



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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

DATE: July 30, 2025

SUBJECT: 2024 – 2025 City Council Priorities

Recommendation

Accept this report as to the current status of the City Council Priorities established on March 4, 2024.

Background

Members of the City Council met on March 4, 2024 to discuss and set priorities for the remainder of Calendar Year 2024, as well as for Calendar Year 2025.

Discussion

Listed below, are the accepted priorities, projects and ongoing initiatives; and their respective statuses as of June 30, 2025.

GOAL 1. FINANCE & TECHNOLOGY

a) Balance the Budget Minimizing the Tax Rate Impact

Status: For FY 2025, the City used \$560,760 to balance the budget. Subsequent to the budget adoption, the Use of Unassigned Fund Balance was reduced by \$460,760 at the tax rate setting. Additionally, the Use of Unassigned Fund Balance was increased by \$1,005,000 for the following: \$400,000 to support Police Department retention payments; \$405,000 to support General Services Winter Operation retention payments; \$160,000 for the preservation of the Concord Stables; and \$40,000 to support the City Council's efforts around Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging (DEIJB). In January 2025, the City Council authorized using \$3,049,000 from Assigned Fund Balance as a transfer to reserves. The FY 2024 Audit is complete and the FY 2024 Unassigned Fund Balance of 21.6% was reported. The City's recently adopted revised Fund Balance Policy is a minimum of 20.5%.

b) Maintain AA+ Bond Rating

Status: In February 2025, the City was notified by S&P Global Ratings that it issued an AA+ rating for the upcoming bond issue, and affirmed the AA+ rating for the City's outstanding debt.

c) Maintain Compliance with Fiscal Policy Goals

Status: The City General Fund Fiscal Goal E-1 limits debt service to 10-14% of total appropriations. On June 30, 2024, the amount was 9.40%.

d) Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Implementation

Status: Implementation of all main modules was complete as of the start of FY 2024.

e) Assessing Full Measure and List and Revaluation

Status: The City's Full Measure and List and Revaluation process began in July 2024, and is expected to be completed in August 2026.

f) Pursue Federal and State Funding

Status: Notable grants applied for or received to date in CY 2024 and 2025 include:

1. On April 14, 2024, the City was awarded \$1,140,000 in "Municipal Per Unit" grant funds from the InvestNH Program. The City received these unrestricted funds due to the development of affordable housing units at Penacook Landing and the Rail Yard, respectively.
2. On July 8, 2024, the City applied for a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant on behalf of 603 Legal Aid, Disability Rights Center – New Hampshire, and New Hampshire Legal Assistance, to conduct a feasibility study to explore the potential acquisition or development of a joint facility to house these respective entities. The grant application was successful.
3. In August 2024, the City Council authorized applying for a \$6,150,000 grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as part of the Airport Terminal Program; and \$1,660,000 relative to design, mitigation and construction associated with the airport terminal project.
4. In August 2024, the City Council authorized applying for a \$605,000 grant from the State of NH / FAA relative to the development of an environmental impact assessment associated with the airport and terminal parking improvement project.
5. In August 2024, the City Council authorized applying for a \$5,058,000 grant from the FAA for the Airport Terminal Project.
6. In August 2024, the City Council accepted \$144,929.47 of Opioid Litigation Settlement Funds to be placed in reserve, retroactive to June 30, 2024.
7. In August 2024, a CMAQ grant in the amount of \$2,447,852 was received from the NH Department of Transportation for the McKee Square Intersection Project (CIP #31).
8. In September 2024, the City was awarded \$35,000 of InvestNH demolition funds to support the development of a privately owned, independent living facility for adults with developmental disabilities at 3 North State Street. These funds were accepted. The City also applied for an additional \$30,000 in InvestNH MUP Grant funds for this project; however, the application was not successful.
9. In the fall of 2024, the Police Department was awarded the FY 2024 Jeanne Shaheen Congressional Directed Spending grant in the amount of \$73,000 in unmatched funding. Funding from this grant will be used to improve crime scene processing equipment and to provide specialized training for Department members.

