



# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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

**DATE:** January 31, 2023

**SUBJECT:** 2022 – 2023 City Council Priorities

### **Recommendation**

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

### **Background**

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

### **Discussion**

Listed below, are the accepted priorities, projects and ongoing initiatives; and their respective statuses as of December 31, 2022.

#### **GOAL 1. BALANCED BUDGET ISSUES: FY 2023 and 2024**

##### **a) Eliminate Use of Fund Balance to Balance Budget**

**Status:** As part of the FY 2023 Budget adoption, the City Council approved reducing the use of fund balance to \$375,000. When setting the 2022 tax rate, the City received an additional \$578,000 in Rooms and Meals Tax revenue and reduced the Use of Fund Balance to zero in advance of the FY 2022 Budget proposal.

##### **b) ARPA Strategy**

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

Additionally, the following ARPA amounts have been received or approved in the following departments:

General Services:

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

c) Health Insurance Costs

**Status:** The City has received a not to exceed amount on its medical insurance with a 12% rate increase driven by high cost claimants and the impact of specialty medication utilization as a whole. The final rates will be determined in February Continuing for FY 2024, it is anticipated that the City will contribute 90% of the premiums for medical and dental with the employee paying 10%.

d) Grant Funding Opportunities

**Status:** The General Services Department has completed a grant application for approximately \$75,000 from the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to offset, in part, the replacement of a 2001 Mack sludge hauling truck. In conjunction with the Information Technology Department, the General Services Department is also pursuing grant funds to enhance cybersecurity for the City's water and wastewater treatment facilities. The Wastewater Division has applied for grant funding for 10 infrastructure improvement projects through the NHDES' State Aid Grant and State Revolving Fund programs. NHDES has approved three grant applications: 1) Sludge Holding Tank Mixing System, \$166,000; 2) Chlorine Building Solar Collection System, \$250,000; and 3) Hall Street Process Evaluation, \$100,000.

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

Due to supply chain issues, the Fire Department has still not received an IV pump that was ordered in August 2022 as part of the GOFERR Locality Equipment Purchase Program.

The Fire Department was recently notified that it was awarded two separate grants, totaling \$25,000, through the 2020 and 2021 NH State Homeland Security Program Critical Infrastructure – Water Related Catastrophe Program. These will be submitted for acceptance by City Council and appropriation of funds at the February 2023 City Council meeting.

The City's 345-page Hazard Mitigation Plan update was submitted to FEMA for review after a public information meeting was held at Fire Headquarters and on Zoom on December 21, 2022. This project uses FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and

Communities (BRICA) grant funds along with an in-kind match of staff time. Once the plan receives conditional approval, it will be presented to City Council for adoption.

The Fire Department has finalized all submissions for FEMA Public Assistance that reimbursed the City for expenses related to the response to COVID-19. A total of \$37,173.81 was obligated by FEMA and received by the City this quarter. This money represents the last of the seven projects submitted for FEMA Public Assistance related to COVID-19. A total of \$280,783.63 was received in FEMA Public Assistance over the duration of the pandemic for costs incurred by all City departments.

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

In January 2022, the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) awarded the Abbot-Downing Society a Brownfields Technical Assistance Grant to complete a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and Hazardous Building Materials Survey of the former Concord Stables located at 117.5 Warren Street. The City prepared the grant application on behalf of the Abbot-Downing Society. The cost of these assessments is being paid for entirely by the State. These studies will allow the City and Abbot-Downing Society to further refine the redevelopment strategy for the property, as well as position the project for future potential Brownfields Cleanup Grants from the US Environmental Protection Agency and NHDES to support redevelopment efforts.

On April 11, 2022, the City Council authorized the City Manager to apply for two Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants: one for up to \$500,000 to support the construction of the new Riverfront Park in Penacook; and another for up to \$400,000 to rebuild the playground at White Park. A site visit with LWCF staff occurred on May 11, 2022, and the City has received notification that both projects are eligible projects. Funding applications for both projects were filed on December 16, 2022. The City should be notified of grant award status by summer 2023.

The Police Department has applied for \$80,217 in American Rescue Plan Act funds. These funds are to be used to purchase two all-terrain vehicles, a pick-up truck, and a trailer. The Department purchased a 2022 Ford F-150 pick-up truck with this grant funding. The other items listed in this grant have been ordered.

