



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Thomas J. Aspell, Jr., City Manager

DATE: January 31, 2024

SUBJECT: 2022 – 2023 City Council Priorities

Recommendation

Accept this report as to the current status of the City Council Priorities established on February 7, 2022.

Background

Members of the City Council met on February 7, 2022 to discuss and set priorities for the remainder of Calendar Year 2022, as well as for Calendar Year 2023.

Discussion

Listed below, are the accepted priorities, projects and ongoing initiatives; and their respective statuses as of December 31, 2023.

GOAL 1. BALANCED BUDGET ISSUES: FY 2023 and 2024

a) Eliminate Use of Fund Balance to Balance Budget

Status: As part of the FY 2023 Budget adoption, the City Council approved reducing the use of fund balance to \$375,000. When setting the 2022 tax rate, the City received an additional \$578,000 in Rooms and Meals Tax revenue and reduced the Use of Fund Balance to zero in advance of the FY 2024 Budget proposal. For FY 2024, the City Council approved using \$295,150 from Fund Balance. The Unassigned Fund Balance, as reported in the June 30, 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), reflected a 19.6% unassigned fund balance. Use of \$295,150 to balance the FY 2024 Budget has the impact of reducing the Unassigned Fund Balance to 19.1%, which is still above the City Council goal of 18.5%. Retroactive to June 30, 2023, the City Council approved using \$385,000 from Unassigned Fund Balance as a transfer to the Assessing Reserve. This further reduced the revised Unassigned Balance from 19.1% to 18.6%. The fund balance amounts and percentages will change upon completion of the FY 2023 ACFR.

The completion of the FY 2023 ACFR reflects an Unassigned Fund Balance of \$15.6 million or 22.4% of expenses. Subsequent to July 1, 2023 (the beginning of FY 2024), the City Council approved the use of \$385,000 from Unassigned Fund Balance for General Services Department retention payments. With this use of fund balance, the Unassigned Fund Balance, as calculated for June 30, 2023, is reduced to \$15.2 million or 21.8%.

b) ARPA Strategy

Status: On March 14, 2022, City Council approved a supplemental resolution appropriating \$4,567,295 in ARPA funds as part of the Standard Revenue Replacement Option under the U.S. Treasury Final Rules for ARPA funds. The City received its first installment of \$2,283,647.65 in July 2021, and the second installment in August 2022. The first installment was distributed to applicable City Funds for FY 2022. The second installment was distributed to the Parking Fund and the General Fund as part of the FY 2023 revenue budget. A final allocation will be transferred to the General Fund in FY 2024.

Additionally, the following ARPA amounts have been received or approved in the following departments as subrecipients of the State of New Hampshire:

General Services:

- \$760,000 from the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) as part of the \$3.8 million facility refurbishment at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant;
- \$166,000 from the NHDES for the replacement of a sludge holding tank mixing system at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant;
- \$50,000 from the NHDES for cyber security technology control improvements at the Wastewater Treatment Plants;
- \$50,000 from the NHDES for cyber security technology control improvements at the Hutchins Street Water Treatment Plant;
- \$250,000 from the NHDES to install a photovoltaic solar array at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant; and
- \$100,000 from NHDES to conduct a process evaluation at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Police:

- \$80,217 from the NH Department of Justice to support the acquisition of a pick-up truck, two all-terrain vehicles, and a trailer.

c) Health Insurance Costs

Status: The City has received a not to exceed amount on its medical insurance of a 15.9% rate increase driven by high cost claimants and the impact of specialty medication utilization as a whole. The final rate is expected in February. The City currently contributes 90% of the premiums for medical and dental with the employee paying 10%.

d) Grant Funding Opportunities

Status: The General Services Department completed a grant application for approximately \$75,000 from the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to offset, in part, the replacement of a 2001 Mack sludge hauling truck. The grant was not approved. In

conjunction with the Information Technology Department, the General Services Department has secured grant funds to enhance cybersecurity for the City's water and wastewater treatment facilities. The Water Division has secured a grant in the amount of \$75,000 to prepare a citizen facing inventory of the community's water service lines relative to their material. The Wastewater Division has applied for grant funding for 10 infrastructure improvement projects through the NHDES' State Aid Grant and State Revolving Fund programs. NHDES has approved three grant applications: 1) Sludge Holding Tank Mixing System, \$166,000; 2) Chlorine Building Solar Collection System, \$250,000; and 3) Hall Street Process Evaluation, \$100,000.

The City is currently working on a Federal Aviation Administration Airport Terminals Program grant.

The Parks & Recreation Department applied for two EDA Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation grants. The first one was for the Phase 2 build of Terrill Park, which included an artificial turf field with lights, parking area, storage building, equipment and associated site work. The Terrill Park project is fully designed and permitted, and is "shovel ready". The second grant was for the design, permitting and construction of the boardwalk section of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail, which would connect the built section at Terrill Park to the new cornfield section near Loudon Road. Unfortunately, the City was not awarded either grant.

In January 2022, the NHDES awarded the Abbot-Downing Society a Brownfields Technical Assistance Grant to complete a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and Hazardous Building Materials Survey of the former Concord Stables located at 117.5 Warren Street. The City prepared the grant application on behalf of the Abbot-Downing Society. The cost of these assessments, which were completed in August 2022, was paid for entirely by the State. These studies will allow the City and Abbot-Downing Society to further refine the redevelopment strategy for the property, as well as position the project for future potential Brownfields Cleanup Grants from the US Environmental Protection Agency and NHDES to support redevelopment efforts. In July 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) provided the City with a Targeted Brownfields Assessment Grant to further refine the hazardous building materials study completed in August 2022. In December 2023, the City submitted a Brownfields Cleanup Grant application to the USEPA for \$1.27 million to address environmental contamination at the property. Grant awards will be announced in spring/summer 2024.

On April 11, 2022, the City Council authorized the City Manager to apply for two Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants: one for up to \$500,000 to support the construction of the new Riverfront Park in Penacook; and another for up to \$400,000 to rebuild the playground at White Park. A site visit with LWCF staff occurred on May 11, 2022, and the City has received notification that both projects are eligible projects. Funding applications for both projects were filed on December 16, 2022. The City was notified in September 2023 that both applications have been tentatively awarded, subject to final review by the Governor and Executive Council, which is expected to occur in early calendar year 2024. As part of the grant request for the new playground, the Parks and Recreation Department also received \$50,000 in private donations to help with construction costs.

The Parks & Recreation Department applied for an \$18,000 grant from the NH State Council on the Arts for repairs to the Eastman Clock Tower, and was recently notified that the application has been tentatively awarded, subject to review by the Governor and Executive Council.

Through its responsibility for Emergency Management, the Fire Department received permission from City Council to apply for \$259,062 from the State of New Hampshire Homeland Security Competitive Grant Program with the intention of purchasing a modular vehicle barrier system to protect crowds in closed roadways at public gatherings.

The Police Department applied for and received \$80,217 in ARPA funds. These funds were to be used to purchase two all-terrain vehicles, a pick-up truck, and a trailer. The Department has purchased a 16-foot enclosed trailer with this grant funding. The Department is still waiting for the arrival of the all-terrain vehicles.

In March 2023, the Concord Police Department researched grant funding opportunities through the Jeanne Shaheen Congressional Directed Spending grant. As a result, the Police Department prepared to submit applications for grant funding through the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies grant program. If approved, monies from this grant will allow the Department to replace and update older technologies currently in use, and to purchase new equipment to keep up with an ever-changing law enforcement environment. Grant money will also be used for training purposes to ensure that staff are properly trained in all aspects of their work.

In April 2023, the Concord Police Department utilized ARPA grant funding to purchase specialized police vehicles to include a 2022 Ford F150 four-wheel drive pick-up truck, an inline enclosed ATV trailer, and two Suzuki 750cc King Quad ATV's. The grant was also used to fund the purchase of personal protective equipment to include helmets, eye protection, and riding gloves for ATV operators. The Department has moved forward with training several officers in ATV safety. This grant project will dramatically improve the agency's ability to respond and work in remote areas of the city. This project is completed.