10. In the fall of 2024, the Police Department was awarded the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant in the amount of \$21,499 in unmatched funding. Funding from this grant will be used to improve equipment and technological enhancements.
11. In the fall of 2024, the Police Department was awarded \$9,626.47 through the U.S. Department of Justice Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program to be used as reimbursement for ballistic vest purchases for police officers. This funding provides up to a 50% reimbursement on ballistic vest purchases.
12. The Police Department received grant funding in the amount of \$73,000 from the NH Attorney General's Drug Task Force. This funding is designed to offset the cost of assigning a police officer to the Task Force.
13. The Police Department received \$40,000 in grant funding from the NH Department of Safety – Law Enforcement Opioid Abuse Reduction Initiative for conducting illegal drug investigations within the Concord community.
14. The Police Department received \$16,000 in grant funding from the NH Department of Safety, State Homeland Security, to aid in the purchase of specialized equipment for Concord Police Department members who are members of the Central New Hampshire Special Operations Unit.
15. In November 2024, the City applied for \$678,000 of Brownfields Cleanup grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to support redevelopment of the Concord Stables building located at 111.5 Warren Street. The application was successful and funding was awarded on May 16, 2025.
16. In December 2024, the City applied for a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant on behalf of Families in Transition to conduct a feasibility study to examine potential renovation of ground floor commercial spaces located at 9-11 Odd Fellows Avenue and 5 Market Lane into housing to support low/moderate income persons. The grant application was successful and the study is underway.
17. On December 17, 2024, the City was one of 18 municipalities in the state to be designated as a Housing Champion by the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs. This designation will give the City and the other 17 communities exclusive, preferential access to \$5 million of special housing grants to be offered through the State's Housing Champions Program. On February 28, 2025, the City applied for \$1.75 million from the InvestNH Housing Champions Program to support the Heights Sewer Improvement Project (CIP #91 and #257). The application was successful and funding in the amount of \$859,689 was awarded on April 16, 2025.
18. In January 2025, the City was awarded a \$500,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to help with the construction of a new Skate Board Park at Kiwanis Riverside Park. The Parks & Recreation Department is working with the non-profit Concord Skate Park Association to raise the \$500,000 match required as part of the grant award.
19. On February 10, 2025, City Council accepted the terms of a Homeland Security Program grant in the amount of \$259,062 for the purchase of a modular traffic barrier system to protect eventgoers that inhabit closed roadways against vehicle ramming incidents. On March 11, 2025, the City received its final approval to start the procurement process. Fire Administration is working with the City's Purchasing Division to author and execute an RFP for this purchase.
20. On March 14, 2025, the Fire Department received final approval notification that it was awarded up to \$5,000 in Emergency Management Performance Grant funds for the purpose of updating the City's 2015 Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). The City's LEOP update committee and contracted consultant are scheduled to meet for their final planning meeting on July 9, 2025. After that, the final document will be assembled and delivered to the City.

21. In March 2025, the Police Department applied for the Stanton K-9 Establishment Grant for up to \$55,000 designated for start-up costs associated with introducing a new Law Enforcement K-9 Program at the Police Department. The Police Department received notice from the Stanton K9 Grant Foundation that it was awarded \$51,900 to re-establish a patrol service dog at the Concord Police Department. This award was unanimously approved by City Council in May 2025.
22. In June 2025, the Police Department applied for federal grant funding through the FY 2025 Community Policing Development Accreditation Supporting Law Enforcement Agencies Seeking Accreditation COPS grant program. The Police Department is seeking up to \$90,000 to support the Department's State accreditation process.
23. In June 2025, the Police Department applied for federal grant funding through the FY 2025 Community Policing Development Microgrant Program, through the COPS grant program. The Department is seeking \$88,000 to purchase specialized equipment used to identify unknown hazardous substances, such as fentanyl and its synthetic analogs.

g) Cost Containment – Health Insurance Costs

Status: The City received a rate hold for FY 2026 on medical and dental, after a 9.5% not to exceed rate. The medical renewal was, in part, due to a much lower member/loss ratio. We are seeing a lower frequency of high cost claimants as well. The City continues to offer a high deductible health plan with a Health Savings Account to driver consumerism, and have piloted an enhanced Reduce My Cost program to encourage employees to pursue lower cost providers for ancillary services like CT scans, MRI's, and lab work. The program pays a percentage of savings directly to the employee for choosing the low-cost provider. The City, along with its benefit consultant, Borislow, continually looks at ways in which to contain costs on health insurance.

h) Technology Infrastructure Improvements

Status: The Information Technology Department has completed the replacement of the wired networking infrastructure. Cybersecurity efforts funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to improve security around the water and wastewater systems (to be completed mid-2025) are continuing on schedule. We have nearly completed the upgrade of all eligible Windows workstation operating systems from Windows 10 to Windows 11. This upgrade must be completed by October 2025, which is Microsoft's end-of-support date.

New infrastructure projects for this year include the replacement of the City's wireless networking infrastructure, which was completed in its entirety ahead of schedule; and expansion of the fiber network to the new Penacook Library & Activity Center and the new Police Station. Additional fiber runs are being planned for the City Stables and the Heights Pump Station. The replacement of Human Services software is on schedule to be completed before the end of FY 2025.