On November 3, 2022, the NH Community Development Finance Authority tentatively awarded \$1.5 million in Community Development Block Grant funds to support development of a new Boys & Girls Club facility at 76 Community Drive, Penacook, as well as a new food pantry at the Christ the King Church on South Main Street.

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

### **a) Bricks and Mortar**

**Status:** The commercial construction at Exit 17, called Interchange Development, continues to progress. In March, the Planning Board conditionally approved 1,500 SF for a restaurant, 2,750 SF for retail, and 2,500 SF for a credit union. This is in addition to the already approved Market Basket, HomeGoods, State Liquor Outlet, and Wendy's restaurant at the site. In addition, applications are currently pending before the Planning Board for a drive-thru pharmacy and coffee shop at 10 Whitney Road.

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

Development of multiple pad sites at the Brixmor Plaza on Storrs Street are underway. The project will feature approximately 16,000 SF of development, including a 110 Grille restaurant, another yet to be announced restaurant, a Xfinity store, and a coffee shop with drive thru.

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

### **b) Zoning Rewrite**

**Status:** Work continues on the final draft of Phase 1. Phase 2 public meetings were held virtually on March 28-31, 2022. The project is ongoing, due, in part, to staffing vacancies within the Community Development Department.

### **c) Housing**

**Status:**

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

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

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

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

On June 9, 2022, the City sold the property to the Developer. Construction is currently underway. The project is scheduled for completion in fall 2023.

- ii. Penacook Landing Phase 2: On September 18, 2019, the City sold 2.5 acres of the former Allied Leather Tannery site, located at 33-35 Canal Street, to the Caleb Development Corporation (Caleb) for redevelopment into a 54-unit housing project. Phase 1 was completed in October 2020. On September 27, 2022, Caleb closed on all financing for the project, including a \$600,000 loan from the City's Revolving Loan Fund Program. The total cost of the project is \$6.2 million. Construction began in October. The project will be completed in fall 2023. Upon completion, Phase 2 will have an assessed value of \$1,615,000 and generate \$45,000 of property tax revenues for the community annually. Interest payments on the City's \$600,000 loan will generate approximately \$291,000 in revenue for the City's Revolving Loan Fund Program.
- iii. Other:
  - a) A 16-lot residential single-family subdivision was approved by the Planning Board for a parcel located at the intersection of Sewalls Falls Road and Abbott Road.
  - b) CATCH Neighborhood Housing has secured development approvals and financing for 48 units of affordable housing to be located at 303 Sheep Davis Road. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2023.
  - c) A private developer has secured development approvals and financing for 123 units of new housing on Pembroke Road, 84 of which will be affordable housing. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2023.
  - d) In 2021, the City secured \$386,242 in Community Development Block Grant funds to support the renovation of housing units owned or leased by Riverbend Community Mental Health. The project specifically involves properties located on Fayette Street and Pleasant Street. Said units are occupied by low-moderate income persons who are clients of Riverbend. In 2022, the City secured an additional \$77,248 to assist this project. The project is currently under construction.
  - e) On May 23, 2022, the Concord Monitor announced that it had entered into a purchase and sales agreement with New England Family Housing concerning the sale of 95 acres for development. According to their article, the project may

include approximately 120 affordable housing units, as well as another 532 +/- market rate housing units. New England Family Housing is currently undertaking its due diligence for the transaction.

**d) Economic Development Website Update**

**Status:** In October 2021, InvestConcordNH.com, the previous Economic Development web site, was archived due to significant price increases and a lack of updating during COVID-19. City staff is currently making improvements to, and reorganizing, the economic development portion of the main City website to make it more accessible, informative, accurate, and engaging. An update is currently underway.

**e) Downtown Business Investment**

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

**f) Outdoor Dining/Food Trucks**

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

**g) Fees/Rent Analysis**

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

**GOAL 3. PUBLIC SAFETY WORK**

**a) Fire Stations and Police Station Analysis**

**Status:** The Fire Department is finalizing plans to raise the height of at least one of the garage bays at Station 1 to accommodate the new tower truck that has been ordered with FY 2023 CIP funds.

