seek to connect its green spaces and provide appropriate access to these natural resources while balancing the needs of all. Public/private partnerships should be encouraged to help further protect valuable open space. High School faculty could be engaged to think of ways students could be provided experiential learning opportunities while helping some of these committees carry out the work necessary to restore and protect habitats.</p>

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	<p>Harmony With Nature BP 2.2 Plan for the provision and protection of green infrastructure</p>	<p>Green infrastructure is a strategically planned and managed network of green open spaces, including parks, greenways, and protected lands. Green infrastructure may also be defined as features that use natural topography and vegetation to capture, store, and infiltrate stormwater runoff, often in urban settings. This includes features such as bioswales, rain gardens, and green roofs. Green infrastructure provides a range of critical functions and ecosystem services to communities, such as wildlife habitat, stormwater management, and recreational opportunities.</p>	<p>Concord has a strong green infrastructure--both physically and with municipal management plans and bylaws. The Town should build on this solid base through education and sponsoring innovative approaches to build and enhance it especially as development continues and climate change occurs</p>
	<p>Harmony With Nature BP 2.3 Encourage development that respects natural topography</p>	<p>Sensitive natural topography includes features such as hillsides, ridges, steep slopes, or lowlands that can pose challenges to development. Taking these features into account in planning for private development and public infrastructure can reduce construction costs, minimize natural hazard risks from flooding or landslides, and mitigate the impacts of construction on natural resources, including soils, vegetation, and water systems</p>	<p>An important element of Concord's character has been from protecting the Town's natural topography. A high demand for housing and limited developable land in Concord is putting pressure on the Town's natural beauty. It would be prudent to assess and update Zoning Bylaws to reflect this dynamic and protect the natural resources while meeting future housing and market demands. School building and renovation plans should be mindful of the these needs during planning stages.</p>
	<p>Harmony With Nature BP 2.4 Enact policies to reduce carbon footprints</p>	<p>The term "carbon footprint" is used to describe the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases emitted by a given entity, such as an individual, company, or city) in a certain time frame. It provides a measure of the environmental impact of a particular lifestyle or operation, and encompasses both the direct consumption of fossil fuels as well as indirect emissions associated with the manufacture and transport of all goods and services the entity consumes. Policies designed to reduce the carbon footprint benefit the environment and have associated benefits on air quality and health. Because these policies are often associated with energy conservation, they can also have positive economic benefits for local governments and community members.</p>	<p>The community is very interested in sustainability with several committees working on the various components. This is in spite of our lack of concentrated population and not participating in some state programs. A good list of opportunities has been identified. Schools have the opportunity to educate students and townspeople (through Community Ed) on sustainability principles and habits that reduce one's carbon footprint. There is also ongoing attempts to decrease the District's carbon footprint wherever possible.</p>

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	Harmony With Nature BP 2.5 Comply with state and local air quality standards	<p>Air quality standards are limits on the quantity of pollutants in the air during a given period in a defined area. Under the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established air quality standards for ground-level ozone, lead, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide to protect public health and the environment and enforced by state and local governments. Pollutants may come from mobile sources (e.g., cars and trucks), area sources (e.g., small businesses), or point sources (e.g., power plants).</p>	<p>in general the town is in compliance with EPA standards and has programs to reduce pollutants. Further opportunities have been identified which leverage the evolution on energy and transportation technologies.</p>
	Harmony With Nature BP 2.6 Encourage climate change adaptation	<p>Adapting to climate change involves adjusting natural and human systems to projected impacts such as sea level rise and increased frequencies of extreme weather events as well as long-term shifts in precipitation levels, growing season length, and native vegetation and wildlife populations. Successful adaptation strategies reduce community vulnerability and minimize adverse effects on the environment, economy, and public health.</p>	<p>A hazard mitigation plan is underway but no detailed vulnerability assessment from climate change has been performed for the town. We need to get current information on vulnerability and do resilience planning in cooperation with the MAPC vulnerability assessment. Schools are planning for sustainable buildings that will stand the test of time including climate change potentialities.</p>
	Harmony With Nature BP 2.7 Provide for renewable energy use	<p>Renewable energy sources, which are derived directly or indirectly from the sun or natural movements and mechanisms of the environment—including solar, wind, biomass, hydropower, ocean thermal, wave action, and tidal action—are naturally regenerated over a short timescale and do not diminish. Use of renewable energy reduces reliance on coal-fired energy plants and other sources of fossil fuels.</p>	<p>The town has installed solar fields and has programs to incent individual use. The timeline for conversion to renewable energy is to slow but the energy task force has recommend a plan to accelerate. The School District is looking at ways to best produce and use renewable energy for the betterment of our students and their futures. To date Solar panels are deployed at Willard and others are in the planning stages at other school locations. In addition the schools are participating in an electric bus program through a grant from the State Dept of Energy.</p>