The Community Development Department recently acquired georeferenced aerial photos for the entire City for calendar years 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. This was achieved via a transition to an annual subscription for aerial photographs, which is funded through the Department's annual operating budget. Historically, the City had commissioned custom aerial flyovers of the City every five years to update its digital, georeferenced aerial photos for the geographic information system. However, this new

approach allows the City to receive data on an annual basis at a significantly reduced cost as compared to past practice.

GOAL 2. ORGANIZATIONAL

a) Recruitment and Retention

Status: Five of the City's six labor unions have entered into new collective bargaining agreements with an eye on retention and recruitment. Four of those agreements included an increase in annual leave accrual, with one increasing the maximum amount only. There was also a focus on competitive COLA's authorized by the City Council, as well as training stipends for CFOA. The CPPA implemented a shift differential to entice officers to second and third shift work. The committee's other recommendations were put into action with results reported below. IAFF negotiations are ongoing and positive. We hope to have a new collective bargaining agreement in place in August.

Five employees initiated Paid Family Medical Leave during the 4th quarter of FY 2025. Three of those claims were for bonding and two were for intermittent illness. The FY 2025 total of PFML claimants is 36, with 23 of those for bonding. The employee referral bonus paid out \$25,500 in FY 2025, with 16 referred employees.

The Community Development Department has experienced significant vacancies and turnover during the past two years. As of March 31, 2025, there were 38 positions in the Department. Of this total, 27 positions (or 71% of the Department) are staffed by persons who either joined the Department or were promoted to their current position after June 2022. As of June 30, 2025, one of the Department's 38 positions is vacant (Engineering Technician). The Assistant City Planner – Zoning is scheduled to start with the City on July 21, 2025.

The Police Department has made great strides in the right direction with staffing. In December 2024, the City Council approved a second retention payment for sworn police officers (minus the Command Staff). This retention payment was the second retention payment in 2024 and was implemented as an emergency stop gap to retain police officers. In 2024, the Police Department lost five police officers: two retired, two left for other law enforcement opportunities, and one was terminated while on probation. This is a dramatic turn around from 2023 when the Police Department lost 19 police officers.

The Police Department was successful in filling both Police Social Worker positions. This new program has made an immediate impact within the community and the Department. In 2024, the Department was also successful in hiring a new full-time employee in its Records Unit and in Dispatch.

As of June 30, 2025, the Police Department has continued to work diligently to fill vacancies within the Department. During this past quarter, the Department has recruited six outstanding police officer candidates who were hired and will start their careers soon. Five of these candidates will attend the NH Police Academy to obtain their fulltime police officer certification by the end of the year, and one candidate is an experienced police officer who previously worked at the Merrimack (NH) Police Department. The Police Department has identified additional candidates who will likely be hired later in the year, as the next available session at the NH Police Academy starts in January 2026.

Fortunately, the Police Department's retention efforts have been successful in slowing down employee turnover. The Department had just one retirement during this reporting period and one voluntary resignation. Retaining employees remains a top priority at the Police Department. While addressing the retention issues, the Department has simultaneously worked to expand its recruitment efforts.

During this reporting period, the Police Department has started two new police internships with students from two local colleges. This intensive work is for course credit and provides additional opportunities for these two college students to learn more about municipal policing. Our interns' hands-on experiences are discussed at their respective college campuses. We are mindful when creating learning experiences for our interns to showcase a wide variety of the work opportunities available at the Concord Police Department. This directly benefits the interns and promotes the Police Department when the interns' experiences are discussed in class. Both interns are doing very well, and we hope they decide to apply for employment with the Concord Police Department after they graduate later this year.

The Police Department is also hosting three students from the Concord CRTC Program. This program is similar to a college internship but geared to the high school level. The idea is to work with Concord High School to build a feeder program by creating interest in future law enforcement opportunities.

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The Police Department has identified additional candidates who will likely be hired later in the year, as the next available session at the NH Police Academy starts in January 2026.

The Parks and Recreation Department managed to hire all funded seasonal positions in the Parks and Cemetery Divisions. However, despite best efforts, they were unable to hire an adequate number of lifeguards for the 2025 season. Full time staffing within the department has been fairly stable this year except with the two share positions within the cemetery division. These shared positions work for nine months with the Parks & Recreation Department, and three months with the General Services Department. Turn over has been high for the PT positions for opening and closing the City-Wide Community Center, Merrimack Lodge at White Park and the new Community room in Penacook.