In June 2023, the Concord Police Department utilized grant funding from a Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) to fund advanced crime scene training for two police officers. This advanced crime scene training was held out of state and all associated costs related to the travel, lodging and course tuition was completely funded through the JAG grant.

In June 2023, the Concord Police Department utilized additional JAG funding to purchase a one-year license with GrayKey digital forensics. This cutting-edge software tool will allow the Computer Crimes Unit to more efficiently access and investigate cases which have a cellular phone component. The use of the JAG funding for the above listed equipment and training successfully completed this grant project.

In September 2023, the Concord Police Department received notification from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Assistance, Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program, that it has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$13,537.50. This grant is used to help offset the price of ballistic vest purchases for our sworn police officers. The Department will work through City Council to accept and appropriate the grant funding according to the City's financial policies.

In September 2023, the Concord Police Department was notified that it would be receiving grant funding from the NH Highway Safety Agency in the amount of \$42,716.12. This funding will be applied towards roadway safety and outreach initiatives conducted by the Police Department.

The Police Department was also notified that it will be receiving grant funding from the NH Department of Safety in the amount of \$38,390 to help fund overtime costs associated with identifying, investigating, and apprehending individuals and/or organizations that are involved in opioid/fentanyl related drug use and trafficking.

In December 2023, the City Council set a public hearing in January 2024 to accept and appropriate \$13,537.50 in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Assistance, Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership grant program. This grant funding will be used for the purchase of ballistic vests for newly hired police officers, as well as to replace in service ballistic vests prior to expiration. The City Council also set for a public hearing at the same meeting \$23,020 in grant funding from the Granite United Way grant project to be used to fund programming incurred by the Police Department for Adverse Childhood Experience Response Team (ACERT) activities.

On November 3, 2022, the NH Community Development Finance Authority tentatively awarded \$1.5 million in Community Development Block Grant funds to support development of a new Boys & Girls Club facility at 76 Community Drive, Penacook; as well as a new food pantry at the Christ the King Church on South Main Street. Both grants later received full approval. However, the Catholic Diocese, on behalf of Christ the King Church, later refused to accept these funds due to the standard CDBG requirement to attach a performance mortgage to the property for the CDBG compliance period.

On February 2, 2023, the City applied for up to \$1 million in InvestNH “per unit” grant funds. The grant is in recognition of the City’s approval of the Dakota Partners Langdon Avenue and Caleb Penacook Landing 2 Project. Supplemental information was provided to the NHBEA on June 29, 2023. The application is pending.

On March 13, 2023, the City Council approved Resolution #9538, which authorized the City Manager to apply for up to \$1 million of Community Center Improvement Program grant funds from the NH Community Development Finance Authority for the new Penacook Branch Library/Community Center to be developed in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Central NH at 76 Community Drive. The application, which was filed in April 2023, was not successful.

On September 11, 2023, the City Council approved Resolution #9574, which authorized the City Manager to seek a waiver and apply for up to an additional \$1 million of InvestNH MUP funds to support Dakota Partners’ Leavitt Farm affordable housing project at #103 Old Loudon Road. The application is currently pending.

GOAL 2. COMMUNITY-WIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES TO EXPAND TAX BASE

a) Bricks and Mortar

Status: The commercial construction at Exit 17, called Interchange Development, continues to progress. In March 2022, the Planning Board conditionally approved 1,500 SF for a restaurant, 2,750 SF for retail, and 2,500 SF for a credit union, which is currently under construction and partially completed. This is in addition to the already approved Market Basket, HomeGoods, State Liquor Outlet, and Wendy's restaurant at the site. The Planning Board recently approved a site plan application for a drive-thru pharmacy and coffee shop at 10 Whitney Road, which is across the street from the Merchants Way development. Construction of the coffee shop is currently underway. Additionally, in April 2023, the developers of the Merchants Way project filed applications for Phase 2 of the project, which will feature approximately 35,000 SF of retail and medical office uses.

The Grappone Mazda dealership at 134 Manchester Street is now complete.

Development of multiple pad sites at the Brixmor Plaza on Storrs Street is now completed. The project features approximately 16,000 SF of development, including two restaurants, an Xfinity store, and a coffee shop with drive thru.

During its December 2022 meeting, the Planning Board granted conditional site plan approval for a new five story, 30,000 SF mixed use building to be developed at 20 South Main Street. The Developer has modified the project back to a two-story building featuring a Friendly Toast Restaurant and event space, as well as a stand-alone diner and new restaurant on an abutting property. The revisions will be considered by the Planning Board in the coming months.

A new Texas Roadhouse restaurant has been approved to replace the former Newicks / Smokey Bones restaurants at 317 Loudon Road; and a new Popeye's restaurant recently opened at 304 Loudon Road.

In spring 2023, United Therapeutics Corporation began construction of a new 36,000 SF corporate aircraft hangar at the Concord Municipal Airport. The facility is scheduled for completion in early 2024. The project will generate approximately \$50,000 of lease revenue for the Airport in FY 2024, and between \$100,000 - \$150,000 in property taxes annually.

On June 23, 2023, Onyx Partners, LTD, a Massachusetts-based developer, acquired the former Regal Cinema site located at 282 Loudon Road for \$4.7 million. The same developer acquired the former Steeplegate Mall on October 13, 2023 for \$18.18 million. Combined, both sites have approximately 60 acres of land. In June 2023, a subsidiary of Onyx Partners acquired the former Regal Cinema property located at 282 Loudon Road for redevelopment. In September 2023, the developer applied for a Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) to redevelop said property, together with the Steeplegate Mall. Combined, the project will feature more than 300,000 SF of commercial space, as well as approximately 625 multi-family housing units. The CDP application was reviewed by the Planning Board at its October 18, 2023 meeting. On January 3, 2024, the Zoning Board of Adjustment is scheduled to review several variance applications to facilitate the project.

On December 20, 2023, ROI Revocable Trust received conditional approval of a Comprehensive Development Plan to develop a large, mixed use development on 92 acres of land located on Manchester Street and Black Hill Road. The project features 266 units of housing, an assisted living facility, a bank, medical office use, and a gas station with convenience store. The developer plans to proceed with formal site plan and subdivision applications in early 2024.

On May 23, 2022, the Concord Monitor announced that it had entered into a purchase and sales agreement with New England Family Housing concerning the sale of 95 acres for development. In March 2023, the developer announced that it had entered into a Purchase Option Agreement concerning 40 additional acres controlled by the Concord Solid Waste Co-op. With this additional real estate, the developer has indicated that the project may include approximately 946 housing units, including 120 affordable units. New England Family Housing is currently undertaking its due diligence for the transaction, and had a nonbinding Design Review Consultation with the Planning Board on October 18, 2023.

b) Zoning Rewrite

Status: Work continues on the final draft of Phase 1. Phase 2 public meetings were held virtually on March 28-31, 2022. Staff is currently reviewing and refining the proposed draft ordinance. The project is ongoing and remains a work in progress. Additionally, to implement the Concord Next Zoning Ordinance, amendments will also be required to the City's Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations. In July 2023, the City applied for \$99,685 of InvestNH HOP Grant funds to assist with completion of the Concord Next Ordinance, as well as associated updates to the Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations therewith. The City's application was not successful

c) Housing

Status:

- i. Former NH Employment Security Property: The City acquired the former NH Employment Security (NHES) property from the State of New Hampshire on October 31, 2014. The property, which was comprised of two parcels totaling 0.78 acres, consisted of a 26,100 SF building and 73 parking spaces. On May 20, 2021, the City Council approved Resolution #9375, which authorized the City Manager to enter into a Purchase and Sales Agreement with the John Flatley Company concerning sales and redevelopment of the former NHES property located at 32-34 South Main Street and 33 South State Street. The Purchase and Sales Agreement was executed on May 17, 2021, and subsequently amended on September 14, 2021 and January 11, 2022. The developer plans to demolish the existing 26,100 SF former office building and construct a new 80,000 SF apartment building featuring 64 market rate units. The new development will have an assessed value of \$8 - \$10.24 million, and will generate \$215,000 - \$275,000 in property taxes annually. Due to governmental ownership, the property has been tax exempt since 1979.