The Police Department recently underwent a Building Assessment conducted by the H.L. Turner Group. The report generated from this assessment outlined many building deficiencies, safety issues, and spatial needs, both short- and long-term. This assessment also outlined possible options for remodeling the current building and/or constructing a new building. The Police Department has well outgrown the functional capabilities of its current building. The building, as it stands now, would fall short of many police

accreditation standards. The building itself could certainly serve as an asset for the City as part of the City Hall Complex; however, the days where it can serve as Police Headquarters have passed and improvements or replacement have become imperative.

The Police Department shared the results of the H.L. Turner Group Building Assessment with the City Administration and City Council on May 9, 2022. Chief Brad Osgood; along with Gerard Blanchette and Doug Proctor, from the H.L. Turner Group; briefed the City Council on the report and the current status of the Police Department building. This conversation focused on both the anticipated maintenance needs of several key components of the building, as well as how the Police Department has outgrown the physical size and layout of the building. It was discussed that the current Police Department is nearly 50 years old and does not meet the needs of a modern professional policing facility.

#### **b) Enhance Emergency Management Services**

**Status:** The Fire Department held a small ceremony at the Manor Fire Station and placed the fourth ambulance into service on October 1, 2022. This addition has improved average ambulance response times throughout the majority of the city, as compared to the response model prior to relocating Ambulance 5 to the Central Station. Response times in neighborhoods surrounding the Manor Station improved (decreased) by approximately 45 seconds; neighborhoods surrounding the Central Station improved by 1-2 minutes; neighborhoods surrounding the Broadway Station improved by approximately 1 minute; and neighborhoods surrounding the Heights Station improved by approximately 1-2 minutes. These figures represent the average of different neighborhoods surrounding each station. Some areas of the city, however, show an increase in response times, which is counterintuitive. There are a few possible reasons for this. The first is that the number of responses is relatively small to some areas of the city, as the data collection has been only for a three-month span. As more data is gathered, a clearer picture may be generated. Also, with the recent influx of new employees, an increase in training that requires taking companies away from their stations has increased. Call volume also continued to rise, which may be a contributing factor as well. This phenomenon will be watched closely and measures will be implemented to reduce any controllable causes.

All schools within the city have worked with the NH Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and the Concord Fire and Police Departments, to perform security assessments and emergency operations plan reviews to prepare for response to adverse events.

### **GOAL 4. RECREATIONAL/CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES, PARKS AND CEMETERIES**

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Parks & Recreation Department will begin advertising for summer lifeguard positions in January 2022, with the goal of opening all outdoor pools this summer. The Department typically needs to hire just over 40 lifeguards to open all pools. Once again, this year, the Department will pay the class registration fee for applicants to take the American Red Cross Lifeguard class (value \$380).

In the FY 2022 Capital Improvement Plan, there were funds appropriated for court restoration at Rollins Park (\$135,000), Trolley Stop repoint at White Park (\$90,000), and stand-alone pickleball courts at Rolfe Park (\$90,000). The court projects were completed in early June 2022, and the repointing of the Trolley Stop at White Park has been completed. In addition, the FY 2022 budget included funds for a pond restoration project at White Park (\$210,000), for which the City is under contract with VHB to create a plan and required permits. Also funded were road repairs at Blossom Hill Cemetery (\$80,000). The mini makeover / renovation of Thompson Park is underway and will be completed in the summer of 2023.

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

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

**Status:**

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

In 2012, the City acquired additional property at 5-11 Canal Street to support future development of the park. As part of marketing efforts conducted for the



Tannery site in 2008 and in 2015, the City commissioned various conceptual site plans for the former Tannery complex, which included a new riverfront park.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ii. Monkey Around Playground: The Parks & Recreation Department continues to work with the Friends of White Park on their fundraising efforts. In May 2022, the Friends held a cornhole tournament with food trucks to raise money for the playground replacement. On April 11, 2022, the City Council authorized the City Manager to apply for up to \$400,000 of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants to support the project. A site visit with LWCF staff occurred on May 11, 2022. The project was selected to move into the grant application phase, with the formal grant application due in December. The City will find out the status of its application by spring 2023.
- iii. Kiwanis Riverfront Park: City staff, working with the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee, the Everett Arena Advisory Committee, Concord Crew and the new Skate Board group have met regularly regarding possible new park amenities. In the FY 2023 Capital Improvement Program, there were funds approved for the “Visioning of the Kiwanis Riverfront Park down to Terrill Park.” On January 19, 2023, the Department will hold the first visioning charette with the community.

