



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Thomas J. Aspell, Jr., City Manager
DATE: January 29, 2018
SUBJECT: 2016 – 2017 City Council Priorities

Recommendation

Accept this report as to the current status of the City Council Priorities established on January 25, 2016.

Background

Members of the City Council met on January 25, 2016 to discuss and set priorities for the remainder of Calendar Year 2016, as well as for Calendar Year 2017.

Discussion

Listed below, in ranked order, are the accepted priorities, projects and ongoing initiatives; and their respective statuses as of December 31, 2017.

GOAL 1. BALANCED BUDGET ISSUES: FY 2017 and 2018

a) Collective Bargaining/Contract Negotiations

Status: All unions are currently under contract until June 30, 2018, at which time the Concord Fire Officers Association (CFOA) agreement will expire.

b) Health Insurance Costs

Status: Harvard Pilgrim gave the City a not-to-exceed (NTE) rate increase of 9.9% in December 2017.

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

Status: On April 11, 2016, the City Council approved a resolution which expanded the RSA 79-E Program to make historic buildings not located within the two established RSA 79-E Districts in downtown and Penacook Village potentially eligible to participate in the program.

The Community Development Department put forth several significant changes to the Zoning Ordinance to facilitate the development and redevelopment of property. The first, approved by Council in 2015, eliminated the 60% open space requirement for minor subdivisions, addressing what was considered a particularly onerous regulation for property owners in Concord. In May 2016, Council also voted to support a recommendation to alter the base thresholds that trigger minor site plan review in cases where no change to the site is actually proposed and there is virtually no impact to the surrounding neighborhood. Additional changes were also subsequently made to the requirements for ADR application reviews within the ordinance, all with a goal of improving efficiency and effectiveness during the development review process.

In the fall of 2017, the Community Development Department forwarded a recommendation – supported by the Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee – to provide a waiver for the assessment of impact fees on non-residential development. This change was adopted by City Council in an effort to enhance Concord’s economic development competitiveness. The Department also proposed a change to the zoning ordinance that would eliminate the requirement that interior renovations involving residential units in the CBP District, with no significant external work, require site plan review. Council adopted this change, thereby saving property owners time and money to improve downtown buildings and build market rate housing units.

The FY 2017 budget included funding for the creation of a new Economic Development Director for the City. After a nationwide search, Suzanne Pegg, Vice President for Global Business Development and Marketing for the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, was selected for this position. Ms. Pegg started with the City on May 1, 2017. To date, she has met with dozens of business and community leaders. In August, she presented City Council with a report outlining her strategic economic development goals and activities.

At its March 2017 meeting, Council approved a \$15,000 match for a Business Incubator Needs Assessment, in partnership with CRDC, the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, Merrimack County Savings Bank, and the New Hampshire Business Finance Authority. The firm of Axcel Innovation, LLC, was retained by the Chamber of Commerce. The firm is currently working on the second phase of this assessment, the results of which are expected in early 2018.

GOAL 3. PUBLIC INFORMATION, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Status: The City is working effectively towards increasing public awareness through branding, marketing and communications.

City Administration: A “Communications Collaborative” has been created, which consists of public information specialists from Parks & Recreation, the Library, Police, Fire, General Services, and the City Manager’s Office. The “Collaborative” meets regularly to discuss initiatives and ideas for increasing/improving communications.

City Administration is also, with an economic development focus, looking to improve citywide communications and marketing to more effectively present the City and its assets and services to residents, visitors, businesses and site selectors. The City is also working with the new Economic Development Director, Suzanne Pegg, to leverage her global marketing experience.

City Administration also researched best practices from other communities around the country to determine the full breadth of social media/communications platforms that could be utilized. Administration presented the concept of a Public Information Officer (PIO) to the City's Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee (FPAC) at their August 2017 meeting. FPAC subsequently recommended that the creation of a PIO position be proposed to City Council for adoption. City Council approved of this new position, and recruitment began in late 2017. A PIO is expected to be on board in the first quarter of calendar year 2018.

Assessing Department: The Assessing Department strives to provide taxpayers with assessing information regarding abatements, current use, numerous exemptions and tax credits, and links to general assessment information on its web pages. The Department contracted with a consultant to review the content of the Assessing web pages and their overall functionality. The review consisted of ease of use; taxpayer usability and understanding; redundant information; missing information; and confusing or misleading information. Changes were recommended that would improve the efficiency of the navigation and links.

In March 2017, Assessing staff attended "Customer Service in the Public Sector" through Primex. This education session specifically focused on assessing departments and included interactive and thought-provoking sessions to identify various customers and set specific customer service goals. The Department will continue to take advantage of future education and training to develop and provide staff with customer service tools.