On December 22, 2022, the City completed interior asbestos abatement at the property. The cost of abatement was \$320,000, of which \$200,000 (or 60%) was funded by a grant from the NH Department of Environmental Services.

On March 2, 2022, the developer secured required variances and special exceptions from the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

On April 20, 2022, the developer secured conditional site plan approval from the Planning Board for the project.

On June 9, 2022, the City sold the property to the developer. Construction is currently underway. The project is scheduled for completion in late-spring 2024.

- ii. Penacook Landing Phase 2: On September 18, 2019, the City sold 2.5 acres of the former Allied Leather Tannery site, located at 33-35 Canal Street, to the Caleb Development Corporation (Caleb) for redevelopment into a 54-unit housing project. Phase 1 (34 units) was completed in October 2020. On September 27, 2022, Caleb closed on all financing for Phase 2 of the project (20 units), including a \$600,000 loan from the City's Revolving Loan Fund Program. The total cost of the project is \$6.2 million. Construction began in October 2022 and is scheduled for completion in February 2024. Upon completion, Phase 2 will have an assessed value of \$1,615,000 and generate \$45,000 of property tax revenues for the community annually. Interest payments on the City's \$600,000 loan will generate approximately \$291,000 in revenue for the City's Revolving Loan Fund Program. The project is funded in part by InvestNH funds.
- iii. Other: On October 10, 2023, staff provided City Council with a report which identified that more than 3,000 units of housing are currently at some point in the development permitting process (i.e., from predevelopment, to permitting, to construction). The same data noted that, between the period of 2020 through 2026, approximately 575 units of new affordable housing will be created in the community. A summary of ongoing housing projects is below.
 - a) A 16-lot residential single-family subdivision was approved by the Planning Board for a parcel located at the intersection of Sewalls Falls Road and Abbott Road. Site work is underway.
 - b) CATCH Neighborhood Housing has secured development approvals and financing for 48 units of affordable housing to be located at 303 Sheep Davis Road. Construction is underway and the project will likely be completed in early 2025. The project is funded, in part, with InvestNH funds.
 - c) A private developer has secured development approvals and financing for 123 units of new housing on Pembroke Road, 84 of which will be affordable housing. Construction began in June 2023. The project is funded, in part, by InvestNH funds.
 - d) In 2021, the City secured \$386,242 in Community Development Block Grant funds to support the renovation of housing units owned or leased by Riverbend Community Mental Health. The project specifically involves properties located on Fayette Street and Pleasant Street. Said units are occupied by low-moderate income persons who are clients of Riverbend. In 2022, the City secured an additional \$77,248 to assist this project. The project is complete.

- e) On May 23, 2022, the Concord Monitor announced that it had entered into a purchase and sales agreement with New England Family Housing concerning the sale of 95 acres for development. In March 2023, the developer announced that it had entered into a Purchase Option Agreement concerning 40 additional acres controlled by the Concord Solid Waste Co-op. With this additional real estate, the developer has indicated that the project may include approximately 946 housing units, including 120 affordable units. New England Family Housing is currently undertaking its due diligence for the transaction, and had a nonbinding Design Review Consultation with the Planning Board on October 18, 2023.
- f) Eighty (80) units of market rate apartments have been approved for 11 Stickney Avenue. A license agreement to help facilitate the project is currently pending with the City Council.
- g) Nine units of market rate rental housing have been approved for 5 Thomas Street.
- h) On May 17, 2023, a private developer filed site plan applications to develop 144 units of age restricted housing at 33 Old Loudon Road. The project has secured conditional site plan approval.
- i) In June 2023, a subsidiary of Dakota Partners submitted applications to develop 98 units of workforce housing at 103 Old Loudon Road. The project has secured conditional site plan approval. During its September 2023 meeting, the City Council authorized City Administration to pursue a waiver to the \$1 million cap on InvestNH Municipal Per Unit grants to support this project. Dakota Partners' recent applications for Low Income Housing Tax Credits to finance the project were not successful. Additionally, the NH Community Development Finance Authority has determined that Dakota Partners is not a Community Based Development Organization in accordance with State and Federal regulations, and, therefore, is ineligible for Community Development Block Grant funds, thus further complicating the project's financing plan.
- j) First Church LLC is moving forward with plans to preserve and redevelop the former First Church property at 177 North Main Street into 30 +/- units of market rate housing. During its September 2023 meeting, the City Council awarded RSA 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentives to support the project. On October 30, 2023, the IQRA Islamic Society of Greater Concord appealed the Zoning Board of Adjustment's approval of the project.
- k) On June 21, 2023, Havenwood Heritage Heights submitted applications to redevelop portions of its campus at 149 East Side Drive. The redevelopment plan will result in 13 units at the property. The project is starting construction.
- l) In June 2023, a subsidiary of Onyx Partners acquired the former Regal Cinema property located at 282 Loudon Road for redevelopment. In September 2023, the developer applied for a Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) to redevelop said property, together with the Steeplegate Mall. Combined, the project will feature more than 300,000 SF of commercial space, as well as

approximately 625 multi-family housing units. The CDP application was reviewed by the Planning Board at its October 18, 2023 meeting. On January 3, 2024, the Zoning Board of Adjustment is scheduled to review several variance applications to facilitate the project.

- m) Sixty-four (64) units of townhouse housing have been approved at 150 Fisherville Road. The project is known as “Tanager Circle” and is being developed by North South Builders (who recently completed Abbott Village on North State Street). The developer is finalizing revisions to development plans so as to comply with Planning Board conditions of approval.
- n) Dakota Partners continues to make progress on its 196-unit workforce housing project on Langdon Avenue. Phase I is nearing completion. Once completed, the majority of the project will be reserved for families earning 60% or less of the area median household income. Additionally, 10 units are reserved for those exiting homelessness.
- o) The Concord Coalition to End Homelessness continues to make progress on six transitional housing units for individuals exiting homelessness, which are currently under construction at 120 Pleasant Street. Additionally, the Coalition plans to break ground on an additional eight transitional housing units to be developed at 6 South State Street. The City secured \$500,000 of Community Development Block Grants to support the 6 South State Street project.
- p) On December 19, 2023, Zillow reported that Concord, NH, was its 10th most popular real estate market in the United States for 2023. Nashua was second and Manchester was third.

d) Economic Development Website Update

Status: In October 2021, InvestConcordNH.com, the previous Economic Development web site, was archived due to significant price increases and a lack of updating during COVID-19. The Assistant Community Development Director, a new position which is responsible for economic development, started with the City on September 11, 2023. Potential improvements to the City’s website will be reviewed by the Assistant Community Development Director as he settles into his new role.

e) Downtown Business Investment

Status: Staff continues to encourage downtown investment and communicate with pertinent property owners.

Wilcox and Barton have announced that they will not be proceeding with proposed redevelopment of 10 Pleasant Street Extension. However, in May 2023, the property was sold to new owners who tentatively plan to convert the existing building into a mixed-use project featuring four residential units and a restaurant.

Ciborowski Associates continues to work on its Phenix Hall redevelopment project. On October 19, 2023, the Heritage Commission determined that demolition of the former E&P Hotel would not preclude the project from potentially accessing RSA 79-E Community

Revitalization Tax Relief Incentives (subject to formal application by the developer and City Council review thereof). On December 6, 2023, the developer applied to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for variances related to project height and obstruction of the State House Dome. Both variances were denied and the developer is evaluating its options to move the project forward.

f) Outdoor Dining/Food Trucks

Status: The Ad-Hoc Outdoor Dining Committee developed a final outdoor dining policy, which was presented and adopted at the March 14, 2022 City Council meeting. This new policy includes several clarifications to the application process, design standards, and the implementation of a \$3 per square foot usage fee on City property (i.e., sidewalks, public squares, etc.) and a fee of \$1,000 per parking space encumbrance per dining season. The dining season ran from April 15, 2022 to November 15, 2022. The committee subsequently forwarded a revised Peddler's ordinance and a new policy for food trucks operating throughout the City, which was approved in May 2022.