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	Harmony With Nature BP 2.8 Provide for solid waste reduction	Solid waste is garbage or refuse resulting from human activities. It can include food scraps, yard waste, packaging materials, broken or discarded household items, and construction and demolition debris. Many common solid waste items—such as glass, aluminum and other metals, paper and cardboard, certain plastics, and food scraps and other organic materials—can be diverted from the waste stream and recycled into new products or composted.	We have several voluntary recycling programs but use is not required or enforced. We need to research opportunity for single stream recycling and research best practices while managing the cost and the effect on our landfill. Schools are looking at ways to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills.
	Harmony With Nature BP 2.9 Encourage water conservation and plan for a lasting water supply	Reducing water use by buildings and landscapes through water conservation and planning for a lasting water supply are critical to a community’s long-term sustainability, particularly in regions with limited precipitation or other sources of water. Access to ground or surface water sources sufficient for anticipated future water use levels and a well-maintained supply system to deliver this water to end users are important to ensure.	The town has an active water management system and sources for additional supply although enforcement is not strong and use of water in private wells is unregulated. We have several opportunities to strengthen our water management through integration with state and federal programs and local regulation and education programs.
	Harmony With Nature BP 2.10 Protect and manage streams, watersheds, and floodplains	A stream is a body of water flowing over the ground in a channel. A watershed is an area of land drained by a river, river system, or other body of water. A floodplain is an area of low-lying ground adjacent to a body of water that is susceptible to inundation. These resources have typically been extensively altered in urban environments—for example, by replacing streams with underground culverts or constructing buildings in the floodplain—negatively affecting the natural and beneficial functions they provide. Watershed management is important to protecting water supply, water quality, drainage, stormwater runoff and other functions at a watershed scale.	Current systems to protect these wetlands, etc. should stay in place. Current approaches and regulations might need to be changed to protect both resources and people’s property from the impact of climate change. The Town should monitor State and Federal environmental regulatory actions regarding wetlands and waterway protection for impact on the Town’s streams, watersheds, and flood plains. High School faculty could be engaged to think of ways students could be provided experiential learning opportunities while helping some of these committees carry out this work.
3. Resilient Economy			

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	Resilient Economy BP 3.1 Provide the physical capacity for economic growth	<p>Economic growth is characterized by an increase in the amounts of goods and services that an economy is able to produce over time. Providing the physical capacity for economic growth means ensuring that adequate space will be available for commercial and industrial development and redevelopment for nonresidential land uses. Communities need to plan for the necessary amount of land and structures appropriately built, sized, and located to support existing and future production of goods and services based on current and projected economic conditions. This could entail decline as well as growth in demand depending on market conditions and as certain economic sectors become obsolete.</p>	<p>Concord faces constraints in physical capacity for economic development, including lack of developable land and historical and other restrictions. However, Concord has the advantage of several developed areas that provide in-fill opportunities (i.e. Virginia Road and Baker Avenue), and clear zoning. Providing economic incentives and streamlined permitting would support the realization of these opportunities.</p>
	Resilient Economy BP 3.2 Plan for a balanced land-use mix for fiscal sustainability	<p>A balanced land use mix for fiscal sustainability is characterized by a pattern that includes both residential and nonresidential uses, such that the long-term cost of providing a desirable level of public services to residents, business owners, and visitors is closely matched to the tax or user-fee revenue generated by those uses.</p>	<p>Concord's land use is sufficiently varied to assist with municipal fiscal sustainability, although the land use is principally residential. The volume of tax exempt land is an obstacle (voluntary PILOT payments are under discussion). Recent center-focused planning (i.e. West Concord Master Plan) has assisted by providing for center-based mixed-use development.</p>
	Resilient Economy BP 3.3 Plan for transportation access to employment centers	<p>Plans should ensure that areas with high job density are accessible to employees via one or more travel modes (automobile, transit, bicycling, walking). More transportation modes serving the employment center offer employees a wider range of commuting options. This is important for improving access to employment opportunities, particularly among populations that may not have personal vehicles.</p>	<p>With the presence of commuter rail, bus service and highway access, Concord has some advantages in bringing workers to its employment centers. However, Concord remains very dependent on automobile use and faces constraints in improving multi-modal transportation availability, particularly bicycling and walking. Certain employment areas are far from public transportation (i.e. Virginia Road). Realistic transportation choices for travel within the town are limited, though bicycling and walking improvements are pending.</p>

