



# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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

**DATE:** July 29, 2015

**SUBJECT:** 2014 – 2015 City Council Priorities

### **Recommendation**

Accept this report as to the current status of the City Council Priorities established on February 3, 2014.

### **Background**

Members of the City Council met on February 3, 2014 to discuss and set priorities for the remainder of Calendar Year 2014, as well as Calendar Year 2015.

### **Discussion**

Listed below, in ranked order, are the accepted priorities, projects and ongoing initiatives; and their respective statuses.

#### **GOAL 1. BALANCED BUDGET ISSUES: FY 2015 and 2016**

##### **a) Collective Bargaining/Contract Negotiations**

**Status:** All unions are currently under contract. Contract negotiations began in early 2015 with the Concord Fire Officers Association, whose contract expired on 6/30/2015. Negotiations successfully concluded in June, prior to contract expiration, and included a provision for cost sharing beginning in July 2016. By eliminating the Point of Service health plan from all contractual language, and eliminating the HMO \$15 plan, which had no deductibles, we have been able to modify our plan offerings to two, more cost effective HMO selections through Harvard Pilgrim. All unions have entered into contracts that provide for cost sharing of medical and dental premiums. The Concord Police Supervisors Association (CPSA) will begin cost sharing in July 2015, and the remaining five unions will begin cost sharing in July 2016.

##### **b) Grant Writing**

**Status:** In April 2014, the City was awarded \$155,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to support renovations to NAMI-NH's facility on North State Street.

In December 2014, the Fire Department applied for \$189,864 through the Assistance to Firefighters grant program to install fire sprinklers in the four Fire Stations. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has notified the City that the grant will be awarded in July 2015. The self-contained breathing equipment purchased through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant, which was awarded in 2014, arrived in May 2015, and all members underwent extensive training, also funded by the grant, to ensure proficiency in the use of the new equipment.

The Police Department currently manages three Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) awards, which have provided approximately \$90,000 to the Concord Police Department and the Merrimack County Sheriff's Department. These funds are designated for equipment, training and other police-related needs identified by each agency to improve the police services provided. Additionally, the Department has recently been notified of an award of approximately \$23,000 through the 2015 JAG program, which is designated for equipment and training purposes. The Department will be sharing a portion of this award with the Merrimack County Sheriff's Office as well.

The Police Department participates in the Ballistic Vest Partnership Program, which provides 50% of funding for the Department's purchase of ballistic vests. The Department also receives funding through the NH Highway Safety Agency to conduct initiatives designed to keep the City's roadways safer. These initiatives include enhanced enforcement patrols on Loudon Road, downtown pedestrian safety patrols, DWI patrols, seatbelt enforcement patrols, and other initiatives targeting aggressive driving and pedestrian safety.

In 2013, the Police Department applied for and was approved to receive funding through the Office of Domestic Preparedness, State Homeland Security Program and Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, for a specialized response/rescue vehicle. The Department received this vehicle in July 2014. This vehicle will be an important asset for both the Department and the Central NH Special Operations Unit for incidents involving the need for a vehicle with such response capabilities.

In March 2014, the Police Department received funding through the State of NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management Exercise and Evaluation Program to conduct an active shooter exercise in conjunction with Concord Hospital. This exercise proved extremely beneficial in assessing not only the Department's response to an active shooter incident, but also in evaluating the interoperation capabilities of other responding agencies, as well as staff at Concord Hospital.

Future grant opportunities are being explored to determine their applicability to the Police Department and whether further action is warranted. A number of grant solicitations are expected during the upcoming year and the Department will remain vigilant in seeking out funding through these grants in order to further the Department's goals.

Library staff has applied for and received a number of grants. They prepared a successful Reen Grant application (\$6,635) for additional comfortable, stacking chairs for the auditorium, and new plastic chairs for children's programs. They also received the following grants from the Concord Public Library Foundation: \$370 for PlaySpace equipment in the Children's Room; \$375 to purchase books to give away at National Night Out; \$1,000 to purchase books for Book Club kits; \$600 to purchase a discounted

library pass for patrons to the Museum of Science in Boston; \$1,000 to help establish a teen zone in the Library; \$1,125 to fund four bands and food vendors for the Summer Concert Series, Live Music on the Lawn; \$600 for the Teen Summer Reading Program; \$300 to go to the Pope Memorial SPCA when the children's summer reading goals are collectively met; and \$860 for a *Wii U* video gaming system and accompanying software for the purpose of setting up a video game club and for teens to utilize at set times during the week. All of these grants help supplement the offerings the Library provides for the community. In addition, the Library received a grant from the Network of Libraries of Medicine to purchase library materials for three programs, as well as to support the filming of the three programs for the Library's YouTube channel. Those programs are: "How to Sign Up for Healthcare"; "Alzheimer's Memory Loss and Dementia"; and "Healing from Lyme Disease".