In March 2023 and May 2023, the City Council modified regulations for dining in parking spaces. Specifically, the City Council, upon recommendation from the Ad-Hoc Outdoor Dining Committee, appropriated the sum of \$34,000 to purchase concrete jersey barricades to enclose dining areas. Use of concrete barricades was recommended to improve safety of diners following an accident on July 5, 2022 involving the outdoor dining area at the Barley House. Four restaurants offered outdoor dining in parking spaces last season, which ended on October 15, 2023. Following the end of the current dining season, City Administration intends to work with the Ad-Hoc Outdoor Dining Committee and/or Parking Committee to review use of parking spaces for dining activities.

g) Fees/Rent Analysis

Status: The Ad-Hoc Fee Committee met with and completed its recommendations for the Parks & Recreation and Community Development Departments. The proposed fee changes were approved by City Council in August for the Parks & Recreation Department. The recommended fee changes for the Community Development Department were submitted for the October City Council meeting, followed by a public hearing and adoption in November.

The new rental rates for the Citywide Community Center went into effect on September 1, 2022, and the use of the center has increased. The Parks & Recreation Department has seen 50 new groups/people using the center compared to the same time period last year. The Department reports that there is still room rental capacity mid-week (9:00 AM to 3:00 PM); however, many nights and on Saturdays the facility is either full or close to full. The Department will continue advertising rental opportunities.

GOAL 3. PUBLIC SAFETY WORK

a) Fire Stations and Police Station Analysis

Status: The work to raise the height of two garage bay doors and repair the floor transition at the Central Fire Station has been completed. It is now ready to house the new Tower truck when it arrives.

The Police Department underwent a Building Assessment conducted by the H.L. Turner Group, which was shared with the City Administration and City Council on May 9, 2022. The report generated from this assessment outlined many building deficiencies, safety issues, and spatial needs, both short- and long-term. This assessment also outlined possible options for remodeling the current building and/or constructing a new building. The Police Department has well outgrown the functional capabilities of its current building. The building, as it stands now, would fall short of many police accreditation standards. The building itself could certainly serve as an asset for the City as part of the City Hall Complex; however, the days where it can serve as Police Headquarters have passed and improvements or replacement have become imperative.

The Police Department is actively working with the Public Properties Division to overhaul and/or replace major components of the existing building. The building had major work completed on the elevator, and the building's rubber membrane roof has been identified as needing replacement. The Police Department Command Staff is actively looking for viable locations in the downtown as a potential future site to construct a new facility.

In June 2023, members of the Police Department Command Staff met with City Administration to tour the former Concord Mutual Insurance property located at 4 Boutin Street and 124 North State Street. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the feasibility of the location as a potential future site for a new Police Station. The consensus was that the site had promising potential based on the location, lot size, and accessibility. On December 11, 2023, the City Council approved Resolution #9604, which authorized the City Manager to enter into a Purchase and Sales Agreement to acquire the site, and appropriated \$4,090 to finance the purchase. The Purchase and Sales Agreement was executed on December 15, 2023. Per the terms of the Agreement, the City must close no later than June 12, 2024. Due diligence, including title review, environmental assessments, as well as space programming and schematic design are currently underway. The results of this due diligence will be presented to the City Council in the coming months.

b) Enhance Emergency Management Services

Status: The Fire Department currently has three Firefighter/Paramedic vacancies, three Firefighter/AEMT vacancies, and one vacancy in Communications. The Department has been unable to fill any of the Firefighter/Paramedic vacancies for the past three months. This is due to a lack of qualified candidates applying for the position. This trend has been seen throughout the state and it is expected that this shortage will continue for the foreseeable future. The Fire Department is investigating ways to recruit and support current members in becoming certified as Paramedics to help with the staffing shortfall. These vacancies are currently being staffed with back fill overtime.

GOAL 4. RECREATIONAL/CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES, PARKS & CEMETERIES

a) Library, Pools, Arena, BMGC, Trails, MRGT, Recreation Programming

Status: For the finale of National Poetry Month in April 2022, the Concord Public Library held a Haiku Hike. Patrons were led on a leisurely walk around White Park and learned about haiku, a traditional form of Japanese poetry. Then, they got to write and share their own haikus about Concord in the springtime.

Later in the spring of 2022, a NH Fish and Game Wildlife Steward gave a presentation at the United Church of Penacook on Understanding Bobcats in New Hampshire.

In May 2022, the Library virtually hosted Andrew Vietze, a Baxter State Park Ranger and author, who told of his adventures in the wilds of the Katahdin region.

The Concord Public Library partnered with New Hampshire Audubon to connect patrons to a five-part webinar, which was held in February 2022, on the Peregrine Falcon in New Hampshire. Attendees learned the history of the bird, its stages of life, conservation efforts, birding tips and more.

In July 2022, Concord muralist Sheri Vincent-Crisp gave a talk to the public about her artwork, which is showcased at the Concord Public Library, both up the stairs to the second floor and in the Children's Department. Also, in July, the Library invited master gardener Ruth Axelrod, of the UNH Cooperative Extension, to speak about invasive plants. In the fall of 2022, the Library introduced "Word on the Street" - two new eBike bookmobiles, which Library staff members rode to outdoor locations in all corners of Concord. The bookmobiles reached out directly to community members, delivering books and materials, educational activities, community information, and library programming information.

In November 2022, the Library hosted eco-educator Willa Coroka, who taught an audience of all ages about beavers and their importance and impact here in the Granite State.

In January 2023, local authors Kathleen and Sheila Bailey came to the Library to talk about their latest book, *NH War Monuments: The Stories Behind the Stones*.

In February 2023, Jason Sokol, an associate professor at the University of New Hampshire and author of three books on the history of the civil rights movement, came to the Library to deliver a talk entitled, "All Eyes Are Upon Us: Racial Struggles in the Northeast." Sheryl Fave, a Historical Reenactor, performed her Ruth Bader Ginsburg, "I Dissent" program at the Heights Community Center Auditorium; and Mary Kelly, a Professor of History at Franklin Pierce University, specializing in Irish American culture and identity, presented a program entitled, "Ireland's Great Famine in Irish-American History: Memory and Meaning."

In March 2023, the Library hosted Deborah Anne Goss, a Historical Reenactor, who appeared as Abby Hutchinson Patton, recalling mid-19th century U.S. and New Hampshire history and performing rousing anthems, heartfelt ballads, and humorous songs during anti-slavery and early women's rights struggles.

In April 2023, speaker Margo Burns offered an introduction to the people and studios that made the cartoons shown before feature films from the 1920's to the 1960's. Her talk encompassed the changing technology, aesthetics, music, politics, and economics behind them; showing stills, characters, and clips from many of these beautiful hand-drawn films.

New Hampshire history was showcased at the Library in May 2023 with two separate programs. First, performer Sharon Wood portrayed Betsy Phelps, the mother of a Union soldier from Amherst, New Hampshire, who died heroically at the Battle of Gettysburg. Wood blended the Phelps boy's story with those of other men who left their New

Hampshire homes to fight for the Union cause and of the families who supported them on the home front. Next, through the lens of the country's current wave of gun violence, local researcher Richard Adams Carey led a look back at the 1997 killing of four and wounding of four others by a gunman in Colebrook, New Hampshire.

In June 2023, the Library hosted local actor and audiobook narrator Alex Picard who led a talk and discussion about her work and the booming audiobook market. In the same month, Victoria Browning Wyeth, the only grandchild of iconic artist Andrew Wyeth and great-granddaughter of illustrator N.C. Wyeth, gave two programs – one for children and their families, and one for adults – about older and newer works of Andrew Wyeth and the other artists in the Wyeth family.

Local photographer Becky Field spoke in June 2023 at the opening reception of “A Photographer's View of New Hampshire's Diversity”, a summer-long exhibition of her work by both the Library and the Parks and Recreation Department. This exhibit of stunning photography focuses particularly on Concord's immigrant and refugee communities.

Quarterly throughout 2022, and again in 2023, the Library partnered with Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc. to provide a bilingual story time for children, at which kids learned and/or practiced using American Sign Language to read a story.