Fire Department: The Fire Department maintains an active presence in print, electronic and social media. WKXL hosts a weekly segment to provide an update on Fire Department activities and safety messages. The Department's Facebook page has 3,742 followers (up from 3,660 last quarter), and its Twitter account has 1,149 followers (up from 1,084 last quarter). Featured information for the second quarter of FY 2018 included Fire Prevention Week safety messages, school visits, Halloween safety, child passenger seat safety, winter holiday safety, and updates on the opioid crisis.

General Services Department: The General Services Department continues to increase communications with the community. The Department disseminates public information via website updates, print media, press releases, the City Manager's newsletter, its monthly General Gazette newsletter, and bill stuffers. Social media is used to improve community engagement, continue branding, and encourage public awareness of services.

During the second quarter of FY 2018, the General Services Department continued to highlight its employees on social media and in its General Gazette newsletter featuring promotions, new hires, training initiatives, and retirements. Job openings continue to be advertised on social media and in the General Gazette newsletter as well, with a consistent message that Concord General Services is a great place to work.

On October 12, 2017, in celebration of the national campaign, "Imagine a Day without Water," hosted by the Value of Water Campaign, the General Services Department promoted the importance of investing in water infrastructure to maintain and upgrade resources. An open house was held at both the City's Water Treatment Facility and the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Facility. Approximately 180 sixth graders from Merrimack Valley Middle School, and 54 high school students from the Concord Regional Technical Center, attended personalized tours of both facilities. WMUR's Chronicle also recently visited the wastewater treatment facility to film an episode featuring the work

that goes into maintaining sustainable wastewater and bio-solid recovery to protect the quality of the Merrimack River and overall public health.

A public outreach initiative has begun in an effort to educate the public to not recycle plastic film, such as plastic bags, due to increased contamination at sorting facilities. The recycling industry has lowered tolerance as a whole for contamination; therefore, the General Services Department will continue to stress the fact that the City's solid waste contractor will only be collecting acceptable materials at the curb, and that plastic bags can be recycled at accepted retail stores. This information has been advertised on the City website, on social media, in the General Gazette newsletter, and in the 2018 Solid Waste Brochure that was mailed out to single family residences in late December. America Recycles Day, hosted by Keep America Beautiful on November 15, 2017, was another recent initiative to encourage the community to recycle more. In addition to regular promotion efforts, press releases were issued to encourage residents to take the America Recycles Day online pledge to recycle more. The Department also reached out to local third grade teachers to invite them to participate in a Recycling Poster Contest, to encourage local kids to learn more about recycling. There were many great poster submissions. Ultimately, a student from Broken Ground School was selected as the winner of the contest and won a pizza party for the entire class. The winning poster was on display at the Concord Public Library.

With the arrival of winter, promotions focused on winter operations, plowing, and parking bans. The Department's winter operations webpage was updated with new information; water bills contained information to encourage parking ban notification subscriptions; and continued outreach for parking bans was released through the City's alert system, the General Gazette newsletter, social media posts and advertisements, and the local media.

Additional topics promoted through various media outlets include Fall Leaf Collection; E-Z Pay for WaterSense, which encouraged water customers to enroll in E-Z Pay for a chance to win a WaterSense Shower Better bundle; water leak updates; Downtown Services Team maintenance; holiday decorations and information; the Penacook Plant of the Year Award; the Water Fluoridation Quality Award; and Everett Arena energy saving projects.

As of December 31, 2017, the Department had 1,611 Facebook likes, 443 Twitter followers, 24 Google+ followers, and 106 YouTube subscribers. In addition, the General Services Department had 7,489 total subscriptions to the Alert Center, Notify Me, and News Flash modules on the City website, which is used regularly to alert the community of relevant events. Approximately 47 press releases have been published by the local media during this quarter.

Human Resources Department: During the second quarter of FY 2018, the Department posted 14 new full-time (FT) and one part-time (PT) job vacancy; as well as four temporary positions and one roster posting. This totaled 20 new postings, of which 10 were carried forward from the previous quarter and one was cancelled.

During the second quarter of FY 2018, 14 new employees (FT, PPT, and PT) were hired. There was an average of 44 days from post to hire. This statistic does not include temporary hires or roster postings. Of the 14 new hires and promotions, four Firefighters were hired from existing rosters. In addition, 24 seasonal/temporary positions were successfully filled.

The Human Resources Department continues to use its standard FREE resources (the City website, Primex, NHMA, Chamber of Commerce, and NH Community College Consortium), as well as our paid sources (Union Leader, Indeed, Facebook, and industry specific job boards) for promoting job postings. These sources typically generate an adequate response for most positions.