The Human Resources Department applied for and was awarded the 2014 New England ADA Center's Field Based Training Day for municipalities, which included a \$1,000 grant to be used to improve accessibility for the disabled. City employees participated in a hands-on training experience on September 29, 2014. The training provided experience conducting an accessibility review and identifying solutions that would improve accessibility to the public for municipal services and programs, as designated under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The City recently received the \$1,000 monetary award and is evaluating the best use of the grant.

The General Services Department received a \$7,673 grant from the NH Department of Environmental Services to host the Annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection event, which is held annually in September at the Everett Arena. The program is the mechanism by which the City provides for safe disposal of hazardous materials that represent a risk to the environment. General Services has recently entered into a new grant agreement for FY 2016 to continue the program.

The General Services Department also received a Homeland Security Grant through the NH Department of Safety in the amount of \$13,675 for the installation of security cameras at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant and at high lift Pump Station #4 on Hutchins Street.

The Parks & Recreation Department received a \$10,000 sponsorship from the Concord Housing & Redevelopment Authority to provide free swim lessons for Concord/Penacook children. The goal is to offer swim lessons to over 1,000 children during the 2015 summer season.

### c) Health Insurance Costs

**Status:** The City has worked diligently with Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare to accomplish a five year average increase on premiums of only 3.88%, with two of the five years representing an unprecedented rate hold. The rate increase for FY 2016 is 10%, primarily due to high cost claimants and health care reform changes. We have increased our wellness program participation amongst employees and spouses with a focus on providing greater access to fitness programs and healthcare consumer awareness. This has correlated to lower standard claim costs. Most recently, high cost claimants have increased due to several serious care claims. Through successful contract negotiations, and collaboration with the City's Health Benefits Review Team, we have been able to eliminate three of our costliest medical plans, which has resulted

in a savings on retiree health care costs. In addition, all of our six unions have agreed to a cost sharing provision with respect to premium payments on medical and dental insurance, which will help to contain the cost of providing health care to employees. These changes will help to mitigate the potential impact of the pending Excise (Cadillac) Tax of 2018 under the Affordable Care Act by keeping our overall premiums lower.

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

**Status:** The Mayor's Impact Fee Committee completed its work in September 2014. The Committee's final report recommended a series of changes to the impact fee ordinance including the elimination of the Merrimack Valley School District impact fee, the transition from a square footage to a dwelling unit measure for residential impact fees, and the clarification of incentive language. The proposed ordinances were adopted by City Council at its November 2014 meeting.

The Upper Floor Development Committee met several times and comprehensively analyzed the municipal review process for downtown redevelopment projects, using the Endicott Hotel case as a model. This committee also held an open forum with downtown property owners from which one of the salient take-aways was the perceived need for the community to revisit the creation of a possible downtown lender's consortium. The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) subsequently addressed the matter of the consortium and the consensus from the bankers on EDAC was that federal lending rules that have been implemented over the last few years, as well as the inherent challenges of historic building renovations, preclude the viability of such a consortium.

In terms of new development, Liberty Utilities received approval for the construction of a new 7,000 SF training facility at 10 Broken Bridge Road. In June 2014, the redevelopment of a new auto dealership at 94 Manchester Street was approved by the Planning Board.

Construction was completed earlier this year on a new 3,300 SF Sugar River Bank branch at 198 Loudon Road. Construction is ongoing on a 31,000 SF retail center at 273 Loudon Road, across from the Steeplegate Mall.

New senior housing developments were approved for 23 Triangle Park Drive in Concord and 61 Borough Road in Penacook.

The Concord Racquet Club was sold to a seacoast investor and re-branded as the "Health Club of Concord." The new owner plans to continue to operate the Club as a fitness/athletic facility with few changes in the short term. Long-term improvements are being contemplated.

## **GOAL 3. PUBLIC INFORMATION, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

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

- a) **Assessing:** All property assessments are available on the City website. The information includes property data along with building sketches. A Powerpoint

presentation on the website entitled “Understanding Property Assessments and Taxation” is a useful tool for taxpayers who wish to become more familiar with the assessment process, tax credits, exemptions and tax bills. An informational meeting explaining the property assessment process was held on February 19, 2015. An explanation of the property tax billing process was added to the Department’s web page in an effort to help taxpayers understand the quarterly billing process.

- b) **Finance – Purchasing:** The Purchasing Division has considerable public contact, mostly through bids, proposals and quotes. Information is distributed to vendors as warranted. Vendors are encouraged to register on the City’s website in order to receive e-mail notification when a solicitation has been issued that the vendor may be interested in. The Purchasing website is easy to navigate for any citizen wishing to review bids and proposals. The website is reviewed regularly to ensure all information is current and updated with every new bid or request for proposal that is released.
- c) **Community Development:** Louis Karno & Company revamped the Main Street Project website and added two project “cams” located at both ends of Main Street. In addition, the firm created and maintains a project Facebook page and Twitter account. Radio and newspaper ads have also been placed with WJYY, WKXL, 93.3 The Wolf, and the Concord Monitor. The radio spots offered local merchants the opportunity to directly showcase their businesses, as well as all of Main Street. Weekly project updates sent directly to members of the public have continued throughout. A “Main Street Minute” collaborative with Concord TV has also started and will be available on their YouTube channel. A project banner beckoning visitors and patrons to Main Street has been placed on the north side of the Remi building.

