



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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

DATE: March 31, 2023

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 March 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 2022 Budget proposal.

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:

General Services:

- \$760,000 from the NH Department of Environmental Services as part of the \$3.8 million facility refurbishment at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant; and
- \$166,000 from the NH Department of Environmental Services for the replacement of a sludge holding tank mixing system at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant.

c) Health Insurance Costs

Status: The City had received a not to exceed amount on its medical insurance with a 12% rate increase driven by high cost claimants and the impact of specialty medication utilization as a whole. The final rates came in at 9.5% in February. Continuing for FY 2024, it is anticipated that the City will contribute 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 Fire Department has received all equipment that was ordered with funds from the GOFERR Locality Equipment Purchase Program. This program supported purchasing durable medical equipment that was needed for the fourth ambulance that was placed into service on October 1, 2022.

The Fire Department has accepted \$25,000 through the federal fiscal year 2020 and 2021 NH State Homeland Security Critical Infrastructure Water Related Catastrophe Program. These funds will be used to purchase personal protective equipment and other supplies that will support increased ability to respond to all water-based emergencies, as well as support the newly developed Swiftwater Rescue Team.

The Fire Department has started to research grant funding opportunities to support the purchase of a portable traffic barrier system intended to protect crowds in closed roadways during special events.

The Parks and 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 NH Department of Environmental Services (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 is being 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.

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 should be notified of grant award status by summer 2023.

The Police Department applied for and received \$80,217 in American Rescue Plan Act 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 of 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.

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.

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. 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 will be filed in April 2023.

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, the Planning Board conditionally approved 1,500 SF for a restaurant, 2,750 SF for retail, and 2,500 SF for a credit union. This is in addition to the already approved Market Basket, HomeGoods, State Liquor Outlet, and Wendy's restaurant at the site. In addition, applications are currently pending before the Planning Board for a drive-thru pharmacy and coffee shop at 10 Whitney Road.

The Grappone Family received development approvals from the Planning Board for a new Mazda dealership at 134 Manchester Street. Steel erection is currently underway.

Development of multiple pad sites at the Brixmor Plaza on Storrs Street is almost completed. The project will feature approximately 16,000 SF of development, including a 110 Grille restaurant, another yet to be announced restaurant, an Xfinity store, and a coffee shop with drive thru. Pending correction of sewer issues and completion of other punch list items, it is anticipated that a certificate of occupancy will be forthcoming soon.

During its December 2022 meeting, the Planning Board granted conditional site plan approval for a new five story, 30,000SF mixed use building to be developed at 20 South Main Street. The building will feature a Friendly Toast restaurant, office space, and event space.

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. The project is ongoing, due, in part, to staffing vacancies within the Community Development Department. Staff tentatively plans to complete proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, as well as associated accompanying edits to the Site Plan Review Regulations, in FY 2024.

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 fall 2023.

- 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 was completed in October 2020. On September 27, 2022, Caleb closed on all financing for the project, 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. The project will be completed in fall 2023. 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 underway, and, as of March 31, 2023, rough framing for the shell of the building was completed.
- iii. Other:
 - 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.
 - 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 anticipated to begin in late 2023.
 - 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 is anticipated to begin in late 2023.

- 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 currently under construction.
- 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 924 housing units, including 120 affordable units. New England Family Housing is currently undertaking its due diligence for the transaction.

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. City staff is currently making improvements to, and reorganizing, the economic development portion of the main City website to make it more accessible, informative, accurate, and engaging. An update is currently underway.

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, the property is currently under agreement. The prospective buyers are currently evaluating the property for a mixed-use project featuring four residential units and a restaurant.

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, 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.

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, based on use this winter, 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 Fire Department is working to finalize a contract to have two garage bays at Station 1 raised to accommodate the new tower truck that was ordered with FY 2023 CIP funds. Construction may start as early as May 2023.

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.

b) Enhance Emergency Management Services

Status: The Fire Department held a small ceremony at the Manor Fire Station and placed a fourth ambulance into service on October 1, 2022. This addition has improved average ambulance response times throughout the majority of the city, as compared to the response model prior to relocating Ambulance 5 to the Central Station. Response times in

neighborhoods surrounding the Manor Station improved (decreased) by approximately 45 seconds; neighborhoods surrounding the Central Station improved by 1-2 minutes; neighborhoods surrounding the Broadway Station improved by approximately 1 minute; and neighborhoods surrounding the Heights Station improved by approximately 1-2 minutes. These figures represent the average of different neighborhoods surrounding each station.