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	Resilient Economy BP 3.4 Promote green businesses and jobs	<p>A green business is any business offering environmentally friendly products and services through sustainable business models and practices. Green jobs are provided by agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative, service, or other business activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. Green businesses and jobs may include, but are not limited to, those associated with industrial processes with closed-loop systems in which the wastes of one industry are the raw materials for another.</p>	<p>Concord has several advantages in attracting and supporting green businesses, including its reputation as a progressive community and its support for its agricultural base. High rents are an obstacle. Targeted economic incentives would assist in this area.</p>
	Resilient Economy BP 3.5 Encourage community-based economic development and revitalization	<p>Community-based economic development is development that promotes, supports, and invests in businesses that serve local needs and are compatible with the vision, character, and cultural values of the community. This approach encourages using local resources in ways that enhance economic opportunities while improving social conditions and supporting locally owned and produced goods and services. These activities foster connections and a sense of place, reduce the need for imports, and stimulate the local economy. This in turn can increase investment in and revitalization of downtowns, commercial areas, neighborhoods, and other place-based community resources.</p>	<p>Concord's strengths in community based economic development include positive planning efforts (i.e. West Concord Master Plan), the formula business by-law and the large number of locally owned businesses. Obstacles include high rents and the inability of many who work in town to live in town. There may be opportunities for improvement through the development of economic plans that provide benefits to businesses that support local needs in a fashion consistent with the town's character and values.</p>
	Resilient Economy BP 3.6 Provide and maintain infrastructure capacity in line with growth or decline demands	<p>Keeping infrastructure capacity in line with demand involves ensuring that structures and networks are appropriately sized to adequately serve existing and future development. This is important in balancing quality of service provision with costs to the local government. Infrastructure planning may include decommissioning or realigning infrastructure in neighborhoods experiencing protracted population decline—for example, to facilitate a transition from residential uses to green infrastructure, urban agriculture, or renewable energy production.</p>	<p>Concord's infrastructure is generally well sized, but limitations exist in sewer capacity and cell service, among other areas. Concord now offers broadband service. Parking capacity is limited and is the subject of ongoing planning and implementation efforts.</p>

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	Resilient Economy BP 3.7 Plan for post-disaster economic recovery	Planning for post-disaster economic recovery before a disaster happens helps communities resume economic activities following damage or destruction by a natural or human-made disaster (e.g., hurricane, landslide, wildfire, earthquake, terrorist attack). Plans for post-disaster recovery are characterized by officially adopted policies and implementation tools put in place before or after an event to direct recovery after a disaster event has occurred.	Concord provides for post-disaster recovery through mutual aid arrangements, existing response plans of schools and Emerson Hospital and effective town department response teams. Concord avoids some risks by having mostly underground utilities. Concord does not have a specific town-wide economic recovery plan
4. Interwoven Equity			
	Interwoven Equity BP 4.1 Provide a range of housing types	A range of housing types is characterized by the presence of residential units of different sizes, configurations, tenures, and price points located in buildings of different sizes, configurations, ages, and ownership structures. Providing a range of housing types accommodates varying lifestyle choices and affordability needs and makes it possible for households of different sizes and income levels to live in close proximity to one another	Concord has successfully met its state-mandated 10% SHI, allowing control over future development, but continues to face challenges over funding and locating housing to meet the needs of seniors and our workforce. Many residents still don't see or understand why Concord needs affordable housing, and would prefer to see land used in other ways.
	Interwoven Equity BP 4.2 Plan for jobs/housing balance	A jobs/housing balance is characterized by a roughly equal number of jobs and housing units (households) within a commuter shed. A strong jobs/housing balance can also result in jobs that are better matched to the labor force living in the commuter shed, resulting in lower vehicle miles traveled, improved worker productivity, and higher overall quality of life. When coordinated with multimodal transportation investments, it improves access to employment opportunities for disadvantaged populations.	Concord is a very desirable town to live in, due to its amenities and services, but housing remains out of reach for many who work here, who grew up here and would like to remain or move back, or would like to remain here as they age. Both zoning and high property taxes remain barriers to diversifying housing. There is a concern that our economic and demographic diversity will suffer unless housing challenges are addressed