In terms of overall development marketing by the Community Development Department, another issue of the “Concord Development” newsletter was distributed in February 2015, focusing on the City’s industrial parks. The Department also negotiated an agreement with CGI Communications, Inc., to produce four videos focused on Concord’s quality of life and development potential. These videos will be made at no cost to the City and are expected to be released by the end of August.

- d) **Fire Department:** The Fire Department’s Facebook page has 2,759 followers, up 92 from last quarter. The Department posted information on its annual awards ceremony, a Firefighter/Paramedic recruitment, and fireworks safety. The Department’s Twitter page has 587 followers (up over 11% since March 2015) and the same information is shared there. In March 2015, WKXL added a weekly segment on Fire Department activities topics of which have included water safety, training, budget, and major incidents.
- e) **General Services Department:** In February 2014, the General Services Department hired the City’s first Communications Coordinator to help the department with marketing, promotions, and public communication. The Department updated its web pages on the City website and increased its web page views to a total of 4,241. The Department also launched a monthly newsletter, *The General Gazette*, which features top stories from the Department. The Department also launched Google+ and YouTube pages. The first video that was launched showcased downtown snow removal.

In April 2014, the General Services Department launched two new YouTube videos regarding Spring Leaf Collection and Arbor Day. The Department created and mailed its first annual Trash and Recycling brochure to residents, which included information regarding PAYT trash bag locations, recycling, contact information, a calendar of trash holidays and other solid waste events, and a PAYT trash bag contest that encouraged residents to sign up for News Flash on the City website. The brochure received the 2014 Outstanding Recycling Brochure Award by the Northeast Resource Recovery Association.

In May 2014, the Department released a new YouTube video showcasing the City's Water Conservation Technician presenting information to school children at the Manchester Water Fair regarding the City's leak detection efforts and the importance of water conservation.

In June 2014, the Department published a YouTube video showcasing a tour at the Water Treatment Plant with a brief explanation of the City's water treatment process. The Department also launched a Twitter page, and diligently tweets about street sweeping, road work, water conservation, recycling, trash holidays, promotions, arena events and more.

In July 2014, the Department initiated a Facebook page. The Department posts 2-3 times a week about things like *The General Gazette*, water conservation, trash and recycling, street maintenance, holidays, General Services' YouTube videos, pictures of events, and other engaging topics. The Department also had a presence at Downtown Market Days, with a mini golf hole built by staff, which advertised General Services' social media pages and the City website. Department staff engaged with the community on-site and encouraged them to follow General Services online. Also in July, the Department published another YouTube video which instructed residents how to read their water meter.

Another community engagement opportunity in July was with the Department's Truck Photo Contest. The Department requested Concord residents to submit photos of what Concord means to them. Two winning photos will be printed on Casella trash and recycling trucks.

In August 2014, the Department attended National Night Out to promote its vehicles, water conservation, solid waste, etc. The mini golf hole from Market Days was brought back as well. Also in August, the Department created and mailed a water brochure, which contained information about utility billing, water conservation, water quality, and two promotions. The first promotion was a Goody Bag Giveaway, which encouraged residents to follow the Department's Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and YouTube pages with an incentive of a free goody bag filled with General Services' promotional items. A YouTube video was also created to promote the Goody Bag Giveaway. The second promotion was "E-Z Pay for WaterSense," a contest that encouraged water consumers to enroll in E-Z Pay for Utility Billing for a chance to win a WaterSense labeled showerhead.

In September 2014, a new YouTube video was released of the Everett Arena ice painting. The Department also continued its E-Z Pay for WaterSense contest to encourage residents to enroll in E-Z Pay and to promote the importance of saving water.

In October 2014, the Department participated in the EPA WaterSense “Shower Better Month” campaign with their E-Z Pay for WaterSense contest and a WaterSense labeled showerhead coupon for use at The Granite Group. When the E-Z Pay for WaterSense contest ended, the Department had gained a total of 79 new E-Z Pay enrollees. Five residents were randomly selected to win a WaterSense labeled showerhead and were educated on how water efficient products can help save water, energy and money. Also in October, a new YouTube video was developed featuring the Fall Leaf Collection Program.

In November 2014, a winter operations web page was created to showcase information regarding street and sidewalk plowing priorities, plowing route maps, downtown snow removal, winter parking bans, and sand locations. The skating web page was also updated with more recent and detailed information.