At the November 2024 City Council meeting, for the second consecutive year, City Council appropriated \$400,000 to fund a winter stipend to be paid to full-time General Services Department employees that support winter operations for city streets, sidewalks, and the airport. The stipend was paid for the winter season from December 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025. During this period, General Services successfully filled a vacant CDL position with a candidate possessing a CDL for the first time in a number of years. One General Services employee, who was training to secure a CDL, resigned to pursue a different profession in the private sector. The program continues to successfully retain necessary CDL operators through the winter season.

b) Class and Compensation Study

Status: The consultant chosen for the Class and Compensation Study, Paypoint HR, began the study in October 2024, at which time it held kick-off meetings in person and virtually throughout the City. Employees completed the Position Vantage Point questionnaires, which were then reviewed by the Supervisors. The project team consists of the City Manager, the Deputy City Manager – Finance, and the Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations. The project team worked with the consultant to deploy the external wage and benefit survey for comparisons of total compensation and was tasked with providing a project report in the 4th quarter of FY 2025. The project team is in receipt of the draft benefit and wage report and has been working with the consultant to review internally and develop next steps, which have included reviewing and verifying the data and discussing implementation steps. The report will be brought to City Council for review in the first quarter of FY 2026 with an implementation request.

c) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging (DEIJB)

Status: The City Council DEIJB Committee will report on the status of this goal. The internal DEIJB committee has partnered with Avant Consulting, and the Leadership Team has been meeting bi-weekly to create systemic equity infrastructure, revise recruiting policies, and develop the guidelines around Employee Resource Groups. The DEIJB committee has selected and begun work with leaders throughout the organization, a team known as L2. The L2 team met and had robust discussions on data driven topics that impact service delivery for the City. Work on recruiting and retention continues, with changes to the training for applicant review and interviewer training in progress. The Professional Development series concluded in June, although attendance was not robust. We have selected two Employee Resource Groups and will be training the co-chairs for these groups in the first quarter of FY 2026.

d) Solid Waste Contract Implementation

Status: The General Services Department is presently undertaking planning and coordination meetings with the City's solid waste collection contractor, Casella Waste Systems, and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) relative to the impending transition to automated collection.

This transition, which will result in trash and recycling collection being completed by vehicles equipped with an automated "arm" picking up City-issued totes (garbage and recycling collection bins), is scheduled to take place in two phases. The first phase, a pilot phase, is expected to launch on or around July 1, 2026, to approximately 25% of Concord homes, as determined by collection routes. The second, subsequent phase will then roll out the program Citywide on or around July 1, 2028.

All residents can expect to see communications relative to a general program overview in fall 2025, with further information and notification made to "pilot" households in early 2026.

e) Community Communication

Status: The Fire Chief, as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the City, has worked with the State of NH to gain access for key officials in the City to the Genasys Alert system that has been made available to all NH communities at no cost. City staff

is awaiting initial training on the system prior to implementation. This will likely be completed in early fall of 2025.

GOAL 3. HOUSING / HOMELESSNESS

Status: As of October 15, 2024, there were 2,352 housing units in development. Of this total, 584 units were completed by the end of 2024; 783 units have been approved by the Planning Board and are awaiting construction; and 985 units are currently in the development permitting process. The 2,352 housing units in development will increase the City's housing stock by 12.1% and the City's population by 5,409 people.

The City, using a variety of tools, has directly supported several recent and proposed housing projects. Tools employed by the City include the sale of City-owned real estate, procurement of grants supporting the development of housing projects, construction of infrastructure improvements, zoning amendments, granting of RSA 79-E Community Tax Relief Incentives, as well as gap financing through the City's Revolving Loan Program. Recent examples of housing projects directly supported by the City using the aforementioned tools include, but are not limited to: Penacook Landing / 33-35 Canal Street (54 units, affordable); Rosemary's Way / 95 Village Street (42 units, affordable); Isabella Apartments / 32 South Main Street (64 units); First Church / 177 North Main Street (30 units); 6 South State Street (8 units, affordable); as well as ROI Properties / Black Hill Road (385 units); among others.

With respect to the First Church project, on August 14, 2023, the City Council approved Resolution #9573, which was later revised and extended by Resolution #9636, on April 8, 2024, which authorized an RSA 79-E Community Tax Relief Incentive for the "First Church" market rate housing project located at 177 North Main Street. The anticipated total value of the seven-year tax incentive is valued at \$393,411 (combined). The project will preserve and renovate the historic former First Congregational Church into 30 units of market rate housing. The project was completed in June 2025.