During the second quarter of FY 2018, there were some recruitments that were a good match for LinkedIn. LinkedIn recently changed their pricing structure and has become more affordable. The Human Resources Department promoted several jobs using this resource and found the results to be acceptable. The Department also tried a new source, The Burlington Free Press, which is part of the USA News Network and offers the ability to promote in various social media platforms, such as Glassdoor, ZipRecruiter, and Twitter, without having to pay for each one. This is an alternative to advertising in a local newspaper for approximately the same cost, while reaching a much broader audience. The Department continues to look for effective and budget wise ways to promote the City's talent requirements.

Concord Public Library: The Library makes good use of social media to post information about upcoming programs and library services. A YouTube channel was created for the posting of videos of Library programs, and Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts are also maintained. In addition, the Library makes great use of the News Flash feature of the City website.

The Library has added a voluntary sign-up to receive marketing emails that promote Library services. In addition, the Library has increased the publication of its newsletter from a bi-monthly basis to a monthly basis. A monthly program bookmark is being placed, on a trial basis, in all outgoing holds and interlibrary loans. The Library has reinstated the hanging of posters at local downtown businesses; and has increased its posting frequency on all social media, added scheduled evening and weekend posts, and is assessing when it has the most success with patron engagement. The Library has also begun to utilize local Concord history more in its social media marketing. The Library worked with the Library Foundation to promote the 2017 Concord Reads title: *Adrift: 76 Days Lost at Sea*, which culminated with an author presentation at Red River Theatres.

In May 2017, the Library launched an online periodical database called *Zinio*. The database can be viewed directly through the internet or by downloading the application, "*zinio for libraries*" and then selecting CPL. Once registered, 57 magazine titles, as well as back issues, may be accessed. There are no lending limits to the length of time an item may be checked out and there are no hold queues.

In August 2017, the Library began to offer a new digital streaming service called *Hoopla*. *Hoopla* offers a variety of streaming items, such as e-books, music albums, movies, and audiobooks. For the initial program launch, patrons may check out five items of any medium per month through *Hoopla*.

The Library has been experimenting with using Facebook ads to promote programs. There has been mixed success, depending on the type of program and the target audience.

Programming staff has been exploring the use of Canva as a graphic design tool for program posters, which has resulted in improved poster designs. Canva is a powerful tool that the Library plans to continue to explore and take advantage of for both paper and digital advertising.

During Library Card Sign-up Month, staff gave out welcome bags to new patrons that included Library swag (CPL sunglasses, programming information, chocolate, etc.), as well as information on getting started with the Library's digital resources. New patrons are also enrolled in the Library's on-line newsletter when they sign up for a Library card.

The Library continues to explore ways of incorporating video into its social media and marketing efforts. Video of the program, Black Bears, was published on the Library's YouTube channel, and video of the Stone Walls program was highlighted on social media.

The Library has added a STEAM webpage link to its Children's Room page, with activities for families to do at home, as well as information about popular STEAM workshops held at the Library.

The Library added two new museum passes for the public to utilize: the SEE Science Center and the NH Children's Museum.

The newly created Social Media Team has solidified its mission, goals and daily strategy for using the Library's three social media platforms efficiently and successfully. As a result, we've seen engagement rise on Facebook, especially as team members have become more comfortable with sharing simple, relatable, and often humorous content that is often better received than staged posts. A #Throwback Thursday series was reinvigorated by the addition of a team member who is familiar with the Concord Room collections and excited to have the opportunity to highlight these.

Parks and Recreation Department: The Parks & Recreation Department creates four seasonal brochures each year, which are delivered to all elementary school children in the city. These brochures highlight all Department programs and events for the next 3-4 months. The brochures are also posted on the Parks & Recreation web site. The Department allows online registration for all classes and camps. Families can pay for classes and the users of the City Auditorium can request rentals and pay for rentals online.

In addition, the Department maintains a very active Facebook page, with over 3,300 "likes". Messages received on Facebook are answered within a few hours, seven days a week. The Department creates a quarterly newsletter for the web site, weekly news releases for local media, a regular TV show ("We Are Serious About Fun") with Concord TV, and numerous public service announcements. The Department works very closely with the Friends of the Audi to advertise events, and handles all reservations for the City Auditorium.

Beaver Meadow Golf Course: Beaver Meadow Golf Course recently implemented Tee Snap, a new Point of Sale software, and a new website, securing several new domain names to improve search engine results. The new software will greatly improve customer service by improving the check-in process at the course and easier sales processes. The new website, in conjunction with the new POS software, will allow for golfers to secure tee times online.

Staff creates and sends out weekly and monthly e-mail blasts to several thousand golfers who have signed up to belong to its online e-club. The web site receives 2,500-3,500 unique web hits per month. Beaver Meadow also maintains a very active Facebook page, with over 1,600 "likes". During the golf season, staff coordinates weekly newspaper and radio ads.