In December 2014, the Department promoted a pilot program for curbside Christmas tree collection. The Department issued a press release to the local media and promoted the program on social media. Program information was also distributed to residents with their water bills. Eleven new web pages were created on the City website regarding the following topics: wastewater treatment; biosolids; odor control; what is flushable; sanitary sewer collection; RV waste; septage discharge; industrial pretreatment; facility tours; and how to prevent fats, oils and greases in our sewers.

Also in December, the Department mailed out its second annual solid waste brochure, this time including a full year calendar. Similar to the last brochure, the calendar included information about trash holidays, household hazardous waste day, and spring and fall leaf collection. The calendar also included the Christmas tree collection, and information about collection services, the Transfer Station, Earth Materials Recycling Center, single-stream recycling, and the PAYT Program. The Department also released another PAYT bag contest with the new brochure, which provided the opportunity for residents to win a free bundle of PAYT bags if they signed up for General Services topics within Notify Me on the City website.

In January 2015, the General Services Department created a Website Navigation YouTube video. The video promoted the City website, particularly General Services’ pages, and was promoted through the City website and social media to help Concord residents better navigate online City services.

In February 2015, a new web page was created to feature information about the Concord Transfer Station. The page describes services, hours of operation, drop-off rates, and more. The Department also updated several web pages to begin featuring WaterSense’s “Fix a Leak Week” to prepare for the water bill stuffer that was being mailed out to residents encouraging them to fix leaks and to visit the City website for more information. A new YouTube video was also created, this time featuring the Everett Arena’s Zamboni getting a new wrap. The video displays the Zamboni before, during and after its new wrap, which features Casella Resource Solutions. The video also features special cameo appearances to increase community engagement.

In March 2015, five winners were chosen for the PAYT trash bag contest. A total of 332 new General Services News Flash subscribers were gained from this contest,

bringing the total number of subscribers to 1,513 at that time. After tracking promotional outlets (social media, print, press releases, newsletters, etc.), it was discovered that most new subscribers came after the 2015 Solid Waste Brochure was released and after press releases to the Concord Patch and Concord Monitor were submitted. A new web page was created to feature Highway and Utilities Division spring operations. This page featured information about potholes, road limit postings, and other spring related activities such as street sweeping, road repairs, etc. As promotional partners for the EPA WaterSense Program, the Department helped to promote "Fix a Leak Week" with a Royal Leak Detection contest. The contest encouraged Concord water consumers to find and fix leaks and to be entered for a chance to win a WaterSense labeled toilet by sharing a picture of their leak detection efforts. This community engagement effort also helped to educate citizens about water conservation, WaterSense, and how to find and repair household leaks. The Department also participated in the national Fix a Leak Week Twitter Party with EPA WaterSense by tweeting water conservation statistics. The Department's Communications Coordinator further promoted the General Services Department by attending Concord TV's annual Concord On-Air event to promote the City's public works services.

In April 2015, Spring Leaf Collection began and the video that was used last year was promoted once again to help educate citizens about the program. Hydrant flushing operations were promoted to inform residents of normal water interruptions. Communication efforts were increased significantly during the water main break on Main Street. (Although this was an Engineering project, General Services received phone calls from residents without water and, as a result, released information about water service to ease public concern. Twenty-nine (29) new followers were gained on the General Services Department's social media pages after that one day.) For Earth Day, the Department tweeted about "green practices". Another YouTube video was made to demonstrate and encourage residents to reduce trash waste by diverting waste through recycling, reducing and reusing. The video reiterates acceptable recycling materials in Concord and introduces the idea of composting. Full promotion of this video will occur soon.

In May 2015, efforts were made to promote the EPA WaterSense Sprinkler Spruce Up promotion by updating infographics on the City website and sharing them on social media. National Drinking Water Week occurred and General Services celebrated with an educational outreach about the importance of drinking water, providing direct links to the City's 2015 Water Quality Report and water quality web page. Staff attended the annual Drinking Water Festival to teach school children about drinking water resources. National Public Works Week also occurred and the Department celebrated by engaging the public about public works services and employee recognition, using all the usual media outlets.

In June 2015, a new PAYT bag retailer (CVS at 46 N. Main Street) was added to the list of bag retailers and promoted through the web, social media, and the press. The Department pre-emptively released a public response to the EPA's regulatory health advisory regarding cyanotoxins, issuing information about the City's water supply testing negative for any of the toxins. The Department once again had a presence at Market Days, with an updated mini-golf hole that promoted the Department's social media and website. New this year to Market Days was "Touch a Truck", with the Department staffing a sidewalk tractor and 6-wheel dump truck to educate the



community about the equipment and public works. Staff also encouraged residents to subscribe to the General Gazette e-newsletter and be entered into a raffle for a chance to win an EPA WaterSense labeled showerhead or small bundle of PAYT trash bags. Eight random winners were selected after 67 new subscribers were entered to win.

The General Services Department won the 2015 Outstanding Recycling Facility Website award from the Northeast Resource Recovery Association for the valuable information provided on its recycling web pages.