Housing, and especially income restricted housing (a.k.a. affordable housing), is a regional issue. As reported in the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission's 2023 Regional Housing Needs Assessment, in 2020, the City's population comprised 36.5% of the total population of the region (43,796 persons in Concord vs. a total regional population of 120,515). Additionally, as of 2020, 37.7% of the region's total housing stock was located in Concord (19,085 units in Concord vs. a total of 50,647 units in the Central New Hampshire Region). However, the same report noted that, in 2020, Concord contained 57.6% of the region's total affordable housing (or income restricted housing) in the region (1,214 units of 2,106 income restricted units in the region). As such, Concord has a disproportionate share of income restricted housing for the region. Additionally, 8 of the 20 communities (or 40%) within the Central New Hampshire region had zero income restricted (affordable) units.

Since 2020, an additional 373 income restricted (affordable) housing units have been built in Concord, and another 132 units have been approved and are awaiting construction. The City was directly involved in several of these projects through several of the tools mentioned above, such as sale of City real estate, securing of grants, or assistance with financing via the City's Revolving Loan Fund Program.

With 2,352 housing units in development, the City has satisfied housing development targets within the 2023 Central New Hampshire Regional Housing Commission's Regional Needs Assessment through 2030 (which suggested the development of 2,223 total units).

In September 2024, the City was awarded a \$35,000 InvestNH grant to support redevelopment of 3 North State Street into a 12-unit rooming house for persons with disabilities. The project was completed in March 2025.

Additionally, the City has received a \$25,000 CDBG Planning Grant to assist Families in Transition with a feasibility study to explore potential conversion of ground floor commercial space into residential units at 5 Market Lane. The study is ongoing.

On December 17, 2024, the City was designated as a “Housing Champion” by the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs. As noted in the award letter, the City was selected because of its “outstanding commitment to fostering an environment that supports innovative and sustainable solutions to address New Hampshire’s housing needs.” The letter also noted that Concord’s “efforts have demonstrated leadership and vision in creating pathways for housing development that will positively impact residents and contribute to solving the State’s housing crisis.” There are 234 municipalities in New Hampshire (13 cities and 221 towns). Concord was one of 18 communities selected for this designation. Concord was selected as it was able to demonstrate the following:

- Compliance with NH State Law, RSA 674:59 (the State’s Workforce Housing Law).
- Ample opportunities to develop housing in Concord. Presently, Concord has 17 different zoning districts, of which housing is permitted in 14. Therefore, housing is permitted in approximately 95% of the City’s total land area (60.2 of 64 total square miles).
- The City’s adoption of innovative land use regulations in accordance with NH State Law RSA 674:21. These include a Cluster Development Ordinance, a Planned Unit Development Ordinance, and Conditional Use Permits.
- Ordinances permitting manufactured housing and mixed-use developments.
- Routine investments in public infrastructure improvements, which support housing.
- The adoption of a Complete Streets policy and promotion of walkable neighborhoods.
- Intermunicipal utility agreements with some neighboring municipalities which have, or could encourage, housing development.

The Town of Boscawen was the only other municipality in central New Hampshire to be designated as a “Housing Champion.”

Due to its designation as a “Housing Champion”, the City has been afforded preferential access to the State’s InvestNH grant program to support infrastructure investments which facilitate housing. On February 28, 2025, the City applied for \$1.75 million from InvestNH to support the Heights Sewer Improvement Project (CIP #91 and #257). The application was awarded on April 16, 2025 in the amount of \$859,689.

On June 18, 2025, ROI Properties received a Conditional Letter of Map Revision from the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for proposed revisions to the Merrimack River Flood Plain to facilitate the development of 385 housing units on Black Hill Road.

a) High Functioning, Coordinated, Quantified Approach to Homelessness

Status: The Police Department continues to be directly involved in responding to citizen complaints related to homelessness issues throughout the city. The Police Department has responded, and continues to respond to complaints related to

encampments, trespass issues, welfare checks, illegal dumping, and more serious criminal issues, such as a 2nd degree assault.

The Police Department is committed to working with other community stakeholders to address these problems. The Concord Police Department has forged strong relationships with those impacted by homelessness, as well as groups whose charge it is to support those in need. Officers know members of the homeless community very well and work to ensure that they are connected to services. Officers work with the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, the Concord Homeless Resource Center, the Friendly Kitchen, the Salvation Army, the McKenna House, and the Community Action Program.

As of June 30, 2025, the Police Department continues to be fully committed to working with all stakeholders to respond to homelessness issues throughout the city. Homelessness presents daily challenges for the Police Department. During this last quarter, members of the Police Department responded to welfare calls for service, trespassing issues, drug/alcohol impairment issues, encampment clean-up efforts, and other issues.