Police Department: The Police Department utilizes a number of social media sites, as well as the City website, to present information about the Department to the public and to keep the public informed of events occurring within the City. The Department's website includes

many pages with valuable information, including guidance on how to obtain reports and other services that the Department provides. The site also provides notification on upcoming hiring processes, drug take-back days, upcoming citizen police academies, and other events. In addition, all Police Department press releases are placed on its web page.

The Police Department's Twitter page has approximately 1,625 followers, and its Facebook page has approximately 3,430 followers. Both of these venues are used to disseminate information regarding Department and/or City events and provide emergency information as necessary.

The Police Department also administers the Concord Regional Crimeline, which allows individuals to anonymously provide tips regarding ongoing investigations in Concord and surrounding towns. Tips can be submitted by phone, online or by text message. During calendar year 2016, over 370 tips were received, leading to the arrest of 37 individuals. During calendar year 2017, 275 tips were received leading to the arrest of 61 individuals.

The Police Chief participates in a weekly radio show on WKXL, where different topics are addressed based upon events occurring in the city, state and, on occasion, the nation. Another initiative of the Police Department is the "Coffee with a Cop" program. This program is designed to promote interaction between the community and the Department by sharing coffee and fostering discussion in a relaxed atmosphere. Since its inception, the Department has held nine "Coffee with a Cop" events at different locations throughout the City. All of these events have been well received by the public and business owners.

During the last three school years, the Police Department has taken part in two programs focused on the schools: "Lunch with a Cop" and "Police Readers". "Lunch with a Cop" features police officers joining students throughout the city during lunch time to field questions and leave a positive impression with the students. The "Police Readers" program has police officers go into K-2nd grade classrooms and read books to the students. During the summer months, officers participated in school visitations throughout the city that were offering summer courses for refugee students. This allowed the students an opportunity to ask officers questions and to learn about the criminal justice system and their local police department.

Over the course of this past summer, the Police Department partnered with several businesses to help institute some new programs. These programs included "Ice Cream Patrols," where the Police Department and Hood joined forces and featured officers visiting the City parks and handing out ice cream and popsicles to kids. The Department also partnered with the Brain Injury Association of NH, Sal's Pizza, Constantly Pizza, and Domino's to help promote bicycle safety for children. Any child observed wearing a bicycle helmet or practicing bicycle safety was issued a certificate good for a free pizza at one of the partnering restaurants.

The Police Department continues to offer Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) classes, which are comprehensive defense training courses for women that include situational awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance, and progresses to the basics of hands-on defense training. The RAD System is dedicated to teaching women defensive concepts and techniques against various types of assault by utilizing easy, effective and proven self-defense tactics. The system of realistic defense will provide a woman with the knowledge to make an educated decision about resistance.

With the growing number of mass shooting incidents occurring across the country, the Police Department has been offering CRASE (Civilian Response to an Active Shooter Event) training to local businesses and schools. This training teaches participants how to react during an active shooter incident. The training also helps those businesses or establishments come up with an action plan should an incident occur at their location.

The Police Department partnered with the New Hampshire Food Bank to sponsor several food drives during Food Action Month (September) in 2016 and 2017. Participants were challenged to “Help Stuff a Cruiser”. Three local charities were the benefactors of the food drives.

GOAL 4. PUBLIC SAFETY WORK & CONTINUED SUPPORT OF SOCIAL SAFETY NETWORK

Status: The Police Department takes an aggressive stance in combatting the opioid crisis facing the City. In January of 2016, the Department assigned an additional investigator to the Drug Enforcement Unit in order to augment the Unit’s efforts in conducting undercover drug investigations and to assist in collecting and disseminating drug intelligence. The Department has worked closely with other stakeholders on this matter to include other police agencies, service providers, and other branches of the criminal justice system. The Department also has a representative participating on the Merrimack County Drug Court Team, which began the implementation of a Drug Court in October 2017 as part of the Merrimack County Superior Court. The Department will continue these efforts and regularly assess personnel assignments and initiatives to most effectively address illegal drug usage in the city. During calendar year 2016, the Department made 318 arrests of individuals with illegal drug related charges. This was a 23% increase in the number of drug-related arrests over calendar year 2015. During calendar year 2017, the Department made 273 arrests of individuals with illegal drug related charges.

During the fall of 2016, the Police Department received a grant award in the amount of \$75,000 through the Law Enforcement Opioid Abuse Reduction Initiative (Project Granite Hammer). These funds were utilized by the Department to cover overtime costs to conduct illegal drug investigations in the City and surrounding towns. The Department was also awarded additional funding through Project Granite Shield for the remainder of 2017 and the beginning of 2018. These funds will also be used to cover overtime costs in conducting illegal drug investigations.