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	<p>Interwoven Equity BP 4.3 Plan for physical, environmental, and economic improvement of at risk neighborhoods</p>	<p>At-risk neighborhoods are experiencing falling property values, high real estate foreclosure rates, rapid depopulation, or physical deterioration. Distressed neighborhoods suffer from disinvestment and physical deterioration for many reasons, including (but not limited to) the existence of cheap land on the urban fringe, the financial burdens of maintaining an aging building stock, economic restructuring, land speculation, and the dissolution or relocation of anchor institutions. A disadvantaged neighborhood is a neighborhood in which residents have reduced access to resources and capital due to factors such as high levels of poverty and unemployment and low levels of educational attainment. These neighborhoods often exhibit high rates of both physical disorder (e.g., abandoned buildings, graffiti, vandalism, litter, disrepair) and social disorder (e.g., crime, violence, loitering, drinking and drug use).</p>	<p>Concord is well served by the Regional Housing Services Office, which coordinates affordable housing in the 7 town region. However, most housing issues are addressed primarily on a town-by-town basis, not as a region</p>
	<p>Interwoven Equity BP 4.4 Plan for improved health and safety for at-risk populations</p>	<p>An at-risk population is characterized by vulnerability to health or safety impacts through factors such as race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geography, gender, age, behavior, or disability status. These populations may have additional needs before, during, and after a destabilizing event such as a natural or human-made disaster or period of extreme weather, or throughout an indefinite period of localized instability related to an economic downturn or a period of social turmoil. At-risk populations include children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, those living in institutionalized settings, those with limited English proficiency, and those who are transportation disadvantaged.</p>	<p>Concord is a caring community as demonstrated through extensive COA services, Hugh Cargill Trust, Tax Relief funding, Tax exemptions, support of MinuteMan ARC and other social services. While we don't have formal process for assisting low income families, there are opportunities to improve coordination across philanthropic groups, provide transportation and access to services (e.g. childcare) and to address the opioid crisis, while recognizing the competition for available funds.</p>

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	<p>Interwoven Equity BP 4.5 Provide accessible and quality public services, facilities, and health care to minority & low-income neighborhoods</p>	<p>A public service is a service performed for the benefit of the people who live in (and sometimes those who visit) the jurisdiction. A public facility is any building or property—such as a library, park, or community center—owned, leased, or funded by a public entity. Public services, facilities, and health care should be located so that all members of the public have safe and convenient transportation options to reach quality services and facilities that meet or exceed industry standards for service provision. Minority and low-income neighborhoods are often underserved by public services and facilities and healthcare providers.</p>	<p>Those minority and low-income individuals and families living in Concord ostensibly have equal access to the services that are available to serve them (e.g. OpenTable, COA, etc.); however, transportation linkages to village centers or services (e.g. new Open Table location in Maynard), may present challenges. We are fortunate to have a Community Services Coordinator but the Town could be more deliberate in coordinating and marketing available services. Opportunities include ESL support in schools, understanding food security challenges and making healthy and affordable food more accessible. Opportunities exist to utilize district resources in providing some of the services necessary to educate people about health care and services through community ed. Facilities could be utilized in off hours to assist efforts in this area.</p>
	<p>Interwoven Equity BP 4.6 Upgrade infrastructure and facilities in older and substandard areas</p>	<p>Infrastructure comprises the physical systems that allow societies and economies to function. These include water mains, storm and sanitary sewers, electrical grids, telecommunications facilities, and transportation facilities such as bridges, tunnels, and roadways. Upgrading is the process of improving these infrastructure and facilities through the addition or replacement of existing components with newer versions. An older area is a neighborhood, corridor, or district that has been developed and continuously occupied for multiple decades. A substandard area is a neighborhood, district, or corridor with infrastructure that fails to meet established standards.</p>	<p>While we are fortunate to have a public works department and light plant that are proactive and prevent any specific neighborhoods from being disadvantaged, there are opportunities to keep Concord at the cutting edge of infrastructure development by widening fiber optic networks, addressing pedestrian/ADA accessibility across the Assabet in West Concord, and ensuring adequate and secure water and wastewater treatment. Longer-term scenarios should address potential drought, cyber security and energy challenges (e.g. net zero buildings or district heating). This is an ongoing aspect of maintenance planning by the school district.</p>