## **GOAL 5. ENHANCED COMMUNITY EVENTS/ARTS**

### **a) Promote Community Events with Community Partners**

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

The Parks & Recreation Department will begin scheduling the parks in mid-February for use in 2023. The Department will also start issuing permits for special events held in City parks. Some past special events have included: SouperFest, an Arts Market in Rollins Park, UNH Law School Graduation at White Park, several 5k road races, Making Strides at Memorial Field, and a Multicultural Festival at Keach Park. The Department also worked with Overcomers Refugee Services to host the first Umuganda Event at Keach Park on June 25, 2022.

The Police Department continues to foster its positive relationship with the community through a number of initiatives and events that Department personnel attend and sponsor. During this quarter, the Department worked closely with the schools in both the Concord School District and Merrimack Valley School District. The D.A.R.E. Program was presented in both school districts and the Department’s School Resource Officers are actively involved at Concord High School, Merrimack Valley High School, Merrimack Valley Middle School, Bishop Brady High School, Trinity Christian School, and St. John’s Regional School. Additionally, Liberty, the Department’s comfort dog, makes frequent visits to the schools throughout the city. Safety assessments have been conducted at several of the public and private schools. Several recommendations have been made to the schools to help officers in accessing the schools during threatening events. These safety assessments will continue throughout the year.

Members of the Police Department have conducted active shooter trainings, as well as safety presentations to businesses, schools, and community groups. Members also

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

The Police Department works closely with the New American communities throughout the city. The Department continues to work with New American leaders in an attempt to open communication and to plan for informational events with the Police Department. The Police Department continues to assist the New American Scholars with their “Students Helping Students” program. This program is designed to promote area high school students assisting and tutoring New American and refugee students who have recently settled in the Concord area. This program also extends beyond the classroom and assists in other areas of life which may be difficult for those new to the country. The Department is working with the Overcomers Refugee Services to plan youth mentoring and educational meetings.

Through the NH Highway Safety Community Outreach and Betterment (COB) grant, the Department is in the process of planning a driver safety educational training class for the New American communities. This training will focus on roadway safety and driver education.

The Department held two R.A.D. (Rape Aggression Defense) classes. All classes were well attended.

The City of Concord participated in Intown Concord’s Market Days. The Human Resources Department brought all current job openings for review, as well as job interest cards for those “shopping” for a new career. It was a great opportunity to be part of the celebration and provide information to Market Days attendees.

Human Resources Department representatives co-chaired two committees with the Human Resources Association Greater Concord organization; one pertaining to Marketing and one for Community Relations. As part of this organization, the City of Concord sent several subject matter experts to participate in the Concord Regional Technical Center’s annual Interview Fair for students.

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

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

The Concord Public Library was present at Intown Concord’s Market Days, at which Library staff provided information on Library resources, temporary literary tattoos, and story times in the family area on the State House lawn.

The Concord Public Library was present at National Night Out, at which Library staff gave away free books for children, library information, and temporary literary tattoos.

The Concord Public Library was present at the Multicultural Festival, at which Library staff signed patrons up for library cards, handed out library information, and provided a free craft for children.

The Concord Public Library was present at Intown Concord's Halloween Howl with its ebike bookmobiles, handing out information on library resources and candy.

The Library also collaborated with the Parks & Recreation Department to bring its two ebike bookmobiles to programs hosted in the parks, such as the Soccer Jamboree and Flying High Dogs, both held at Keach Park. The Library also worked with Parks & Recreation and the Assistant City Planner for two Trails and Tales programs with a book discussion and hike on City trails, one on Marjory Swope Trail and the other at Oak Hill.

The Library held several collaborative programs in the fall of 2022. These included a Signing Evening Storytime with Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services; Color a Smile, where young patrons participated in this national campaign to send "cheerful drawings" to seniors and military personnel overseas; co-hosted several book discussions with the Concord YMCA; hosted Walk-In Wednesday with Granite VNA; and brought back Beat the Librarians Trivia Night at Lithermans Limited Brewery with Bow Baker Free Library.