The Police Department continues with initiatives put in place to best address community safety concerns. The highly successful Problem Oriented Policing (POP) Unit is a tool the department utilizes to address issues that can be best resolved with a concentrated proactive approach, which is not always possible through the Patrol Division. The POP Unit is able to address public safety issues through enforcement and by coordinating with other City and community resources. The POP Unit has been very successful in addressing issues with the homeless population, panhandling, nuisance properties, and many other quality of life issues within the City. Recent staffing issues have limited the Department’s ability to fully implement the POP Unit; however, we are hoping to have this unit up and running again during FY 2018. All officers are encouraged to participate in community engagement activities. The success of the Police Department in providing the safest community possible is dependent upon a cooperative effort between the Department and the community as a whole.

In an attempt to strengthen its partnership with the refugee/New American community, the Police Department has held several Q&A type meetings with the refugee/New American community to address any questions or concerns they may have relating to the community, local and state laws, and the Police Department. With the assistance of the NH Department of Motor Vehicles, the Police Department implemented a driver training course to assist those having difficulty obtaining a driver's license due to language and cultural obstacles. This continues to be a work in progress. The Department also looks forward to working with the new administration of the New American Africans to further the partnership between the police and the refugee/immigrant community.

The Fire Department has seen a surge in drug overdose activity. In December, several Department members representing Fire Administration and the union locals met with staff from Riverbend Community Mental Health and the Capital Area Public Health Network to begin planning for ways Fire Department staff can attempt to direct patients to treatment resources at the time of an emergency response. A follow-up meeting will take place in February 2018, and will include the City Manager, the Police Department, and other stakeholders.

GOAL 5. PARKING MASTER PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Status: The City embarked upon a strategic planning process in 2014 for the purpose of making the Parking Fund financially solvent, while simultaneously promoting economic development goals tied to parking, as well as improving customer service and the quality of the City's parking facilities. The Parking Committee presented its final Strategic Plan to the City Council on November 13, 2017. The Strategic Plan includes a variety of short and long-term recommendations to be implemented over the next several years. On December 11, 2017, the City Council approved several ordinances to begin implementation of parking reforms. The ordinances include changes to parking rates, hours of enforcement, citations, and resident permit parking near the UNH Law School. Financial components of the Strategic Plan will be brought forward as part of the upcoming FY 2019 budget process.

GOAL 6. FOSTER/ENHANCE DIALOGUE WITH LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Status: In coordination with Merrimack County, the City provided support regarding a proposal to construct a new County Courthouse, adjacent to the existing courthouse, instead of on the Heights. Support included testifying at numerous State Legislative Committee hearings and background work associated with those hearings.

In coordination with the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, the City provided support regarding a proposal to open the State House to the public on weekends to promote tourism in downtown Concord.

In December 2016, the City Council authorized the City Manager to work with the legislative delegation to draft amendments to RSA 231 and RSA 261, concerning alternative funding mechanisms for the construction, repair, maintenance, administration, and enforcement of parking facilities and parking meters. Efforts to amend the statute were not successful and City Administration, working with the Mayor and Senator Feltes, introduced revised legislation, which is currently pending with the Legislature.

GOAL 7. ENHANCED COMMUNITY EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Status: The Mayor established an Ad-Hoc City Council Committee to review the process, costs and revenues associated with community events. The committee held several meetings and accepted input from local event organizers. A report to Council was submitted in early 2017. Recommendations included holding a LEAN event to streamline the current permitting process. This LEAN event was held in late May. Recommendations from that LEAN event would streamline the event permitting process from eight review/decision points to one. The committee voted to support the recommendations at its May 30th meeting. These recommendations were subsequently adopted by City Council during the summer of 2017. A comprehensive set of amendments to the business/ event licensing chapter of the City ordinances, resulting from those recommendations, has been forwarded to City Council for review at their October 2017 meeting. These changes were ultimately adopted by City Council.

The Concord Public Library is the current repository of the four community mosaics created by Concord residents as part of the Citywide 250th celebration.

The Parks & Recreation Department continues to coordinate the following events: July 4th Celebration, Summer Concert Series, Movie in the Parks, and White Park Winter Carnival. The Department has also worked with a wide range of diverse organizations this past year to increase the number of community events, as follows:

- Hosted four new baseball tournaments with the Concord Sports Center, with the largest tournament bringing 24 teams from all over New England.
- Expanded the number of games hosted for the Granite State Baseball League. Teams from all over New Hampshire and Massachusetts now play games most weekends on City fields.
- Black Ice Pond Hockey Tournament held at White Park.
- Worked with Seacoast Express Soccer Club to help host their annual regional tournament in fall of 2017, and will be expanding the number of games hosted at City facilities for the fall 2018 tournament. This tournament brings in over 180 soccer teams from all over New England and Canada over two days.
- Annual bike races at White Park and numerous fun runs in the City's parks.