In an effort to better track the demands placed on the Police Department, it has developed a dedicated call for service code to help better track this community problem. This code was developed at the beginning of June 2025, and, to date, the Department has responded to 50 calls for service for homelessness related issues. The total time officers spent from arrival to clearing these calls for service was just over 21 hours. The Department will monitor this data moving forward.

In the spring of 2024, six units of transitional housing for persons exiting homelessness were completed at 129 Pleasant Street. The project was completed by the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness.

In 2023, the City secured a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant to support the purchase and redevelopment of real estate located at 6 South State Street into eight units of transitional housing to support persons exiting homelessness. The project, which is also being developed by the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, is rapidly nearing completion and will likely secure a Certificate of Occupancy in July 2025. The City also waived the street excavation moratorium for this property to allow the redevelopment to move forward.

On December 9, 2024, the City Council approved an agreement with the Granite United Way to support the Steering Committee on Concord's Plan to End Homelessness in providing fiscal sponsorship services for the purpose of supporting initiatives of the committee, as well as for the hiring of a full-time project manager to work in a joint cooperative effort in combatting the sources and impacts of homelessness within the City of Concord. Staff has initiated efforts to explore potential sources of grant funds to support this initiative.

GOAL 4. TRANSPORTATION & UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

a) Fully Fund Street Paving and Sidewalk Program

Status: Through the Purchasing Division, the General Services Department awarded a multi-year paving project to GMI Paving early last year. Except for a portion of Airport Road, where the City's Engineering Services Division is designing new sidewalks, all of

the FY 2024 paving was completed. Since the contract was for two years, GMI Paving also completed approximately half of the streets included in the FY 2025 budget, as well as temporary pavement repairs on the Loudon Road bridge. The following streets were paved in calendar year 2024: Airport Road, from Loudon Road to #91; Farmwood Road; Fernald Street; Fox Run; Freedom Acres; a portion of Hannah Dustin Drive; Kearsarge Street; Long Pond Road; Mill Street; Oak Hill Road, from Appleton Road to #52; Old Turnpike Road, from Airport Road to Park Street; Pine Crest Circle; Regional Drive, from Chenell Drive to Airport Road; Shoe String Road; and Winthrop Street. The following streets were completed in the spring of 2025: the full length of Clark Street, Dolan Street, Edgemont Avenue, Fisher Street, Palm Street, Fairbanks Street, and Horseshoe Pond Lane; as well as North Main Street from Bouton Street to Horseshoe Pond Lane. With the exception of a portion of Airport Road, where the City's Engineering Services Division is currently designing a new sidewalk and drainage improvements, all of the FY 2024 and FY 2025 paving has been completed.

b) McKee Square

Status: Traffic studies and preliminary design concepts are underway. The project is included in the State's 10-Year Plan. Eighty percent (80%) of the project will be financed with State grants. On August 23, 2024, the City was notified that its application for a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant in the amount of \$2,447,852 was awarded for the project.

c) I-93 Project With or Without Bridge Deck (Including Storrs Street Ext.)

Status: The I-93 Project has been included in the 2024-2025 State 10-Year Transportation Plan. Design and permitting are scheduled from 2025-2028, with construction commencing in 2029. The project is tentatively scheduled to be completed in the mid to late 2030's. Estimated project cost is approximately \$504 million. The State has agreed to relocate the State's Lincoln Line and portions of the CSX Northern Main Line to facilitate Storrs Street Extension North (CIP #18).

On June 12, 2023, the City Council approved Resolution #9562, which appropriated the sum of \$200,000 for the I-93 Bridge Park Feasibility Study (CIP #567). A community meeting was held on February 20, 2024. Working with the NH Department of Transportation, the feasibility study identified two potential design alternatives costing between \$76-\$115 million. These concepts were presented to the public on February 4, 2025. The project's final report was presented to the City Council at its May 12, 2025 meeting. The project is now complete.

d) State Parking Garages

Status: Demolition of the former NH Department of Justice Building at 33 Capitol Street has been completed. The State has awarded a contract to PC Construction in the amount of \$17.7 million for construction of the State's new 409-space Legislative Parking Garage. Construction was delayed as the State had to abate asbestos contaminated materials at the site. Soil abatement was completed in March 2025, and the project is now under construction and is expected to be completed in March 2026. Once the new garage is finished, the State will demolish the existing Legislative Parking Garage located above the Storrs Street rights-of-way. The State has engaged a consulting engineer to prepare required demolition specifications, which are presently 65% complete. The State plans to bid demolition in summer/fall 2025. Pending Governor

and Executive Council approvals, demolition would occur in spring 2026. Demolition will involve termination of the City's 1974 Air Rights Leased to the State for the garage. Discussions are ongoing with the State regarding the scope of work and expectations for the post demolition condition of the City's real estate.