The General Services Department regularly submits press releases to the local media to promote important information about events, programs and promotions. Since February 2014, the Department has been featured 25 times in the Concord Monitor, 35 times in Concord Patch, 5 times in the Concord Insider, and at least 8 times in other miscellaneous sources.

Since February 2014, the Department's monthly web page visits have increased by 2,171 views, to 6,412 in February 2015. In June 2015, the Department's web pages have maintained 3,291 views. The Department continues to steadily gain followers on their social media pages. By the end of June 2015, the Department had 343 likes on their Facebook page; 217 followers on their Twitter page; 40,381 views and 23 followers on Google+; and 4,748 video views and 30 subscribers on their YouTube channel.

- f) **Human Resources**: In an effort to improve outreach activities as they pertain to position vacancies within the City, the Human Resources Department utilizes online cloud-based recruitment software for applications. Now an applicant can be made aware of other City job opportunities by completing a job interest card. Job interest cards are sent out to those who have completed a profile and have let us know what types of work they are looking for. This has served to reduce phone calls within the Department, while saving the job seeker time in having to check back to our website. It has also saved in recruitment advertising costs. Our job vacancies are a hotlink from the home page of the City's website.
  
- g) **Library**: Staff has focused on improving marketing by revising the Library's list of publicity contacts in order to reach a broader audience. Staff created two Tumblr pages – one for teens and one for book clubs and adult readers. The Library has created a YouTube channel for the posting of videos of Library programs and they also maintain a Facebook page. The Library makes great use of the News Flash feature of the City website, highlighting upcoming programs and information about library services. Staff continues to highlight library services and programs through monthly *Insider* ads. The Library just concluded marketing of its 2015 "Concord Reads" events throughout the city on a variety of mediums. Currently, the Library is doing a Tumblr promotion where the tenth person to log on to Tumblr will receive a bag of books. Reminding patrons that their reading history can be viewed through their online patron account is also a current emphasis. The Library launched its own *Instagram* account (Concordnhlibrary) to help promote library programming and to reach out to a new segment of potential library users; two new volunteers were brought on to help distribute marketing materials throughout the area; and new bookmarks with the updated Library hours that changed on June 29<sup>th</sup> for the next fiscal year were created for handout.

- h) **Parks & Recreation:** The 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 content of the brochures is also posted on the Parks & Recreation web site. In addition, the Department maintains a very active Facebook page, with over 2,000 “likes”. The Department also creates a monthly newsletter for the web site, weekly news releases for local media, a monthly 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 rental opportunities.

The Parks & Recreation Department also maintains the web site for the Beaver Meadow Golf Course. Staff creates and sends out weekly and monthly e-mail blasts to several thousand golfers who have signed up to belong to our online e-club. The web site receives between 2,500 and 3,500 unique web hits per month. The Department also maintains a very active Facebook page for the course, with over 1,400 “likes”. During the golf season, staff coordinates weekly newspaper and radio ads. This past summer, the Department made a promotional video with Concord TV.

- i) **Police Department:** The Police Department utilizes a number of social media sites, as well as the City website to present information regarding 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 Department press releases are placed on the Department’s web page.

The Police Department’s Twitter page has approximately 1,300 followers and its Facebook page has approximately 1,300 friends. Both of these sites also 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 2014, 298 tips were received by the Department through Crimeline. These tips have led to the arrest of 24 individuals and closed out numerous cases.

The Community Resources Unit of the Police Department produced a segment on Concord TV entitled, “On the Beat”, which aired every other month. “On the Beat” allowed the Department to disseminate news of interest regarding the Department, as well as helpful tips to prevent crime and how to respond if one has been a victim of crime. In addition, interviews were conducted with other City employees and community leaders to help pass on useful information to the residents of Concord. Unfortunately, in 2015, after 26 episodes, the Department will not be able to continue with this project due to organizational changes at Concord TV.

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.

In May 2015, the Police Department began a “Coffee With a Cop” initiative. This program is designed to promote interaction between the community and the Police Department by sharing coffee and fostering discussion in a relaxed atmosphere. The first “Coffee With a Cop” occurred at the McDonald’s on South Main Street in May, and a second event occurred in June at The Works Bakery Café on North Main Street. Both of these events were well received by the public and business owners. Additional “Coffee With a Cop” events will be scheduled throughout the year. The next event is currently scheduled for July 31<sup>st</sup> at the McDonald’s on Fisherville Road.