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	Interwoven Equity BP 4.7 Plan for workforce diversity and development	<p>Workforce diversity is characterized by the employment of a wide variety of people in terms of age, cultural background, physical ability, race and ethnicity, religion, and gender identity. Workforce development is an economic development strategy that focuses on people rather than businesses; it attempts to enhance a region's economic stability and prosperity by developing jobs that match existing skills within the local workforce or training workers to meet the labor needs of local industries.</p>	<p>Support for Minuteman Tech, Minuteman ARC and CCHS internship program should be continued. Given Concord's relatively homogenous population with a relative lack of economic diversity, several large employers (i.e. Emerson Hospital) provide some diversity of opportunity, but more should be done to target business segments attractive to millennials, expand vocational training opportunities and consider zoning opportunities to incentivize business development. Concord Community Education department of the School District is a great resource to help educate people on opportunities and to train people for jobs that may be developed to satisfy this goal.</p>
	Interwoven Equity BP 4.8 Protect vulnerable populations from natural hazards	<p>A natural hazard is a natural event that threatens lives, property, and other assets. Natural hazards include floods, high wind events, landslides, earthquakes, and wildfires. Vulnerable neighborhoods face higher risks than others when disaster events occur. A population may be vulnerable for a variety of reasons, including location, socioeconomic status or access to resources, lack of leadership and organization, and lack of planning.</p>	<p>The Town's emergency response system (including first responders, CMLP, reverse 911, and regional cooperation) is strong and has been tested, but additional efforts could establish neighborhood-level connections, strengthen COA and FISH volunteer efforts and account for increased potential flood hazards.</p>
	Interwoven Equity BP 4.9 Promote environmental justice	<p>Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Its goal is to provide all communities and persons across the nation with the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to decision making processes. This results in healthy environments for all in which to live, learn, and work.</p>	<p>The Town has a relatively pristine environment with only a few areas suffering significant environmental degradation (e.g. 2229 Main Street, White Pond). Re-development opportunities for 2229 Main Street could further strengthen environmental justice protections by targeting disabled or elderly population uses (post-cleanup). Schools can participate in the promotion of environmental justice through educational programming.</p>
5. Healthy Community			

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	Healthy Community BP 5.1 Reduce exposure to toxins and pollutants in the natural and built environments	<p>Toxins are poisonous substances capable of causing disease in living organisms. Pollutants are waste substances or forms of energy (noise, light, heat), often resulting from industrial processes, that can contaminate air, water, and soil and cause adverse changes in the environment. Examples include carbon monoxide and other gases as well as soot and particulate matter produced by fossil fuel combustion; toxic chemicals used or created in industrial processes; pesticides and excess nutrients from agricultural operations; and toxic gases released by paints or adhesives</p>	<p>Concord has a proactive environmentally aware population regarding the health hazards of toxins and pollutants, Public water is tested; however, the Sudbury River remains polluted, Route 2 traffic affects air quality, pesticides are in use, and leaf blowers create noise pollution. There is need for a strategic approach to by-laws and regulations regarding these problems, and town use of electric busses could be considered. Schools can use low toxicity cleaning products throughout the schools.</p>
	Healthy Community BP 5.2 Plan for increase public safety through reeducation of crime and injuries	<p>Public safety involves prevention of and protection from events such as crimes or disasters that could bring danger, injury, or damage to the general public. Although addressing crime is typically considered a governmental responsibility (police, fire, and emergency services), it can also be reduced through environmental design using crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles.</p>	<p>Concord has a low crime rate, but continued assessment of nighttime lighting for public safety and the utilization of accepted "crime prevention through environmental design" principles are advisable</p>
	Healthy Community BP 5.3 Plan for the mitigation and redevelopment of brownfields for productive uses	<p>A brownfield is defined by the federal government as any abandoned, idled, or underused real property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by the presence or potential presence of environmental contamination. Redevelopment of these sites requires an environmental assessment to determine the extent of contamination and to develop remediation strategies. The feasibility of site cleanup, market forces, and other factors may help define appropriate reuse options, which range from open space to mixed use development</p>	<p>Concord should monitor the remediation of brownfield sites, coordinate with state and federal regulatory agencies on status of these sites, and develop plans to reuse these sites to meet community needs. There is the opportunity for interaction with school busing resources in this area.</p>