Throughout the summer of 2023, reading programs were organized for residents of all ages. The programs were designed to encourage diverse reading, exploration of e-cultural institutions (by using the Library's museum passes), and learning about library resources. In addition, the Library joined with the Parks & Recreation Department to host an exhibit of photography of local artist Becky Field, which highlighted the diversity of our community.

During the summer of 2023, the Library staged “Live Music with the Library.” Local bands performed in June at Keach Park, in July at Eagle Square, and in August on Prince Street.

In July 2023, Boston Bruins' mascot, Blades, joined Library staff in leading story time for children of all ages.

In August 2023, the Library held a book talk to discuss, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Lacks was an African-American woman whose cancer cells are the source of the HeLa cell line, the first immortalized human cell line and one of the most important cell lines in medical research.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2023, eBikes continued to visit parks throughout the city, as well as events including National Night Out, the Sunflower Festival, Wings & Wheels, and the Multicultural Fest.

New items were added to the “Library of Things” collection to help patrons save money by testing items before they buy them. They can try a musical instrument, borrow a helpful tool or gadget, or find a new hobby or past-time.

In October, the Library introduced Lit Kits – the newest items in the Children's Library of Things. Lit Kits are fun and educational books and manipulatives that circulate in clear backpacks that the littlest patrons can wear home.

As a result of dialogue with Decoding Dyslexia NH, Youth Services at the Library started adding decodable books to the children's collection. These are books that are especially helpful as children with dyslexia learn to read.

Also in October, the Library partnered with David Sanders-Zakre and his caregiver to start "Game On!", a new monthly drop-in gaming group for adults with disabilities and their caregivers.

The Library has deployed a new Ultimaker S3 3D printer in the Children's Department. The new machine was purchased using Concord Public Library Foundation funds. Children's card holders are able to submit print job requests through the Library's website, and all are able to watch the printer in action at the Children's service desk.

On October 11, 2023, the Library hosted a program entitled, "Becoming Wolf: The Eastern Coyote." The facilitator discussed coexistence strategies with coyotes and talked about the history of the coyote coming to New Hampshire and the current significance of the animal.

In celebration of Native American Heritage month, the Library welcomed traditional storyteller Anne Jennison who spent the evening sharing Northeast Woodlands Abenaki stories. The Library also put together a number of book displays highlighting Native American authors and culture.

On November 15, 2023, Dave Anderson visited the Library and delivered a talk entitled, "Wind, Water, Fire and Ice: Extreme Weather Impacts on New Hampshire Trees and Forests."

To get everyone in the holiday spirit, on December 2, 2023, the New England Irish Harp Orchestra performed at the Heights Community Center and performed traditional holiday and Irish songs.

On December 5, 2023, the Library hosted Adair Mulligan who delivered a program entitled, "A Walk Back in Time: The Secrets of Cellar Holes." Mulligan discussed the discovery and significance of old stone walls and foundations found in New Hampshire woods and what we can learn from these remnants of the past.

The Parks & Recreation Department's main Summer/Fall Brochure went out in mid-May 2023. The brochure advertises all programs and camps the Department offers from mid-June to late October. Once again, this summer, Concord Housing & Redevelopment sponsored the Department's "Learn to Swim" program allowing resident youth to take part in a free session of swim lessons (8 classes).

The Parks & Recreation Department began advertising for summer lifeguard positions in January 2023, with the goal of opening all outdoor pools this summer. The Department typically needs to hire just over 40 lifeguards to open all pools. Once again, this year, the Department paid the class registration fee for applicants who passed the American Red Cross Lifeguard class (value \$380) and worked at least four shifts per week. The Department was able to open five of the six community pools, plus the new splash pad at White Park. The only pool that did not open was the Garrison Park pool.

The new splash pad at White Park was a tremendous success. Summer attendance for the splash pad was almost 12,000. The previous highest pool attendance for White Park was in 2001 with 7,811 visitors. Despite a rainy summer, the overall pool attendance was just over 33,000 visitors, which is the highest number since the 2010 season.

Concord Housing + Redevelopment once again sponsored the City's Learn to Swim program, and just over 400 youth took part in swim lessons over the summer of 2023.

Parks & Recreation summer camps were a success again in 2023. Parks & Recreation offers traditional day camps (three different camps: Stay & Play for 9 weeks; Rec Adventure for 8 weeks for children in grades 1-8; and a Nature Camp for 8 weeks geared towards children in grades 1-5. The Department also partners with the Community Action Program to offer free lunch to Stay & Play campers. This past summer, 90% of the traditional camps were full, serving over 750 children. Parks & Recreation also offers specialty camps such as Basketball, Soccer, STEM and Dance. An additional 300 kids participated in the specialty camps in summer 2023.

Parks & Recreation continues to see growth in participation for youth sports, both for players and volunteer coaches. This past fall, the Department had 595 kids participating in youth sports. In addition to the youth players, there were over 65 volunteers helping to run the soccer programs.

Since the opening of the Citywide Community Center in 2018, the Parks & Recreation Department has developed programming to appeal to adults 18-50 years of age. Programming includes Pickleball, Trails and Ales, French classes, Tai Chi, Yoga, Zumba, and Archery.

The Parks & Recreation Department's Senior Program offers a variety of activities, including Book Club, Knitting Group, Exercise Classes, Coffee Socials, Walking, Out to Lunch Club, and many more. The Department has also partnered with the Community Action Program and the Visiting Nurse Association to offer services such as monthly lunches and health clinics. New this year, the Department worked with the NH Humanities Council to bring educational and cultural programming to the Citywide Community Center. All of these programs are free to our Senior Passport holders. Senior Passports are free for Concord and Penacook residents and can be purchased for \$50.00 per year for non-residents.

In July 2023, the City entered into a one-year pilot with Second Start to allow them use of the Citywide Community Center program room for up to 12 hours a week, at no charge, for their programming for New American residents.

The Parks & Recreation Department is coordinating the design and permitting of the cornfield section of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail. The City has hired VHB, of Bedford, NH, for the design and permitting for this section of trail.

In the FY 2022 Capital Improvement Plan, there were funds appropriated for court restoration at Rollins Park (\$135,000), Trolley Stop repoint at White Park (\$90,000), and stand-alone pickleball courts at Rolfe Park (\$90,000). The court projects were completed in early June 2022, and the repointing of the Trolley Stop at White Park has been completed. In addition, the FY 2022 budget included funds for a pond restoration project at White

Park (\$210,000), for which the City is under contract with VHB to create a plan and required permits. Also funded were road repairs at Blossom Hill Cemetery (\$80,000). The mini makeover / renovation of Thompson Park is underway and will be completed in the summer of 2024.

In the FY 2023 Capital Improvement Plan, several additional projects were funded. The soccer mini pitch at Keach Park was opened to the public in early July 2023, and the LED court light conversion at Rolfe and Rollins Parks was completed. Staff are also working with H.L. Turner Group on life safety improvements to the Parks Division maintenance building at White Park, as well as conducting a review of the buildings at Blossom Hill Cemetery.

In the FY 2024 Capital Improvement Plan, several additional park projects were funded. Funds were approved for final design and permitting of Kiwanis Riverfront Park. VHB is under contract to perform the work. Parks & Recreation staff are also working with the new skateboard park association for final design of the new skateboard park as part of this process.

In addition, a project was funded to add athletic field lights to one youth soccer field at Keach Park. The Department selected H.L. Turner Group for design and assistance with creating new operating estimates. The first public meeting will be held on January 11, 2024. Several projects were also funded in the Cemetery Division to improve failing retaining walls. Department staff are working with Milestone Construction on this project.

In June 2023, City Council and the Concord School District agreed to create a new Park Master Plan for the Memorial Field Complex. The cost of the project will be shared equally between the two organizations. The first meeting for the Master Plan was held in September 2023, and the second public meeting will be held in February 2024.