#### **GOAL 4. PARKING MASTER PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

**Status:** The City issued a Request for Qualifications and Experience (RFQ) for this project on January 21, 2014. Statements of qualifications were received on February 28, 2014 from four consultant teams. Consultant teams were subsequently interviewed on April 4th and April 21st. On June 9, 2014, the City Council appropriated \$115,000 to proceed with the project. On June 24, 2014, the City engaged Nelson Nygaard and Desman Associates to undertake the project. The total contract is \$108,775. The project began last summer with data collection. That process included reviewing all past City parking studies, as well as the completion of an inventory of all public and private parking spaces in the study. In September and October of 2014, ten (10) stakeholder focus group meetings were held. Stakeholder forums included residents, downtown business owners and employees, the State of New Hampshire, the US Federal Court, UNH Law School, landlords and developers, as well as staff from the Parking Division and the General Services Department. A community “open house” to receive public input about the City parking system was held on October 6, 2014. On January 7, 2015, the Consultant collected additional parking counts when the Legislature was in session, as well as to hold meetings with long-term lease holders to gauge potential interest in moving to a permit system. A second public forum was held on January 28, 2015, to present preliminary findings and recommendations to the community. The Consultant also met with the City’s Parking Committee on March 16, 2015, to discuss preliminary findings. As of June 30, 2015, the Consultant and City staff were working to develop new financial pro formas for the Parking System, which incorporate the preliminary recommendations. During this process, the draft recommendations might be modified if not financially viable. Once the City Administration is satisfied that the preliminary recommendations are financially viable, the final study will be presented to the City Council, likely in early fall 2015.

#### **PROJECT 1. MAIN STREET COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT**

**Status:** The project received City Council approval on July 30, 2014. Two additional meetings with downtown merchants were held in August to arrive at the preferred construction sequence. Ultimately, the merchants attending unanimously approved the construction of the entirety of the North Main Street streetscape in 2015, with the southern section, from Pleasant Street to Concord Street, being done in 2016.

Per Council direction, a lighting firm was sought to be part of the project team. The lighting design firm of Horton Lees Brodgen, with offices across the country, including in Boston, was selected. A lighting design was presented to City Council in December 2014.

A way finding signage package was also presented to City Council in December 2014. Council directed Community Development staff to meet with downtown stakeholders to obtain input on the designs. Meetings were held on January 6th and 8th, 2015, followed by a public hearing on January 12th. The “historic” sign package option was the consensus choice for the downtown.

Construction began in the spring of 2015 on North Main Street. Local merchants and residents have been impressed with the quality and speed of the work done by the contractor, Severino Trucking. The east side of North Main Street was completed largely on schedule with some remaining punch list items to address. Construction on the west side of North Main Street began on July 13<sup>th</sup> and is scheduled for completion by Veterans’ Day weekend in November.

## **PROJECT 2. CITYWIDE MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER**

**Status:** On April 23, 2014, the City engaged a design team for the project led by the H.L. Turner Group of Concord. As part of the FY 2014 and FY 2015 budgets, the City has appropriated approximately \$751,000 to complete design. Focus group meetings were held on May 29, 2014, with six stakeholder groups, including the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee (RPAC), to confirm the findings of the 2011 Needs Assessment, as well as reintroduce the community to the project. A public forum was held on June 24, 2014. During its August 2014 meeting, staff reported on the results of the stakeholder input and the City Council authorized the City Manager to proceed with schematic design, as well as updates to the 2011 business plan and financial pro forma for the project. Initially, schematic designs, as well as business plans/financial proformas, were completed for three options and presented to the City Council on February 9, 2015. The City Council requested supplemental information, which was provided on March 9, 2015 and April 13, 2015. Ultimately, 13 different options were developed, ranging in cost of up to \$14 million. None of the 13 options were selected by City Council. As of June 30, 2015, the City Administration was exploring minimum essential improvements needed to keep the facility serviceable for the next few years, as well as exploring less ambitious long-term options to renovate and expand the facility.

## **PROJECT 3. OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **a) South Main Street**

**Status:** On June 9, 2014, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a Purchase and Sales Agreement with the State of New Hampshire to acquire the former Employment Security property located at 32-34 South Main Street. The City Council also appropriated \$1.99 million, supported by the Sears Block TIF District, to support this effort. The City acquired the property on October 31, 2014 for the purpose of holding it on an interim basis until such time as a developer can be found with a suitable redevelopment plan that maximizes the highest and best use of the property. The City, with the aid of an independent contractor, has decommissioned, weatherized, and secured the property. In February 2015, the City opened the property’s 75-space parking lot for paid public parking. On March 25, 2015, the City engaged the Norwood

Group, a commercial real estate brokerage firm based in Bedford, NH, to market the property.

Concord Steam representatives have not approached the City since their announcement in December 2013 to abandon the development of their new plant at the South Main Street/Langdon Avenue site. The City has directed developers in need of project sites to the area. The property is currently on the market for \$3.3 million.

**b) Penacook Village**

**Status:** The final phase of environmental cleanup activities at the Former Allied Leather Tannery and Amazon Realty sites were completed in August 2014 and a full report was provided to the City Council in September. Working with its environmental consultant, the City is in the process of amending institutional controls for the site, as well as project close-out with the USEPA and NHDES. This will be completed in late September 2015. On March 25, 2015, the City engaged the Norwood Group, a commercial real estate brokerage firm based in Bedford, NH, to market the property. It is anticipated that the property will be listed for sale this summer.