The Fire Department now has 15 Advanced EMT's on staff who are participating in the newly created labor grade. This has helped expand the Fire Department's ability to deliver high quality Advanced Life Support on medical calls.

GOAL 4. RECREATIONAL/CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES, PARKS AND 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 Concord area.

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.” In February, 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.

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.

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, for the design and permitting for this section of trail.

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 will pay the class registration fee for applicants to take the American Red Cross Lifeguard class (value \$380).

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 2023.

In the FY 2023 Capital Improvement Plan, several additional projects were funded. The soccer mini pitch at Keach Park should be open to the public in July 2023, and the LED court light conversion at Rolfe and Rollins Parks will be completed in spring 2023. 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.

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

Status:

- i. Canal Street Riverfront Park: In 2004, the City held a design charrette for the purposes of soliciting public input concerning redevelopment of the former Allied Leather Tannery complex at 23-25 Canal Street. As part of that exercise, the community expressed a strong desire to develop a new public riverfront park at the Tannery property to support future redevelopment of the site, as well as revitalization of Penacook Village.

In 2012, the City acquired additional property at 5-11 Canal Street to support future development of the park. As part of marketing efforts conducted for the Tannery site in 2008 and in 2015, the City commissioned various conceptual site plans for the former Tannery complex, which included a new riverfront park.

In conjunction with the sale of the portion of the Tannery site located at 35 Canal Street to the Caleb Development Corporation for the Penacook Landing housing project, in September 2020, the City retained a 1.53-acre parcel with approximately 500 feet of frontage on the Contocook River for the future riverfront park.

As part of the FY 2022 budget, the City Council appropriated \$110,000 of impact fees for design and permitting of the Canal Street Riverfront Park. On November 5, 2021, a Request for Qualifications and Experience (RFQ&E) was issued to engage a design team for the project. Proposals were received on December 10, 2021. On February 11, 2022, the firm of GPI was selected for the project. Contracts with GPI were executed on March 25, 2022.

On April 11, 2022, the City Council approved Resolution #9449, which authorized the City Manager to apply for up to \$500,000 in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants to support the project. The grant application was submitted on December 16, 2022.

On April 15, 2022, a kick off meeting for the project occurred with GPI. The kickoff meeting also involved meetings with Chief's Restaurant and Briar Hydro Associates (both about the project site). On May 19, 2022, additional meetings were held with the remaining two site abutters (Day Properties and the Caleb Group), as well as the City's Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee.

On June 9, 2022, the City Council approved the FY 2023 Budget, which included \$1,247,729 for the Canal Street Park. An additional \$500,000, which is associated with the pending LWCF grant application, was asterisked in the budget and will be appropriated at time of grant award.

On June 22, 2022, the City, in partnership with the Penacook Village Association, held a community forum to discuss four concept plans for the park. Feedback from this session will be digested over the summer and used to craft a final concept plan for the park.

In August 2022, City Administration issued an RFQ&E to engage on-call construction management services for this and other capital improvement projects. Interviews were completed in October 2022. Milestone Construction and PC Construction were selected. The two firms then competed for the Canal Street Riverfront Park project. Milestone Construction was selected for the project and began to prepare preliminary cost estimates for the project as designed.

On December 8, 2022, the final design concept for the Park was presented at the Penacook Village Association's Annual Meeting.

In late calendar year 2022, the City applied for \$500,000 of Land and Water Conservation Fund grants to support the project. The application is currently pending.

The project is currently in the permitting phase. Pending receipt of grant funds, as well as bid pricing from the to-be-selected construction manager, construction is scheduled for late spring/early summer 2023.

- 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, with the formal grant application due in December. The City will find out the status of its application in spring 2023.
- 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 is a second public meeting for the visioning process scheduled for May 4, 2023.

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.

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 past special events have included: SouperFest, an Arts Market in Rollins Park, UNH Law School Graduation at White Park, several 5k road races, Making Strides at Memorial

Field, and a Multicultural Festival at Keach Park. The Department also worked with Overcomers Refugee Services to host the first Umuganda Event at Keach Park on June 25, 2022.

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. This quarter, officers attended several lunch periods at the middle schools and elementary schools. The officers also conducted several book readings with students. 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. These safety assessments will continue throughout the year.

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 held one "Coffee with a Cop" event at Hannaford grocery store. The event was well attended by community members. This gave members of the community an opportunity to ask questions and get to personally know some of the officers working in their area of the city.

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. During this quarter, the Department met with Ascentria Care Alliance. Ascentria wants to partner with the Department while resettling New Americans in the community. They wish for the Department to play an active role in helping educate New Americans on American law enforcement and how the Department can assist them in the community. 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 is in the process of planning a driver safety educational training class for the elderly. This training will focus on roadway safety and driver education.