Construction of the new Penacook Branch Library/Community Center is underway. The project is being developed by the Boys and Girls Club of Central New Hampshire. Once completed, the City will acquire a portion of the development from the Boys & Girls Club for a new branch library/community center. The project will be completed in the summer of 2024. The City's budget for said investment is \$1.3 million.

b) **Terrill Park, Kiwanis Park, Skate Park, Penacook Riverfront, Monkey Around Playground, Cemeteries, Recreational Corridor**

Status:

- i. Canal Street Riverfront Park: The Canal Street Riverfront Park project was first conceived in the 1986 Penacook Village Master Plan. The concept was carried forward in the 2004 Penacook Mill/Tannery Design Charrette, as well as in the 2015 Penacook Village Master Plan. Property for the park was acquired in multiple phases as part of the City's efforts to redevelop the former Allied Leather Tannery complex.

Public meetings were held in partnership with the Penacook Village Association in June and December 2022. Input received from the public served as the basis for the final design. The Planning Board review of the project was completed in June 2023.

State Wetlands, Shoreland, and Alteration of Terrain permits have been secured, and the project is now fully permitted.

The project has a total budget of \$3.369 million. Funds include a \$500,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, which has been tentatively awarded. Customary processes with the State of New Hampshire will be completed later this fall.

Streetscape improvements associated with the project were constructed by the General Services Department's paving contract as an add/alternate to the Annual Paving Program contract during summer/fall 2023. The cost of said improvements was \$154,000 and was funded by the park project budget.

The project is currently out to bid. Construction of the park is scheduled for spring 2024. The project will be completed in spring 2025.

- ii. Monkey Around Playground: The Parks & Recreation Department continues to work with the Friends of White Park on their fundraising efforts. In May 2022, the Friends held a cornhole tournament with food trucks to raise money for the playground replacement. On April 11, 2022, the City Council authorized the City Manager to apply for up to \$400,000 of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants to support the project. A site visit with LWCF staff occurred on May 11, 2022. The project was selected to move into the grant application phase, and a grant was submitted in December 2022. The City was notified in September 2023 that the grant application was successful and needs to be approved by the Governor and Executive Council prior to formal acceptance by City Council. The Department also secured \$50,000 in donations to help with the City's construction costs.
- iii. Kiwanis Riverfront Park: City staff, working with the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee, the Everett Arena Advisory Committee, Concord Crew and the new Skate Board group have met regularly regarding possible new park amenities. In the FY 2023 Capital Improvement Program, there were funds approved for the "Visioning of the Kiwanis Riverfront Park down to Terrill Park." On January 19, 2023, the Department held the first visioning charette with just over 120 residents in attendance. There was a second public meeting for the visioning process held on May 4, 2023. The new master plan was well received, and it was recommended that the City move forward with design and permitting. Funds for the final design and permitting of the approved Master Plan were included in the FY 2024 Capital Improvement Plan. VHB is under contract for the work and is the same company who created the new Master Plan.

GOAL 5. ENHANCED COMMUNITY EVENTS/ARTS

a) Promote Community Events with Community Partners

Status: Community events continue to be shared through a variety of City channels, including the City Manager's newsletter and social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). The City's Public Information Officer continues to work with the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce and Intown Concord on coordinated community outreach.

In spring 2023, the Public Information Officer filled the City's seat on the Intown Concord Board of Directors. City representatives are also participating in the planning process for a re-envisioned Capital Arts Fest event in 2024.

The Parks & Recreation Department began scheduling the parks in mid-February for use in 2023. The Department also started issuing permits for special events held in City parks. Some of this year's events have included: a monthly Arts Market in Rollins Park, UNH Law School Graduation at White Park, several 5k road races, Making Strides at Memorial Field, several large tournaments featuring teams from all over New England, and the Multicultural Festival at Keach Park.

Once again, this past summer, the Parks & Recreation Department received sponsorship from the Walker Lecture Fund for the annual summer concert series. Over 20 free outdoor community concerts were held around the city. The Department also partnered with Red River Theatres to offer outdoor movies for the summer of 2023.

The Parks & Recreation Department coordinated the City's annual July 4th Celebration and helped with the annual Wings & Wheels event at the Concord Airport. The Department was also involved with the Concord School District's back to school event that was held at Keach Park. This event was geared toward parents and students, and almost 1,000 people took part in the event.

Wings & Wheels was held on September 17, 2023 at Concord Airport, and was well attended with attendance estimated to be around 2,000 people. The volunteer committee will continue to pursue activities to enhance the event that promotes STEM education and aviation. The 2024 event is scheduled for Sunday, September 29, 2024.

In December 2023, the Parks & Recreation Department worked with the American Red Cross to hold a blood drive. The Department also worked with the Concord Arts Market and coordinated a new Indoor Arts Market to be held once a month in January, February and March 2024, at the Citywide Community Center.

The Fire Department participated in Fire Prevention Week activities in October to communicate the importance of fire safety in the community. The theme this year was "Cooking Safety Starts With YOU." On-duty companies visited 19 schools in Concord and Penacook, and one additional school opted to visit the fire station instead. Informational posts related to cooking safety were also shared on the Department's social media platforms during this time.

Fire Administration partnered with the Concord Fire Officers Association (IAFF Local 3195), IAFF Local 1045, and the Human Services Department to host a Holiday Food Drive, through which \$625 worth of items were purchased and donated.

The Police Department continues to foster its positive relationship with the community through a number of initiatives and events that Department personnel attend and sponsor. During this quarter, the Department worked closely with the schools in both the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts. The D.A.R.E. Program continues to be presented in both school districts and the Department's School Resource Officers are actively involved at Concord High School, Merrimack Valley High School, and Merrimack Valley Middle School. The Community Services Officers stay in contact with Bishop Brady High

School, Trinity Christian School, and St. John's Regional School as well. Additionally, Liberty, the Department's comfort dog, makes frequent visits to the schools throughout the city. Safety assessments continued to be conducted at several of the public and private schools. Recommendations have been made to the schools to help officers in accessing the schools during threatening events.

Members of the Police Department have conducted active shooter trainings, as well as safety presentations to businesses, schools, and community groups. Members also presented fraud education classes to the elderly; and educational classes warning students about bullying, cyberbullying, and internet safety. The Department continued to present several active shooter trainings for several of the Concord School District schools and its administrators. Members of the Police Department also assisted Concord Hospital with several active shooter trainings for hospital staff. These trainings will continue throughout the year.

The Police Department works closely with the New American communities throughout the city. The Department continues to work with New American leaders in an attempt to open communication and to plan for informational events with the Police Department. The Police Department continues to assist the New American Scholars with their "Students Helping Students" program. This program is designed to promote area high school students assisting and tutoring New American and refugee students who have recently settled in the Concord area. This program also extends beyond the classroom and assists in other areas of life which may be difficult for those new to the country. The Department continues to participate with the Refugee Advisory Council. This group meets monthly. The Refugee Advisory Council helps ensure the coordination of services for refugees and immigrants, and raises awareness of issues that affect refugee and immigrant communities throughout New Hampshire.

Through the NH Highway Safety Community Outreach and Betterment grant, the Department conducted a driver safety educational training class for the elderly. This training focused on roadway safety and driver education.

On August 1, 2023, the Concord Police Department held its yearly National Night Out event at Rollins Park. National Night Out is an evening of local and state police officers coming together to help increase awareness of community police programs, which, in turn, helps build bridges between officers and those they serve to protect. This year, approximately 4,000 attendees participated in the event.

The Police Department partnered with the NH Food Bank to sponsor several food drives during the month of September – Food Action Month. Participants were challenged to "Help Stuff a Cruiser." Three local charities were the benefactors of the food drives. Enough food was collected to provide 3,409 meals and \$1,321.04 was raised.

In December 2023, the Police Department partnered with the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots toy drive. Several members of the Police Department worked directly with Toys for Tots to help gather, organize, and deliver hundreds of new toys to many families with children who have fallen on difficult financial times. The Department not only delivered toys to many residences, but also delivered toys to the Washington Street School in Penacook, where volunteers handed out hundreds of toys to a variety of children in need.

The City of Concord participated in Intown Concord's Market Days. The Human Resources Department brought all current job openings for review, as well as job interest cards for those "shopping" for a new career. It was a great opportunity to be part of the celebration and provide information to Market Days attendees. Concord Public Library staff provided information on Library resources, temporary literary tattoos, and story times in the family area on the State House lawn.