PROJECT 1. MAIN STREET COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT

Status: This transformative project was completed in 2016, with some punch list and follow-up sign and warranty work completed in 2017. The project won several awards in 2017, including the American City and County Crown Community distinction.

PROJECT 2. CITYWIDE MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER

Status: Planning for a new city-wide multigenerational community center first began in 2004. During the period of 2004-2013, the City conducted a variety of feasibility studies, which explored dozens of options for a new facility at Keach Park. Ultimately, the City Council elected to pursue a new facility at the site of the former Dame School at 14 Canterbury Road. On January 10, 2013, the City acquired the former Dame School property from the Concord School District for the sum of \$1.00. Subsequently, \$781,503 was appropriated as part of the FY 2014 and FY 2015 budgets for design of the new facility.

On April 11, 2016, the City Council approved a \$7.1 million plan for a new city-wide multigenerational community center at the site of the former Dame School located. As part of its approval, the Council appropriated \$6.55 million of supplemental funding for design and construction. A contract for design services was executed on May 23, 2016. Design and permitting efforts were substantially completed in late fall 2016.

A Request for Qualifications and Experience (RFQ&E) was prepared for the purpose of selecting a Construction Manager (i.e., General Contractor) for the project. A total of 11 responses to the RFQ&E were received on November 18, 2016. Five firms were short listed and interviewed. Milestone Engineering and Construction was selected to be the Construction Manager for the project on January 5, 2017.

During the ensuing months, the Construction Manager solicited bids from various subcontractors and established a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for the project. Due to a strong economy and robust construction market, the project cost exceeded available budget. Therefore, on May 8, 2017, the City Council appropriated an additional \$515,000 to support the project.

A construction contract was executed with Milestone Engineering and Construction on May 15, 2017. Construction began on June 15, 2017. As of the date of this report, the project is approximately 60% complete, remains on budget, and is scheduled to be substantially complete on May 25, 2018. The facility will be open to the public in June.

PROJECT 3. SUSTAINABILITY: MUNICIPAL FACILITIES, RECREATIONAL ASSETS, AND NORTHERN PASS

Status: In April 2016, City staff provided a report and presentation to the City Council on the impact of invasive insect species within the City of Concord. The City Council accepted the report with the understanding that there will be several action items over the next several years.

The City continues to follow the Northern Pass project closely. Per Council's direction, the City filed as an intervener at the federal and state levels. The Council's Northern Pass Committee, the Community Development Department, and the City Solicitor's office continue to monitor the proceedings to protect the City's interests in this matter.

PROJECT 4. OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

a) South Main Street

Status: On September 21, 2011, the State of New Hampshire notified the City of its plans to divest of the former Employment Security property located at 32-34 South Main Street and 33 South State Street. The State divested of this property as part of a larger plan to consolidate various Employment Security offices throughout central New Hampshire to the former Tobey Building in the State Office Park on Fruit Street. Renovation of the Tobey Building was completed in May 2014. The State's asking price was \$1.75 million, as established by a July 2011 real estate appraisal. In accordance with RSA 4:40, the City was afforded a right of first refusal to acquire the property before it was listed on the open market.

Due to the property's highly visible location and strategic importance relative to the City's ongoing downtown revitalization efforts, the City elected to invoke its right of first refusal to acquire the property. Recognizing its fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers, the City Council had initially hoped to avoid using City funds to acquire the property by partnering with a private developer who would acquire the site through a three party transaction involving the City, the State, and the developer. As such, in early 2013 the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the purpose of selecting a developer to redevelop the property. Two proposals were received, but neither ultimately moved forward. As a result, on October 31, 2014, the City acquired the property for the sum of \$1.575 million plus closing costs.

To finance the purchase and related holding costs, the City Council approved Resolutions #8777 and #8778, which appropriated the sum of \$1.99 million in Sears Block Tax Increment Finance (SBTIF) District bonds and notes. In accordance with RSA 162-K:8 (the State law governing tax increment finance districts), as well as the SBTIF's Development Program and Financing Plan, these bonds and notes were issued as short-term, low cost interest only Bond Anticipation Notes, with the understanding that the issuance would eventually be converted to a full principal and interest debt once the property is sold to a developer. At the time of purchase, the City had structured its financing plan on the assumption it would hold the property for approximately five years.

In January 2015, the City issued an RFP for the purpose of engaging a commercial real estate broker to market the property. In March 2015, the City engaged the NAI Norwood Group of Bedford, New Hampshire, to market the site. To support marketing efforts, the City engaged a design team to prepare conceptual site plans depicting how the property could potentially be redeveloped. Following completion of the development concepts and a comprehensive marketing package, the property was put on the market in August 2015 with an asking price of \$1.6 million.