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	<p>Healthy Community BP 5.4 Plan for physical activity and healthy lifestyles</p>	<p>healthy lifestyle is characterized by individual practices and behavioral choices that enhance health and wellbeing. Barriers to the design of the physical environment can influence rates of physical activity and health benefits. Active transportation facilities (e.g., sidewalks and bike lanes) and accessible, equitably distributed recreational opportunities support physical activity and healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>Concord provides its citizens with many opportunities for recreation and the development of a health life style via access to public trails for biking and hiking, access to national and state park facilities, playgrounds, and town exercise facilities. Further progress could be achieved via 1. Increasing, improving, and connecting pedestrian and bike systems including river and Route 2 crossings 2. Providing increased parking for bikes 3. Completing streets and removing sidewalk obstructions</p>
	<p>Healthy Community BP 5.5 Provide accessible parks, recreations, facilities, greenways and open space near all neighborhoods</p>	<p>Parks are areas of land—often in a natural state or improved with facilities for rest and recreation—set aside for the public’s use and enjoyment. Greenways are strips of undeveloped land that provide corridors for environmental and recreational use and connect areas of open space. These facilities offer a range of benefits to residents, including opportunities for increased physical activity. The proximity of parks to neighborhoods supports increased physical activity among residents; however, social and environmental impediments such as crime, unsafe pedestrian conditions, and noxious land uses may decrease accessibility and subsequent use of these facilities. Plans should ensure that the type of park and its function and design are appropriate for its locational context.</p>	<p>Public parks and their connecting greenways provide multiple benefits to town citizens including opportunities for increased physical activity. Concord residents have access to a diversity of these recreational spaces including conservation land, state and national parkland and public exercise facilities. It lacks pocket neighborhood parks, ride out playgrounds, and a town common. Further coordination with the School District for use of the open space on school property is an opportunity to expand access to parks and recreation.</p>

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	Healthy Community BP 5.6 Plan for access to healthy, locally-grown foods for all neighborhoods	<p>A lack of access to fresh, healthy foods contributes to obesity and negative health outcomes. In many urban areas, residents face difficulties in buying affordable or good-quality fresh food, a situation commonly referred to as a “food desert.” Healthy foods include those that are fresh or minimally processed, naturally dense in nutrients, and low in fat, sodium, and cholesterol. Locally grown goods are those produced in close proximity to consumers in terms of both geographic distance and the supply chain. Though there is no standard definition of locally grown, sources can range from backyards and community gardens to farms within the region or state.</p>	<p>Local surveys document that Concord residents value the health benefits afforded by access to fresh, locally grown and healthy foods. Multiple farm stands and community programs engaging citizens in local agriculture already exist. Affordability, lack of refrigeration at the food pantry, the need for CSA access and produce delivery systems, and deficiencies in West Concord access to existing resources remain problems</p>
	Healthy Community BP 5.7 Plan for equitable access to health care providers, schools, public safety facilities and arts and cultural facilities	<p>Equitable access ensures services and facilities are reachable by all persons, regardless of social or economic background. Healthcare providers are those individuals, institutions, or agencies that provide healthcare services to consumers. Schools are institutions that provide education or instruction. Public safety facilities provide safety and emergency services to a community, including police and fire protection. Arts and cultural facilities provide programs and activities related to the arts and culture, including performing arts centers, concert halls, museums, galleries, and other related facilities.</p>	<p>Concord has many strengths in providing its citizens access to health, safety, educational, and cultural facilities. It has a community hospital and outpatient facilities, good public services, access to schools, a museum, multiple art organizations, and generous support from its citizens. Improvements are needed in providing transportation linkage to these facilities and increasing funding to the arts. Schools are involved in ensuring access to facilities on school grounds that offer public benefit.</p>
6. Responsible Regionalism			