GOAL 5. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

a) Interim Zoning Amendments / Initiate Master Plan Update / Concord Next 2.0

Status: On July 8, 2024, the City Council adopted Ordinance #3167, which established zoning regulations for charitable gaming halls/casinos.

On August 12, 2024, the City Council approved Ordinance #3168, which modified the Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, the ordinance created a conditional use permit for obstruction of the view of the State House dome for development projects located within the Central Business Performance and Opportunity Corridor Performance Districts; created a separate conditional use permit to allow for the maximum building height to increase from 80' to 90' within the Central Business Performance District; and also modified previously existing conditional use permit provisions which allow the maximum building height to be increased from 45' to 80' within that portion of the Opportunity Corridor Zoning District located between Loudon Road, Storrs Street, Hills Avenue, and I-93. Said ordinances were adopted, in part, to promote redevelopment of Phenix Hall and adjacent properties. Upon passage, said ordinances were referred to the Planning Board for further review. The Planning Board has completed its review and has proposed modifications to the originally adopted ordinance, as well as other zoning amendments. On January 13, 2025, the City Council held a public hearing on the subsequent revisions to those enacted by Ordinance #3168, and adopted Ordinance #3175, which codified said revisions.

Despite being understaffed, the Planning Division has begun preparing interim amendments to the existing Zoning Ordinance to address the most significant, persistent issues therewith. The initial batch of amendments was released in April 2025. Staff intends to work with the Planning Board, Economic Development Advisory Committee, Architectural Design Review Committee, and others, to review proposed amendments prior to presentation to City Council. Revisions to Batch #1 of proposed changes, and preparation of Batch #2, are ongoing. Staff desires to have all interim amendments adopted by the end of December 2025. Following the completion of an upcoming City Master Plan, which, subject to future City Council appropriations would commence in FY 2026, and likely will take approximately two years to complete, more comprehensive amendments to the Zoning Ordinance will be initiated to implement the goals and objectives of said forthcoming Master Plan.

b) Implement Economic Development Advisory Committee

Status: During its March 2024 meeting, the City Council adopted Ordinance #3159, which re-established the Economic Development Advisory Committee. Appointments were confirmed by City Council on April 8, 2024. To date, the Committee has met on June 25, 2024; September 24, 2024; December 3, 2024; January 28, 2025; and March 25, 2025, April 22, 2025, and June 24, 2025. The focus of the Committee's initial meetings has been to review the City's various economic master plans, as well as forthcoming interim zoning amendments. The Committee has also met with representatives of the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce to discuss business development issues, and the

NH Housing Authority to discuss various housing issues, as well as NHTI and the CRTC program to discuss workforce development.

c) Economic Development Web Site Overhaul / Digital Marketing Package

Status: In April 2024, the City launched a newly revised and updated web site, which included an Economic Development page. The Economic Development page continues to be refined by staff. In the near future, staff will be adding additional content to the website, including an overview of public/private partnership success stories, review of RSA 79-E supported projects, and others. Recent updates include an overview of some recent public-private partnerships. Additional updates will be forthcoming over the next several months.

d) New Airport Terminal

Status: The current terminal building was constructed in 1937, and later expanded in 1965. The building is obsolete, fully depreciated, and inadequate to support this growing general aviation airport. Additionally, the building is not compliant with modern building codes, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Due to these shortcomings, it has been a long-standing City goal to demolish and replace the current terminal with a new, modern facility that will support the airport for decades to come. Specifically, the goal of replacing the current terminal has been carried in various City Airport Master Plans since at least 1996.

Subject to State and Federal permitting processes, upon completion of the new terminal, the existing building would be demolished. Once demolition is completed, the property occupied by the current terminal will be used for additional hangar development at the airport.

In February 2024, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) notified the City that it intended to award a \$2.51 million Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) grant to support the construction of a new terminal as part of the FAA's FY 2024 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – Airport Terminal Buildings Grant Program. This potential grant is a key financial component of making the long-desired project a reality in the coming years.

On March 11, 2024, the City Council approved Resolution #9622, which appropriated City, State and Federal funds to proceed with design, permitting and bidding of the new terminal building and associated parking, in anticipation of the aforementioned grant funding for construction of these improvements.

Following the approval of Resolution #9622, staff and project consultants began the process of designing the project, including presentation to the Planning Board in May 2024, and have completed the preliminary design phase.

As design of the new terminal and related improvements progressed in early to mid-2024, the City was informed by the FAA that the 2011 environmental assessment (EA) for the Airport is insufficient for the new Terminal Project. As such, a consultant must be engaged and a new EA prepared.