On April 19, 2017, Dol-Soul Properties LLC submitted a Letter of Intent to acquire the property. On October 10, 2017, the City Council held a public hearing and approved an agreement to sell the property to Dol-Soul Properties for \$1.075 million. Dol-Soul plans to redevelop the property into a \$12.5 million, 120,000 square foot mixed use project featuring approximately 109 market rate apartments and 5,000 square feet of commercial space, as well as 54-103 parking spaces. To support the project, the City will demolish the former Employment Security building at a cost of approximately \$300,000, and will provide up to 82 permit parking spaces to augment on-site parking provided by the developer. The project is expected to start construction in late 2018 or early 2019.

b) Penacook Village

Status: Final cleanup of the 4.04 acre former Penacook Mill/Amazon Realty site located at 11-35 Canal Street was completed in September 2014. In January 2015, the City issued a Request for Proposals for the purpose of engaging a commercial real estate broker to market the property. In March 2015, the City engaged the NAI Norwood Group of Bedford, NH, to market the property. To support marketing efforts, the City engaged a design team which prepared conceptual site plans depicting how the property could potentially be redeveloped. Following the completion of development concepts and a comprehensive marketing package, the property was put on the market in August 2015 with an asking price of \$540,000. On May 8, 2017, the City Council approved a purchase and sales agreement to sell approximately 2.5 acres of the site to the Caleb

Development Corporation for the sum of \$540,000 (a full price offer). Caleb plans to redevelop the property into a 54-unit affordable housing project. The remaining 1.5 +/- acres of the site will be retained by the City for a potential future riverfront park, currently scheduled in CIP #567 in FY 2020 for \$1.2 million, as added by the City Council during the FY 2018 budget adoption process. On September 11, 2017, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into an agreement amending certain provisions of the purchase and sales agreement concerning temporary lot line configurations between the Caleb and City parcels. Execution of that amendment is currently pending. On September 13, 2017, Caleb received a crucial variance from the Zoning Board to allow for ground floor residential uses at the property.

On October 18, 2017, the Planning Board approved Caleb's site plan application for the project. In November 2017, Caleb filed an application with the NH Housing Finance Authority for Low Income Housing Tax Credits for Phase I of the project. Tax credit awards are scheduled for early 2018. Pending the award of certain tax credits, conveyance of the property and start of construction could commence as early as summer 2018.

The Concord Public Library is monitoring potential locations to better house the Penacook Branch Library, as the current building has increasing challenges.

c) Downtown 2nd & 3rd Floor Redevelopment

Status: In February 2016, the developer of the Remi Block (formerly known as the Vegas Block) closed on a \$2.8 million financing package for renovation of the property into 20 market rate apartments and three commercial storefronts. The City contributed \$200,000 to the financing package through its Revolving Loan Program. Further, the City has supported the project with a RSA 79-E Tax Relief Incentive benefit (valued at \$315,000), and a license for installation of balconies over the City's adjacent streets. The City is in discussions with the developer regarding use of municipal parking to support the project. The project was completed in March 2017 and was fully leased within 23 days.

In June 2016, the Planning Board approved the site plan and subdivision for the Bienvenue project, which will convert the former Sacred Heart Church to 10 condominiums. This project has garnered significant interest, as its units will push the price point for downtown residential living in Concord. This project was completed in the summer of 2017.

In September 2017, the Elm Grove Companies acquired four properties in Downtown Concord for redevelopment. Elm Grove plans to renovate all four properties, and will add 31 new market rate apartments, combined, at 5 South State Street and 15 Pleasant Street. On December 11, 2017, the City Council granted RSA 79-E Community Tax Relief Incentives with six year terms to support renovation of the two above mentioned properties.

The City has also received interest from other parties seeking to acquire properties in the downtown area for conversion to market rate apartments.

On December 27, 2017, local developer Steve Duprey, doing business as New Concord Theatre, LLC, acquired the former Concord Theatre located at 16-18 South Main Street for the sum of \$483,500. Mr. Duprey is working in partnership with the Capitol Center for the Arts (CCA). Together, they plan to undertake a \$5,457,102 renovation of the

property to create a new performing arts venue. The new venue will be a second location, which will be operated – and eventually owned by – the CCA. This new venue will feature an auditorium with capacity to hold 270 seated guests to 450 standing patrons, and will be capable of hosting a variety of performances, including small plays, concerts, lectures, and movies. The auditorium will be equipped with retractable stadium seating for easy configuration of the space, depending upon the event. The Theatre will also have banquet capabilities for meetings, parties, weddings, and other special events. On January 24, 2018, the City’s Community Development Advisory Committee approved a loan participation agreement with the Capitol Regional Development Council in the amount of \$250,000 to support the project. Pending award of New Markets Tax Credits and Historic Tax Credits, the project will begin in late spring 2018. The project will take approximately 9-12 months to complete.