The Department held one R.A.D. (Rape Aggression Defense) class. The class was well attended.

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.

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 will occur 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 Concord Public Library held several programs in City parks throughout the spring and summer of 2022, including story times and book discussions. The Library also hosted a summer concert series, with each concert being held at a different location throughout the city.

Library staff visited Abbot-Downing Elementary School for their 2022 Earth Day celebration, and participated in the Christa McAuliffe Elementary School's block party, providing library information and card sign-ups. The Head Start Socialization Group visited the Library weekly for story times.

The Concord Public Library was present at Intown Concord's Market Days, at which Library staff provided information on Library resources, temporary literary tattoos, and story times in the family area on the State House lawn; at National Night Out, at which Library staff gave away free books for children, library information, and temporary literary tattoos; at the Multicultural Festival, at which Library staff signed patrons up for library cards, handed out library information, and provided a free craft for children; and at Intown Concord's Halloween Howl, with its ebike bookmobiles, handing out candy and information on library resources.

The Library also 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. 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.

GOAL 6. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

a) Energy: LED Street Lights

Status: All street lights have been converted to LED. The Engineering Services Division is working with vendors on final billing, warranties and submission to Unifil for completion of on-bill financing. This project is anticipated to save the City in excess of \$600,000 over the next ten years. 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. Our core team of Department Heads also participated in a four-hour training by the National League of Cities entitled, "REAL RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING: Leading for Racial Equity." Additionally, the Human Resources Director attended the Diversity Workforce Coalition's Annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion event to learn more about allyship to include activism, advocacy, and acting as an accomplice in bringing about systemic change to the inequity and marginalization that exists in every organization.

c) Workforce & Housing (Homelessness)

Status: Over the past 24 months, the Penacook Landing multifamily development added 34 units of workforce housing in downtown Penacook, and CATCH added 42 units on Village Street. Penacook Landing Phase 2 started construction in October 2022 and will add an additional 20 units for the community, as discussed in Section 2.c.ii. of this report.

Phase I of the Dakota Partners project on Langdon Avenue is currently under construction. The project will add 192 units of new housing, the majority of which will be affordable housing.

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.

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, as discussed in Section 2.c.ii. of this report.

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 currently under construction.

The Concord Coalition to End Homelessness has been working diligently on its Housing First model, recently securing Zoning Board of Adjustment relief for a project at 120 Pleasant Street. The estimated cost of the project is \$2.5 million. The project is currently underway.

On January 11, 2023, City Council authorized the City Manager to apply for up to \$500,000 of Community Development Block Grant funds to support the Coalition's planned acquisition and redevelopment of #6 South State Street into eight units of transitional housing for people exiting homelessness. The application is due at the end of January. Grant awards are typically announced in April.

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 White Park on Arbor Day 2022.

Five street trees were planted along the street frontage of Maple Grove Cemetery using budgeted funds from the Conservation budget.

The Tree Committee set up a booth at the Farmer's Market for three weeks in June 2022 to educate residents about proper tree planting techniques and the Sustainable Tree Program.

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.

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. 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. Review is ongoing.

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 with NHDOT, CSX, and the City to resume while the transaction is ongoing.

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 "cornfield" 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), which the Friends of the MRGT has indicated they will help fundraise for. Design and permitting for this section will be completed by spring 2023 with the goal of starting construction in summer/fall 2023.

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. The Friends of the MRGT will continue efforts to raise the required match for the LWCF grant.

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. Pending City Council authorization, City Administration plans to reapply for these funds in the upcoming application round.

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. However, said project has not yet moved forward. When/If the project moves forward, and fees are collected, a resolution establishing this reserve in trust account will be submitted to City Council.

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 design/engineering, and FY 2024 construction. Preliminary options for this work include a roundabout and a signal alternative. Staff will work with its engineering consultants on developing and scheduling meetings with the public and stakeholders. 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: Continental Paving completed the FY 2022 paving project in November. The FY 2023 paving project bid was opened in late December 2022. GMI Asphalt was the low bidder, at budget, and was awarded the project. Letters for curb cost sharing went out in January 2023, with a tentative start date of early April, weather dependent.

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.

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 by the beginning of 2024. Efforts continue to build and update new security policies.

The City's Munis migration from Logos New World Systems is officially complete. Energov, the permitting module, went live on August 22, 2022. The training for and migration to the Munis Tax module continues to go well. We expect to go live, as planned, on January 1, 2024.