Human Resources Department representatives co-chaired two committees with the Human Resources Association Greater Concord organization; one pertaining to Membership and one for Community Relations. The Community Relations committee is currently working on setting up virtual interviews for seniors at the Concord Regional Technical Center to give them a one-on-one interview with feedback before they graduate. These occurred during the second week of April 2023. The Human Resources Department has also participated in three virtual job fairs that NH Employment Security has hosted.

The Library collaborated with the Parks & Recreation Department to bring its two ebike bookmobiles to programs hosted in the parks, such as the Soccer Jamboree and Flying High Dogs, both held at Keach Park. The Library also worked with Parks & Recreation and the Assistant City Planner for two Trails and Tales programs with a book discussion and hike on City trails, one on Marjory Swope Trail and the other at Oak Hill. The Library held several collaborative programs in the fall of 2022. These included a Signing Evening Storytime with Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services; Color a Smile, where young patrons participated in this national campaign to send "cheerful drawings" to seniors and military personnel overseas; co-hosted several book discussions with the Concord YMCA; hosted Walk-In Wednesday with Granite VNA; and brought back Beat the Librarians Trivia Night at Lithermans Limited Brewery with Bow Baker Free Library.

Library staff also engaged with several community partners in the fall of 2022. The Library served as a drop box station for the Junior Service League's toiletry drive, as well as the snack pantry drive for Rundlett's Blue Duke Care Closet. Library staff also participated in an outreach day with the New Hampshire Human Rights Commission, providing other non-profit organizations with information and ways the Library can help assist them.

The Library continues to provide free programs for community members of all ages, which are promoted on its website and social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), in the Library newsletter, in the City Manager's newsletter, and in the Concord Monitor and The Patch. Several Library programs are held in partnership with other organizations, such as Granite VNA, Soak Up the Rain New Hampshire, the NH Audubon Society, and NH Humanities.

In September, the Library partnered with the Concord Community Music School for an evening of music. Instructors at the school performed harpsichord and recorder and provided an overview of each instrument and its historic significance.

In October, the Library partnered with a local senior benefits specialist who provided guidance on navigating Medicare enrollment; and with the Granite VNA who answered questions regarding end of life directives and wills.

The Library also launched a pilot program with a local senior living community in an effort to deliver books, DVDs, and audiobooks to residents with mobility issues. Each Wednesday, requested items are picked up and delivered by a volunteer at the facility.

GOAL 6. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

a) Energy: LED Street Lights

Status: All non-ornamental street lights have been converted to LED and the project is complete. This project is anticipated to save the City in excess of \$600,000 over the next ten years. In April 2023, Gary Miller of Unitil presented at the City Council meeting and a press release was issued about the partnership and project. Certain ornamental street lights, which were excluded from the project, such as those located on Loudon Road and the Manchester Street bridge, will be addressed in future capital improvement projects to be proposed by City Administration.

b) Diversity

Status: The City continues to use CircaWorks for job postings that seek out underrepresented groups, including people of color, veterans, LGBTQ, and individuals with disabilities. The Human Resources Director, along with the National League of Cities (NLC), worked on developing a racial equity plan following the training that was provided as part of our contract with NLC. Training included REAL Leading Workshop training, Racial Equity Planning technical assistance, and Equity Core Teams. The employee retention and recruitment committee continue to focus on diversity in the workforce as they work on their next slate of recommendations to City Administration and City Council.

The City has formed a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) committee and is developing a plan for employees and supervisors through the work of a consultant and a training and development plan.

c) Workforce & Housing (Homelessness)

Status:

Penacook Landing (33-35 Canal Street): 54 units of new affordable housing developed at the former Allied Leather Tannery site by the Caleb Group, a Massachusetts based developer. Phase I (34 units) was completed in 2020. Phase II (20 units) is currently underway and scheduled for completion in February. The City supported the project by selling the site to the developer; securing \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to demolish the structures, fill and grade the site; and installing a sewer pump station. The City also provided a \$600,000 loan from its Revolving Loan Fund to support Phase 2 of the project (which had a total development cost of \$6.2 million).

Rosemary's Way (85 Village Street): 42 units of affordable housing, completed at 95 Village Street in 2021 by CATCH Neighborhood Housing. The City supported the project by selling 2.1 acres of City-owned property to the developer to facilitate the project for \$75,000. The City's land comprised 60% of the project site.

Rail Yard Project: 199 units of affordable and workforce housing being developed at Langdon Avenue. Phase I of the project features 96 housing units, the majority of which are reserved for families earning 60% of the area median income.

303 Sheep Davis Road: CATCH Neighborhood Housing has secured development permits and financing commitments to develop 48 units of affordable housing on Sheep Davis Road, as discussed in Section 2.c.ii. of this report.

195-199 Pembroke Road: Brookline Opportunities has commenced construction of 123 units of new workforce housing on Pembroke Road, 84 of which will be affordable housing, as discussed in Section 2.c.ii. of this report.

Riverbend: In 2021, the City secured \$386,242 in Community Development Block Grant funds to support the renovation of housing units owned or leased by Riverbend Community Mental Health. The project specifically involves properties located on Fayette Street and Pleasant Street. Said units are occupied by low-moderate income persons who are clients of Riverbend. In 2022, the City secured an additional \$77,248 to assist this project. Renovations at both properties are complete.

120 Pleasant Street: The Concord Coalition to End Homelessness has been working diligently on its Housing First model, and is currently constructing six units of transitional housing at 120 Pleasant Street. The project will be completed in 2024.

6 South State Street: The Concord Coalition to End Homelessness has secured development permits and approvals to construct eight units of transitional housing at 6 South State Street. The City secured \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to support the Coalition's acquisition and redevelopment of the property.

103 Old Loudon Road: Dakota Partners has secured development permits for 98 units of workforce housing at 103 Old Loudon Road. During its September 2023 meeting, the City Council authorized City Administration to pursue a waiver to the \$1 million cap on InvestNH Municipal Per Unit grants to support this project. The application has been submitted and is currently pending. Dakota Partners' recent applications for Low Income Housing Tax Credits to finance the project were not successful. Additionally, the NH Community Development Finance Authority has determined that Dakota Partners is not a Community-Based Development Organization in accordance with State and Federal regulations and, therefore, is ineligible for Community Development Block Grant funds, thus further complicating the project's financing plan.

d) Essex Hydro

Status: An agreement was reached with Essex Hydro to enter into a long-term Net Metering Agreement for a portion of their renewable energy generation. The agreement received full approval by the Public Utilities Commission, and Net Metering began on June 1, 2022.

e) Renewable Energy

Status: The City continues to work towards finding partners for renewable energy projects that are in the best interest of the City of Concord and will help achieve the City's renewable energy goals.

f) Trees, Urban Canopy

Status: Two trees were planted at Kimball Park on Arbor Day 2023.

The Tree Committee did a reconnaissance of the neighborhoods in Penacook slated for paving in 2023, and identified 31 potential tree planting locations. General Services will review the locations to determine if these locations are feasible, and then the committee will start public outreach in Penacook, asking these residents if they are willing to plant a tree in their front yard. Four potential locations have been identified.

The General Services Department's Sustainable Tree Program received requests for 30 trees to be planted in 2023 and is taking orders for 2024.

In the spring and early summer of 2023, the Tree Subcommittee participated in two projects to plant trees and pollinators with the Concord School District at Abbot-Downing School and at Concord High School.

GOAL 7. TRANSPORTATION**a) I-93, Storrs Street, Stickney Avenue****Status:**

- i. I-93 Project: On August 9, 2022, the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT), and their consultant, McFarland Johnson, presented a project update at a special Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) meeting. The updates were inclusive of additional improvements at the City's request, including improvements at Exit 13 (the Manchester Street intersection with Old Turnpike Road), partially restoring access to the Exit 14 northbound on-ramp, alternatives to expand the Merrimack River Greenway Trail through the project limits, exploring partial access at Stickney Avenue, and consideration of the proposed Storrs Street Extension Project and associated railroad realignment. TPAC continued to solicit public input and discussed all aspects of the project at subsequent meetings held on August 25, September 15, and September 29, 2022. On October 11, 2022, TPAC provided a report to City Council outlining its recommendations for the Bow-Concord Project. On October 11, 2022, the City Council received a presentation from the NHDOT concerning the Project. On November 14, 2022, the City Council held a public hearing on the I-93 Bow-Concord Project. Related to said hearing, City Administration provided a staff report which discussed past planning initiatives relative to a "bridge park" and challenges associated therewith, based on the State's current design for the Bow-Concord Project. On December 12, 2022, the City Council concluded its public hearing on the proposed Bow-Concord Project, and approved a draft letter to the State outlining the City's positions on various components related thereto.