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	Responsible Regionalism BP 6.1 Coordinate local land use plans with regional transportation investments	<p>A local land use plan is an officially adopted long-range comprehensive or sub-area (i.e., a neighborhood, corridor, or district) plan describing or depicting desirable future uses of land within a jurisdiction. Regional transportation investments are any projects listed in a transportation improvement program intended to improve a transportation network serving a multi-jurisdictional area, often included in metropolitan planning organization plans. These projects include investments in highways and streets, public transit, and pedestrian and bicycle systems.</p>	<p>Concord has multiple regionally connected public and private transportation assets, including: Route 2; two MBTA commuter rail stations; several bike/multipurpose trails (Minuteman Bikeway Extension, Bruce Freeman Trail and, the Battle Road Trail), and a bus line to Boston. Concord has the opportunity to broaden its participation in regionally coordinated transportation plans and services to help improve the daily transportation needs of commuters, local residents, and visitors. This is an area where coordination with the school district's busing capabilities may provide benefit.</p>
	Responsible Regionalism BP 6.2 Coordinate local and regional housing plan goals	<p>A regional housing plan is any officially adopted plan assessing current housing conditions and describing or depicting desirable future housing conditions across a multijurisdictional area. If applicable, these plans include state-mandated regional "fair share" plans establishing target affordable housing unit allocations among constituent jurisdictions. Local communities should provide for affordable housing in a manner consistent with the needs and targets defined in regional housing plans.</p>	<p>Concord currently maintains a Housing Production Plan and participates with neighboring towns to support the Regional Housing Services Office, an entity providing administrative services to monitor affordable housing in the several towns. A regional housing plan structure to establish affordable housing across several towns is not presently required in MA</p>

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	Responsible Regionalism BP 6.3 Coordinate local open space plans with regional green infrastructure plans	<p>A local open space plan is any officially adopted functional plan or comprehensive plan element describing or depicting desirable future locations or conditions for open space within a local jurisdiction. A regional green infrastructure plan is any officially adopted functional plan or comprehensive plan element describing or depicting desirable future locations or conditions for parks, greenways, protected lands, and other types of green infrastructure within a multijurisdictional area. Coordinating local open space plans with regional green infrastructure plans can maximize both the ecological and public benefits that green infrastructure provides and can help leverage investment in parks, greenways, trails, and other green infrastructure projects.</p>	<p>Concord maintains an active "chapter land" program, registering lands that are listed with conservation or agricultural restrictions. In addition, several regional organizations participate with Concord to raise awareness and maintain and expand open space and green corridors adjacent to and across Concord's borders. Examples of successful regional cooperation include Minute Man National Historic Park, SUASCO River Stewardship Council, Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge, Bay Circuit Trail, Battle Road Scenic Byway, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Ongoing participation with the MAGIC communities and HATS communities will provide additional opportunities.</p>
	Responsible Regionalism BP 6.4 Delineate designated growth areas that are served by transit	<p>A designated growth area is an area delineated in an officially adopted local or regional comprehensive plan where higher density development is permitted or encouraged and urban services—including public transportation (where feasible)—are (or are scheduled to be) available. The purpose of a designated growth area is to accommodate and focus projected future growth (typically over a 20-year timeframe) within a municipality, county, or region through a compact, resource-efficient pattern of development.</p>	<p>An aging population will have significant planning implications on the metro-region. Concord needs to understand metro-regional demographic growth projections and plans and assess the impact on housing, transportation, and the local economic base</p>

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	<p>Responsible Regionalism BP 6.5 Promote regional cooperation and sharing of resources</p>	<p>Regional cooperation and sharing of resources covers any situation where multiple jurisdictions coordinate the provision of public services and facilities. This includes instances where separate jurisdictions share equipment or facilities, where jurisdictions consolidate service or facility provision, and where jurisdictions share a tax base. The latter is a revenue-sharing arrangement whereby local jurisdictions share tax proceeds from new development for the purposes of alleviating economic disparities among constituent jurisdictions and/or financing region-serving infrastructure and facilities.</p>	<p>Regional sharing of resources is primarily in place with Concord Carlisle Regional High School and Minuteman Tech Vocational High School. Regional emergency services (and shared expense) and emergency response as well as shared disaster response cooperation among towns is also in place, although sharing of dispatch services has not been supported across towns. The Board of Health and Building Departments have provided assistance to Carlisle and Lincoln for inspection services. Regional cooperation exists through MAPC and the MAGIC collaboration and those organizations have provided grant monies for shared initiatives such as a grant-writer. Concord's participation in the MA Green Communities Act has provided resources for improving energy performance in municipal facilities. Concord participates in the Community Preservation Act and has realized resources for investment in housing, recreation, open space, and historic resources through that resource sharing arrangement, although the percentage of Concord's return is diminishing each year. MA statutes limit sharing of resources managed by Concord Municipal Light Plant. Consideration of district heating facilities within town or across towns and shared waste water systems may be desirable. The Library participates with the Minuteman Library System to share library resources.</p>