The overhead power lines were buried in downtown Penacook over the spring. The visual difference has been warmly received. Construction on the roadway progresses and the roundabout is expected to take shape over the next couple of months.

The Penacook Village Vision Plan was completed by Community Development staff in February 2015. The Plan was presented to the Planning Board at its March 18, 2015 meeting. Over the next several months, additional public input will be sought and draft zoning amendments prepared for Planning Board review and City Council action.

**c) Downtown 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Redevelopment**

**Status:** The Upper Floor Development Committee reviewed the City's development review process to determine what changes, if any, should be implemented to facilitate upper floor development. A forum with downtown property owners over the summer of 2014 illustrated a need for alternate funding sources for redevelopment projects. Some attendees suggested re-visiting the idea of a "lender's consortium." The viability of a lender's consortium was subsequently discussed at the October 2014 Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) meeting. EDAC members involved in banking questioned the feasibility and applicability of this lending concept, arguing that changed banking regulations and the challenges of historic renovations significantly discourage banks from participating in such an arrangement. Ultimately, EDAC did not take any action to support or promote the lender's consortium concept.

Related to this effort, on December 8, 2014, the City Council approved an RSA 79-E Community Tax Relief Incentive application for redevelopment of the Vegas Block. The City Council also approved a license agreement for installation of balconies for the upper floors of the building. Staff has also met with the developer, CRDC, and the developer's lender regarding potential use of the City's Revolving Loan Fund program to provide gap financing for the project.

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

**Status:** On May 12, 2014, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a Purchase and Sales Agreement with Tsunis Holdings to acquire a 4.04 acre property to facilitate future construction of Storrs Street North. The City Council also approved Resolution #8756, which appropriated \$1.05 million to support this purchase and related activities. The City acquired the property on October 1, 2014. Working with third party consultants, the City is currently in the process of preparing bid documents and securing permits from the State to conduct removal of vegetation and interim grading of the property until such time as the City is prepared to advance CIP #18 (Storrs Street North Extension).

#### **PROJECT 4. EXPAND NEIGHBORHOOD STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

**Status:** To maintain our local roadway network of 220 miles of streets, annual funding of \$2.6 million is needed.

In recent years, the City has invested in its major arterial streets that receive heavier traffic volumes and, consequently, has had to reduce annual expenditures directed towards local streets to approximately \$1 million. With the funding for the final phase of the Route 3 North Street Rehabilitation project now in place, City Council has expressed a strong desire to focus on funding for local neighborhood streets. City Administration presented a new Neighborhood Paving Plan at the City Council's CIP Out-Year Review Meeting on February 17, 2015. During the upcoming budget review process, the City Council and Administration will determine how to best augment existing funding with new sources to increase the number of local neighborhood streets to be repaved each year. The General Services Department is actively engaged in the development of that plan and has launched an informational page on the City's website

The adopted FY 2016 CIP budget includes authorization to bond \$4 million to be directed at paving local and neighborhood streets, and also raises an annual appropriation of \$1.319 million. Looking forward, City Administration advised City Council that it would be necessary to set aside a General Fund tax rate increase of one half percent per year, through FY 2024, to sustain a paving program for the community's local roadway network. The current CIP anticipates this growth in revenues.

This past spring, the General Services Department completed paving work on the following streets: Dwinell Drive; Federal Street; Gale Street; Holt Street; Orchard Street; Pleasant Street (from Langley Parkway to Fisk Street); Pleasant View Avenue; Prince Street; Redington Road; Short Street; Silk Farm Road; Summit Street; Tahanto Street; and Tuttle Street.

#### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 1. MAJOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS**

**Status:** Work on CIP #35 (Route 3-Village Street Improvements) is in its final phase. The construction zone runs from the Manor Road area north to Stark Street.

CIP #19 (Loudon Road Improvements): The "road diet" was approved by City Council and is under design. Construction was anticipated for summer 2015, but the State has postponed the authorization to bid the project until at least January 2016, due to funding constraints.

CIP #40 (Langley Parkway): A final report on the Langley Parkway project findings to date was distributed to City Council in February 2015.

## **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 2. MUNICIPAL COMPLEX IMPROVEMENTS**

**Status:** In March 2014, the General Services Department completed a major renovation of the second and third floors of City Hall, which consolidated Finance Department staff on the second floor and Engineering and Planning Division staff on the third floor. The work consisted of the renovation of approximately 3,100 square feet of office space. With these improvements, both Deputy City Manager offices are located on the second floor adjacent to the offices of the City Manager and City Solicitor. The work included constructing a new private office and repurposing a larger private office into a needed conference room on the second floor. Planning staff were moved to the third floor with a new private office constructed for the City Planner. A small conference room on the third floor was also constructed for use by Engineering and Planning staff. The work also included a new entryway into the repurposed space for the Engineering and Planning staff, with extended counter service. New office furniture and privacy cubicles were also provided to enhance the work environment. Through a grant the City received from the NH Charitable Foundation, the General Services Department was able to have both staircases in City Hall painted. The Department also completed minor renovations in Council Chambers to provide support for the new electronic City Council agenda system.