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

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

## **GOAL 6. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES**

### **a) Energy: LED Street Lights**

**Status:** All street lights have been converted to LED. The Engineering Services Division is working with vendors on final billing, warranties and submission to Unitil for completion of on bill financing. This project is anticipated to save the City in excess of \$600,000 over the next ten years. Certain ornamental street lights, which were excluded from the project, such as those located on Loudon Road and the Manchester Street bridge, will be addressed in future capital improvement projects to be proposed by City Administration.

**b) Diversity**

**Status:** The City has purchased a contract with CircaWorks to provide recruitment efforts towards Diversity Hiring. This will help us reach under-represented groups to innovate and lead with the country's largest network of community-based organizations and niche sites. The Human Resources Director also sat on a panel discussion for the Human Resources Association – Greater Concord discussing diversity, equity and inclusion strategies for the workplace in November 2022.

The Fire Department has extended a conditional offer to an additional female firefighter. This would bring the total number of female Firefighters and Firefighter/Paramedics to five.

**c) Workforce & Housing (Homelessness)**

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

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

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

A private developer has secured development approvals and financing for 123 units of new housing on Pembroke Road, 84 of which will be affordable housing, as discussed in Section 2.c.ii. of this report.

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

The Concord Coalition to End Homelessness has been working diligently on its Housing First model, recently securing Zoning Board of Adjustment relief for a project at 120 Pleasant Street. The estimated cost of the project is \$2.5 million. As of December 31, 2022, funding requests were pending with the NH Housing Finance Authority and NH Community Development Finance Authority.

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

**d) Essex Hydro**

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

**e) Renewable Energy**

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

**f) Trees, Urban Canopy**

**Status:** Two trees were planted at White Park on Arbor Day.

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

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

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

The Sustainable Tree Program is taking names for a waiting list for spring 2023.

**GOAL 7. TRANSPORTATION**

**a) I-93, Storrs Street, Stickney Avenue**

**Status:**

- i. I-93 Project: On August 9, 2022, the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT), and their consultant, McFarland Johnson, presented a project update at a special Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) meeting. The updates were inclusive of additional improvements at the City's request, including improvements at Exit 13 (the Manchester Street intersection with Old Turnpike Road), partially restoring access to the Exit 14 northbound on-ramp, alternatives to expand the Merrimack River Greenway Trail through the project limits, exploring partial access at Stickney Avenue, and consideration of the proposed Storrs Street Extension Project and associated railroad realignment. TPAC continued to solicit public input and discussed all aspects of the project at subsequent meetings held on August 25, September 15, and September 29. On October 11, 2022, TPAC provided a report to City Council outlining its recommendations for the Bow-Concord Project. On October 11, 2022, the City Council received a presentation from the NHDOT

concerning the Project. On November 14, 2022, the City Council held a public hearing on the I-93 Bow-Concord Project. Related to said hearing, City Administration provided a staff report which discussed past planning initiatives relative to a “bridge park” and challenges associated therewith based on the State’s current design for the Bow-Concord Project. On December 12, 2022, the City Council concluded its public hearing on the proposed Bow-Concord Project, and approved a draft letter to the State outlining the City’s positions on various components related thereto. In accordance with City Council directive from its November 14, 2022 meeting, on December 9, 2022, staff met with the City’s on-call engineering consultants to discuss scope of work for the “bridge park” project. Based upon input from the City’s consultants, staff has started to prepare a draft scope of work for the project.

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

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

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

On October 18, 2021, the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) invoked the State’s Right-of-First-Refusal (ROFR) for the Northern Line, in accordance with RSA 228:60-b. As such, the City’s Purchase and Sales Agreement with PanAm automatically terminated upon the State’s enactment of its ROFR. The State enacted its ROFR, as the Northern Line has been designated for a potential future high-speed rail corridor to connect Boston to Montreal. As such, the City and NHDOT entered into negotiations concerning a potential partnership between the City and the State, which would allow the Merrimack River Greenway Trail to move forward while simultaneously protecting the State’s interests relative to the high-speed rail corridor. These negotiations were successful and, on May 9, 2022, the City Council approved Resolution #9463, which authorizes the City Manager to enter into the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) negotiated between the City and NHDOT. Said agreement will be presented to the Governor and Executive Council pending final negotiation of a purchase and sales agreement between Pan Am and the NHDOT. Upon execution of the MOA between the City and NHDOT, the NHDOT shall assign the purchase and sales agreement to the City, following which the City shall complete its due diligence and acquire the property.