d) North Central Corridor/Storrs Street Connection & South End Rail Yard

Status: Using budget surplus associated with the recent cleanup of the former Tsunis property, the Engineering Services Division engaged a design consultant to commence the preliminary design process. The initial review of the commensurate I-93 Bow/Concord project alternatives, however, illustrated that the City would be best served to delay the Storrs Street extension project until the State has a firmer grasp on its preferred I-93 alternative for the area in between Exits 14 and 15. Because of this concern, the City Council, as part of the FY 2018 budget adoption, delayed final design and construction from FY 2018 to FY 2020. As part of the I-93 Bow/Concord planning process, the City has articulated to the State its desire to maximize potential development opportunities along the corridor, including near Stickney Avenue, Storrs Street, and Horseshoe Pond.

ON-GOING INITIATIVE 1. SEWALLS FALLS BRIDGE

Status: Construction was completed in the fall of 2016. A final wearing course and the adjacent Heritage Park area were completed in the spring of 2017.

ON-GOING INITIATIVE 2. MAJOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS – LOUDON ROAD

Status: The City Council, at its September 2016 meeting, voted to no longer pursue the three lane conversion and instead make safety improvements via driveway access management and re-paving. Paving was completed in 2017.

ON-GOING INITIATIVE 3. CREATE AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS (particularly in regards to Recreation and Economic Development Opportunities)

Status: The Parks & Recreation Department coordinates work with many community groups to expand recreation opportunities and to help with the offering of the following programs and services:

- Coordinates the Adopt-a-Spot Program with over 50 different organizations maintaining areas around the city.
- Continues to work with the Concord Crush Youth Lacrosse league for the registration and scheduling of the league.
- Works with the Pope Memorial SPCA for the operating of the dog park at Terrill Park.

- Coordinates with several groups for community park clean-up days, including the Friends of White Park, Concord Crew at Kiwanis River Front Park, and the Merrimack River Greenway Trail Committee.
- Works with the Friends of the Audi to promote events, marketing, and volunteer days.
- Works with the Capital Area Wellness Coalition, the Patriots Alumni Club, the Concord Police Department, the Concord Rotary Club, Black Ice Pond Hockey, and Friends of White Park to offer several special events around the City.
- Worked with Red River Theatres to co-sponsor a “Movie in the Park” in July 2017.

In May 2016, the Concord Public Library partnered with local businesses to offer its first “How To” Festival. The festival offered thirty 25-minute educational sessions for the public on a range of topics, including biking opportunities promoted by S&W Sports; scarf tying provided by Gondwana; and useful information about the City’s trail system to name just a few.

The Concord Public Library has installed six “Little Free Libraries” in the community. “Little Free Libraries” are community spaces at which residents can read and exchange books for free without a library card. Simply take a book, pass it on to another reader, return it or exchange it for a different title. The “Little Free Libraries” are located at Rolfe Park, Rollins Park, White Park, Keach Park, the Oak Hill Trail, and the Marjory Swope Trail. There has been tremendous usage of the free materials in these libraries.

The new Economic Development Director has been meeting with many local businesses and civic leaders to assess community economic development assets and establish a network of resources that could be considered for potential partnership opportunities and/or participation on economic development task forces. These task forces will largely play a more targeted role than the traditional Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), which is proposed to be eliminated in early 2018.

ON-GOING INITIATIVE 4. CREATIVE ECONOMY WORK

Status: Creative Concord is actively engaged in conducting the Americans for the Arts economic prosperity survey and is working with the City on the development of pilot programs for the coming year. The FY 2017 Budget provided matching funds for the survey and funding for the beginning of a downtown public arts program. Artwork was installed on Main Street as part of what is hoped to be a continuing effort to foster art in our downtown. In the summer of 2017, the Kimball Jenkins School of Art launched a bicycle-themed exhibit along the sidewalks on Main Street.

ON-GOING INITIATIVE 5. CONTINUE EXPANDED NEIGHBORHOOD STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Status: The FY 2017 paving project has been completed as scheduled. With good pricing, the City was able to add Broad Cove Drive to the list of streets that were reclaimed this year.

The FY 2018 paving project is out to bid with a bid opening date of February 9, 2018. Staff has developed a plan to use funds collected through the City’s Excavation Permit process, which was upheld by the courts last spring, as well as additional funds made available to the City through the passage of Senate Bill 38. Anticipated start of construction is late March or early April.