The General Services Department completed a multi-year effort to refurbish the Green Street Community Center. Elements of the project included the repair and sealing of the building's exterior brick façade, installation of new roof gutters to better manage rainwater, installation of exterior energy efficient lighting to improve parking lot illumination, new game room flooring and locker room partitions, and repairs to the building's sprinkler system. The key-stone component, a new hardwood floor, was installed, painted with the City's Parks and Recreation insignia at center court, and striped for the fast growing sport of pickleball.

The General Services Department completed the replacement of existing exterior windows and doors, with enhanced security and energy efficient units, for all three floors of the Police Station. Other security enhancements are scheduled to be completed to augment this capital investment of over \$350,000.

Understanding that the aesthetic condition of the City's public properties is of the utmost importance, the General Services Department has implemented an aggressive citywide painting program. Beyond repainting the Green Street Community Center foyer, exterior entry, gymnasium and locker rooms, City staff will repair and repaint the exterior façade and entries to the City Auditorium, as well as interior spaces of the Municipal Complex.

The General Services Department has embarked on a project to upgrade the efficiency and reliability of the air-conditioning system at the City's main Library.

## **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 3. MEMORIAL FIELD COMPLEX IMPROVEMENTS**

**Status:** The General Services Department managed the much-needed renovations of the press box and immediate grounds of the Doane Diamond baseball complex at Memorial Field. Work included a new roof, new siding, new windows and a refurbished interior. Security panels were installed to cover the windows when the building is not in use. The

stairway to the second floor was reconstructed to meet present code and safety requirements. The grounds were improved, including the addition of foundation drains, area drains and a ground water pumping station to improve the wet conditions of the past. The work on the building included the addition of two large overhead doors at each end to provide secure storage space for equipment. Walkways and access drives were reconstructed and paved for safe access for users and patrons.

#### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 4. SEWALLS FALLS BRIDGE**

**Status:** The State has issued a Notice to Proceed on this project. The lowest responsible bidder was E.D. Swett. Construction is anticipated to begin in August 2015 with completion late in 2016.

#### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 5. CREATE AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS (particularly in regards to Recreation & Economic Development Opportunities)**

**Status:** The sale of City and State-owned land for the proposed 31,000 SF Siena Development, located across from the Sears Auto Center on Loudon Road, was closed in early December. In addition to the State and private land involved, the City received \$39,141 for remnant slivers of City property and the developer has since cleared the land in preparation for spring construction of the shopping center and public roadway improvements, which will be built at the developer's cost.

The Library has partnered with the NH League of Conservation Voters on a public meeting with an EPA representative; the National Network of Medical Libraries for programs and materials; the Appalachian Mountain Club for programs; and Second Start for an English language learning group. The Library also has a number of community partners for Concord Reads programs.

The Parks & Recreation Department has continued a very successful partnership with Concord Crush Lacrosse, whereby the Department handles all registrations for the league. In June 2015, the Department expanded this to include fall 2015 Concord Youth Hockey registrations.

The Parks & Recreation Department also partnered with the Concord School District this past school year to offer a Family Resource drop-in center at the new Heights Community Center. This weekly program was staffed by school district employees and was geared to new American families. This program will continue during the 2015/2016 school year.

#### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 6. CREATIVE ECONOMY WORK**

**Status:** In the summer of 2014, a fact-finding visit was made by City Councilor Byron Champlin and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and NHTI to the Plymouth State Enterprise Center. Representatives of the Enterprise Center subsequently made a formal presentation to EDAC at its September 2014 meeting. EDAC formed a subcommittee to explore the concept of the incubator and has since, along with members of Creative Concord, visited the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene and the Alpha Loft in Manchester. Investigation of the incubator concept continues.

#### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 7. HALL ST. WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT ODOR CONTROL PROGRAM**



**Status:** The second phase of the three phased comprehensive odor mitigation program at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant has been operating since November 2013. In order to ensure that future capital funds are spent appropriately, the General Services Department is moving forward with two rounds of odor source sampling and analyses in FY 2015. This effort is intended to rank remaining unmitigated sources of odor and to determine the effectiveness of the investments made to date. Atmospheric dispersion modeling will also be conducted to predict potential off-site odor emissions. The current Capital Improvement Program has funds scheduled in FY 2016 and FY 2017 to address remaining process areas that are identified as significant contributors to off-site odor emissions. The General Services Department prepared a report for City Council which presented the effectiveness of the first two phases of the comprehensive odor mitigation program. The design of the third phase is programmed in the adopted FY 2016 CIP budget for FY 2017, with construction tentatively scheduled in FY 2017. Staff continues to deploy a mobile monitoring device during non-winter months. So far this calendar year, it has not recorded any detectable odor levels.