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

The “cornfield” section of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT) (approximately 4,000 feet from Loudon Road south towards Terrill Park) is currently under design and permitting. The City was awarded a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to build this section of the trail from Loudon Road south along the Merrimack River. The

LWCF grant was for an estimated \$550,000 project and requires a 50% match (\$275,000), which the Friends of the MRGT has indicated they will help fundraise for. Design and permitting for this section will be completed by spring 2023 with the goal of starting construction in summer/fall 2023.

In February 2022, the Friends of the MRGT, in partnership with the City, applied for an allocation of Community Development Investment Program (CDIP) tax credits from the NH Community Development Finance Authority for the portion of the project located between Terrill Park and Loudon Road. Unfortunately, the funding application was not successful. The Friends of the MRGT will continue efforts to raise the required match for the LWCF grant.

c) **Airport Terminal**

**Status:** On January 27, 2022, the City held an Airport Listening Session where the consensus among the attendees was to move forward with a new terminal. At the February 24, 2022 Airport Advisory Committee meeting, the committee unanimously recommended the City Council authorize staff to apply for an FAA Airport Terminal Program grant. This program would provide potential funding for the relocation and construction of the Concord Municipal Airport's terminal building, with only a 5% match required. At the March 14, 2022 City Council meeting, the Council authorized the City Manager to apply for this grant. Unfortunately, the City's application was not successful. Pending City Council authorization, City Administration plans to reapply for these funds in the upcoming application round.

d) **Sidewalks: Maintain/Recondition**

**Status:** The Planning Board continues to require sidewalks on most site plans. In instances where construction of a sidewalk may be premature (no connection within any reasonable distance), the Planning Board has instituted a "fee in lieu" policy. Under this approach, a fee commensurate with the cost to construct sidewalk would be assessed to applicants seeking site plan approval. The funds generated from this fee would be used to support City sidewalk construction in the future. To date, one project has been subject to this policy as a condition of approval. However, said project has not yet moved forward. When/If the project moves forward, and fees are collected, a resolution establishing this reserve in trust account will be submitted to City Council.

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

**Status:**

- i. **McKee Square (CIP #31):** The McKee Square intersection improvement was approved in FY 2023 for a traffic assessment and design/engineering, and FY 2024 construction. Preliminary options for this work include a roundabout and a signal alternative. Staff will work with its engineering consultants on developing and scheduling meetings with the public and stakeholders. In addition, City Council recently authorized the City Manager to apply for a CMAQ grant to support this project.



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

**ONGOING INITIATIVE 1. FORMER TANNERY SITE/PARK**

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

**ONGOING INITIATIVE 2. ENHANCED NEIGHBORHOOD STREET PAVING PROGRAM**

**Status:** Continental Paving completed the FY 2022 paving project in November. The FY 2023 paving project bid opened in late December and GMI Asphalt was the low bidder, at budget, and has been awarded the project. Letters for curb cost sharing will go out in January with a tentative start date of early April, weather dependent.

**ONGOING INITIATIVE 3. BRIDGES**

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

**ONGOING INITIATIVE 4. TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

**Status:** The Information Technology (IT) Department supported the Wastewater and Water Treatment Plants in applying for grants related to the cybersecurity and access to control systems throughout the enterprise. This included working with the Federal Environmental Protection Agency on auditing and creating an action plan for calendar years 2022 and 2023 to improve securing and updating our access controls. These grant applications are currently under review. While a cybersecurity action plan has been developed in conjunction with all stakeholders, no money has been awarded yet.

The IT Department's new Network Security Engineer has received the first round of network switches to replace our aging infrastructure. She should be deploying these over the course of the next couple of months. Efforts continue to build and update new security policies.

The City's Munis migration from Logos New World Systems is officially complete. Energov, the permitting module, went live on August 22, 2022. The training for and migration to the Munis Tax module continues to go well. We expect to go live, as planned, on May 1, 2023.