- ii. In accordance with City Council directive from its November 14, 2022 meeting, on December 9, 2022, staff met with the City's on-call engineering consultants to discuss scope of work for the "bridge park" project. Proposals were received on March 3, 2023. On June 12, 2023, the City Council appropriated \$200,000 to proceed with the Bridge Park Study. A consultant has been selected and the project is underway. Staff has met with key property owners in the study area and a kickoff meeting has been scheduled with NHDOT in January 2024.

b) **Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT)**

Status: In March 2021, the City filed an application for TAP grant funds to support the development of a rail trail on a 1.9-mile section of the Northern Line between Sewalls Falls Road and the Town of Boscawen. PanAm Systems provided a letter of support for the City's application.

On July 7, 2021, the City entered into a Purchase and Sales Agreement with PanAm Systems/Northern Railroad for a 5.6+/- mile discontinued segment of the Northern Main Line, located between Horseshoe Pond Lane and the Contoocook River, as well as a 0.5-mile section of the Concord-Claremont Line located between Horseshoe Pond Lane and the Smokestack Center on McGuire Street.

On October 18, 2021, the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) invoked the State's Right-of-First-Refusal (ROFR) for the Northern Line, in accordance with RSA 228:60-b. As such, the City's Purchase and Sales Agreement with PanAm automatically terminated upon the State's enactment of its ROFR. The State enacted its ROFR, as the Northern Line has been designated for a potential future high-speed rail corridor to connect Boston to Montreal. As such, the City and NHDOT entered into negotiations concerning a potential partnership between the City and the State, which would allow the Merrimack River Greenway Trail to move forward while simultaneously protecting the State's interests relative to the high-speed rail corridor. These negotiations were successful and, on May 9, 2022, the City Council approved Resolution #9463, which authorizes the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) negotiated between the City and NHDOT. Said agreement will be presented to the Governor and Executive Council pending final negotiation of a Purchase and Sales Agreement between Pan Am and the NHDOT. Upon execution of the MOA between the City and NHDOT, the NHDOT shall assign the Purchase and Sales Agreement to the City, following which the City shall complete its due diligence and acquire the property. On June 1, 2022, PanAm was sold to CSX. In early 2023, CSX contacted the City about the status of the Purchase and Sales Agreement. Discussions subsequently occurred between NHDOT and CSX about this transaction. In June 2023, the City met with NHDOT and developed a strategy to reactivate this transaction and move it forward within the context of the aforementioned MOA. Those discussions were promising. As a result, the City has resumed previously suspended due diligence activities to move the transaction forward in partnership with NHDOT.

Following completion of due diligence, the City terminated the Purchase and Sales Agreement for the Concord-Claremont Line on October 25, 2021 due to title concerns.

The “sunflower” section of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT) (approximately 4,000 feet from Loudon Road south towards Terrill Park) is currently under design and permitting. The City was awarded a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to build this section of the trail from Loudon Road south along the Merrimack River. The LWCF grant was for an estimated \$550,000 project and requires a 50% match (\$275,000). City Council approved the funds (\$705,000) for the construction in September 2023. Design and permitting for this section is complete and the project will be bid shortly.

In February 2022, the Friends of the MRGT, in partnership with the City, applied for an allocation of Community Development Investment Program tax credits from the NH Community Development Finance Authority for the portion of the project located between Terrill Park and Loudon Road. Unfortunately, the funding application was not successful.

As part of its conditional approval, the Planning Board has secured easements at 11 Stickney Avenue to facilitate future development of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail project.

c) **Airport Terminal**

Status: On January 27, 2022, the City held an Airport Listening Session where the consensus among the attendees was to move forward with a new terminal. At the February 24, 2022 Airport Advisory Committee meeting, the committee unanimously recommended the City Council authorize staff to apply for an FAA Airport Terminal Program grant. This program would provide potential funding for the relocation and construction of the Concord Municipal Airport’s terminal building, with only a 5% match required. At the March 14, 2022 City Council meeting, the Council authorized the City Manager to apply for this grant. Unfortunately, the City’s application was not successful. In spring 2023, City Council authorized City Administration to file new grant applications to support this project, which are currently pending.

d) **Sidewalks: Maintain/Recondition**

Status: The Planning Board continues to require sidewalks on most site plans. In instances where construction of a sidewalk may be premature (no connection within any reasonable distance), the Planning Board has instituted a “fee in lieu” policy. Under this approach, a fee commensurate with the cost to construct sidewalk would be assessed to applicants seeking site plan approval. The funds generated from this fee would be used to support City sidewalk construction in the future. To date, one project has been subject to this policy as a condition of approval.

e) **Projects: Langley Parkway, McKee Square**

Status:

- i. **McKee Square (CIP #31):** The McKee Square intersection improvement was approved in FY 2023 for a traffic assessment and preliminary schematic design concepts for potential improvements. Preliminary options for this work include a roundabout and a signal alternative. The FY 2024 Budget appropriated \$275,671 to complete design/permitting for the preferred design concept (once identified). Construction is tentatively programmed in FY 2026. Staff will work with its

engineering consultants on developing and scheduling meetings with the public and stakeholders to review schematic design concepts. In addition, the City recently applied for a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant to support the project. The application is currently pending.

- ii. Langley Parkway (CIP #40): In accordance with the City Council's direction, as provided to City Administration during the adoption of the FY 2023 Budget in June 2022, this project has been removed from the City's Capital Improvement Program.

ONGOING INITIATIVE 1. FORMER TANNERY SITE/PARK

Status: Updates about this project are addressed in Goal 2(c) and 4(b) of this report.

ONGOING INITIATIVE 2. ENHANCED NEIGHBORHOOD STREET PAVING PROGRAM

Status: The FY 2023 paving project has been completed. The contractor agreed to hold prices and did three streets from the 2024 paving project: Stickney Hill Road, Millstone Drive, and Spillway Lane. All work was completed in late November.

The FY 2024 paving bid was opened on December 20, 2023. Staff is reviewing the bids and a contract award is expected in January. Depending on the weather over the rest of the winter and early spring, the tentative start date for the project is the first week of April.

ONGOING INITIATIVE 3. BRIDGES

Status: The NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) agreed to add an additional \$14 million in State bridge aid to the Loudon Road bridge project to accommodate a wider bridge with a 14' multi-use path. This renovated bridge will provide a critical connection for the Merrimack River Greenway Trail from east to west, and will also be safer for all cyclists and pedestrians, as well as improve the angle of the bridge as it intersects with Ft. Eddy Road. The City and NHDOT are planning to begin design work shortly.

The City also recently accepted \$1.9 million in unrestricted one-time grant funds from the NHDOT for future bridge projects. Said funds were deposited into a reserve fund to support future bridge improvement projects.

ONGOING INITIATIVE 4. TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Status: The Information Technology (IT) Department supported the Wastewater and Water Treatment Plants in securing a \$100,000 grant from the NH Department of Environmental Services related to the cybersecurity and access to control systems throughout the enterprise. This included working with the Federal Environmental Protection Agency on auditing and creating an action plan for calendar years 2022 and 2023 to improve securing and updating our access controls. We are now in the implementation phase, which will continue through 2023 and 2024.

The IT Department's new Network Security Engineer has received the first round of network switches to replace our aging infrastructure. The deployment of the new infrastructure is on schedule to be completed in 2024. Efforts continue to build and update new security policies.

We are in the process of implementing vendor self-service, and this is proceeding on schedule. The training for and migration to the Munis Tax module continues to go well. We expect to go live on February 7, 2024.