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	Responsible Regionalism BP 6.6 Enhance connections between local activity centers and regional destinations	<p>A local activity center is a node containing a high concentration of employment and commerce. A regional destination is a location that is responsible for a high proportion of trip ends within a regional transportation network, such as a job cluster, a major shopping or cultural center (e.g., large performance art venues and museums) or district, or a major park or recreational facility. A connection between a local activity center and a regional destination may be one or more surface streets, grade-separated highways, off-road trails, or transit corridors.</p>	<p>There are several transportation services in Concord (COA, Liberty Ride, Commuter Rail), however they are very limited in terms of services and geographic scope. The potential to enhance services and make connections to regional destinations (employment centers, Burlington Mall, Alewife T) exists with private services (ride hailing) and public services. A more robust intratown service could facilitate the use of the Commuter Rail. As for bike and pedestrian connections, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail will add connectivity in West Concord. A grade separated crossing of Route 2 would enhance connectivity between Concord, West Concord, and the Middle School.</p>
	Responsible Regionalism BP 6.7 Coordinate local and regional populations and economic projections	<p>A population projection is an estimate of the future population for a particular jurisdiction or multi-jurisdictional area. An economic projection is an estimate of future economic conditions (e.g., employment by industry or sector, personal income, public revenue) for a particular jurisdiction or multijurisdictional area. Common time horizons for population and economic projections are 20 to 30 years. Coordinating local and regional projections minimizes the risk of planning cross purposes as the result of inconsistent data.</p>	<p>Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) may estimate regional economic conditions and population but Concord and the surrounding towns generally establish their budgets annually, without benefit of planning across municipalities. Benefits from regional planning is an opportunity to evaluate.</p>
	Responsible Regionalism BP 6.8 Include regional development visions and plans in local planning scenarios	<p>A regional development vision or plan is a description or depiction of one or more potential future development patterns across a multijurisdictional area, based on a set or sets of policy, demographic, and economic assumptions. A local planning scenario is a description or depiction of a potential future development pattern for a jurisdiction, based on a set of policy, demographic, and economic assumptions. While many scenario planning efforts present preferred scenarios, the real value of such planning is to allow participants to consider alternative ways of realizing a collective vision, including different outcomes that may be likely given the difficulty of accurately predicting certain demographic and economic trends</p>	<p>Concord has participated in regional development visions and plans through MAGIC, MAPC, HATS, Battle Road Scenic Byway, BFRT, FEMA, MAEMA, Massport, Department of Corrections as well as the MA DOT Transportation Improvement Planning. Each opportunity for collaboration in planning has myriad challenges and many have resulted in beneficial results for all communities. Concord's challenge is to be alert to changes in the regional visions of state and federal agencies that won land in the town and to distinguish between future development that will be beneficial to the Town's goals and that which would be detrimental.</p>

Topic Area	Best Practice	Best Practice Description	SWOT Synopsis
	Responsible Regionalism BP 6.9 Encourage consistency between local capital improvement programs and regional infrastructure priorities	<p>A local capital improvement program is an officially adopted plan describing or depicting capital projects that will be funded within a local jurisdiction during a multiyear (usually five-year) time horizon. Regional infrastructure priorities and funding are the capital projects and monetary resources designated in officially adopted plans or investment policies that identify regional infrastructure facility needs throughout a multijurisdictional area.</p>	<p>Concord actively participates in establishing shared regional infrastructure priorities through MA DOT TIP, BFRT, CASE Collaborative, MSBA, CPA, and several public private partnerships in town. Additionally, clean up of Brownfield sites within the town have required participation with EPA and MA entities to negotiate appropriate clean-up protocols. There are always opportunities to share costs and Concord's challenge is to identify when shared regional resources will benefit the Town. Regional infrastructure priorities are set by the TIP each year and modified as funding becomes available from the state. This results in multi-year development projects that must be managed by Town departments with Town resources.</p>