The EA process may take as much as 18 months to complete. It is anticipated that the updated EA will include an alternative analysis for the proposed new terminal building, demolition of the existing terminal building, as well as other projects programmed in the City's current Capital Improvement Program.

The results of the updated EA process may affect design details for the terminal building and related improvements. As such, findings of the updated EA, as well as any potential modifications to the terminal project resulting therefrom, will be presented to the City Council prior to resumption of design efforts.

During its August 12, 2024 meeting, the City Council approved a consent resolution which authorized the City Manager to apply for Federal and State funding in an amount up to \$605,000 for various purposes, including the completion of an updated environmental assessment for the Airport pertaining to the proposed terminal project. This application is currently pending.

On December 9, 2024, the FAA informed the City that it had cancelled the \$2.51 million BIL grant for the project. Once an updated EA is completed for the Airport, additional grant resources will need to be identified and secured in order to advance the new terminal project to final design and future construction.

e) Heights Sewer Project

Status: The FY 2024 Budget included \$1.9 million, combined, for CIP #91 and CIP #275, to design a replacement sewer pump station and piping improvements to address sanitary sewer capacity for certain areas of the Heights. The FY 2025 Budget appropriated the sum of \$16,900,000 for CIP #91 (sewer main improvements) and \$6,250,000 for CIP #275 (sewer pump station improvements) to fund construction of the project. Design of each respective portion of the project is nearing completion. The project will be bid in early FY 2026. Construction will likely begin in fall 2025/spring 2026. The project is currently scheduled for completion in spring/summer 2027. On April 16, 2025, the State of New Hampshire awarded an \$859,689 Housing Champions grant to support construction of these sewer improvements.

f) Regulatory Amendments – Review Charitable Gaming

Status: During its February 12, 2024 meeting, the City Council set for public hearing on July 8, 2024, proposed zoning amendments pertaining to charitable gaming. The Planning Board held a public hearing on May 15, 2024 on the proposed ordinance. The final ordinance was adopted by City Council on July 8, 2024.

g) Mayor's Business Visitation Program

Status: The Mayor's Visitation Program was implemented in August 2024. As of March 31, 2025, visits have included Boyce Highlands, Grappone Mazda, Northeast Delta Dental, The Viking House/Capital Craftsmen/Hilltop Consignment, and Quality Press, Inc. The goal is to conduct one business visitation per month (on average).

h) Historic Preservation Initiatives

Status: The City continues to work with the NH Preservation Alliance on redevelopment strategies for the Gas Holder building, and recently attended two summits with State and local leaders to advance that effort.

Recent amendments to zoning provisions for height in the Central Business Performance District were drafted to include protections for demolition of historic buildings.

Preservation and adaptive reuse of the First Congregational Church, located at 177 North Main Street, into 30 units of market rate housing, which was supported by a City RSA 79-E Community Tax Relief Incentive valued at \$393,000, was completed. The building was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Efforts to divest of the former Penacook Library, located at 3 Merrimack Street, are ongoing. City Administration is in the process of engaging the City's on-call real estate broker to list the property. Any sale shall include deed restrictions/covenants to reasonably preserve the architectural and historic integrity of the property.

i) Placemaking / Gateways / Community Art / Murals

Status: As part of the FY 2025 budget, \$35,000 was appropriated to clean up landscaping at the Exit 14 Gateway. Work was initiated and is ongoing. On February 6, 2025, Brixmor (the owner of the Capitol Shopping Plaza at 80 Storrs Street) granted the City a beautification easement, which allows the City to install murals or other improvements at portions of the property to beautify views of downtown from I-93. The easement was a condition of Planning Board approval for renovation of the plaza. The East Concord Gateway sign was completed in spring 2025. Total cost was approximately \$5,000.

GOAL 6. ENERGY / ENVIRONMENT / SUSTAINABILITY**a) Community Power Review**

Status: On March 11, 2024, City Council approved Resolution #9620, adopting a Community Power Plan and authorizing the City to join the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH). The Draft Community Power Electric Aggregation Plan was submitted to the Public Utilities Commission on April 15, 2024. The Community Power program launched on October 1, 2024.

b) Complete Solar Arrays at Old Turnpike Landfill / Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant

Status: In May 2023, the City issued an RFP for the lease of the capped landfill for a ground-mounted solar array. Kearsarge Solar, LLC, was selected for the construction of a 5 MW solar array on the landfill. The City will benefit from annual rent payments for a 20-year lease term; annual property tax payments in the form of a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT); and annual electric cost savings from group net-metering credits.

Kearsarge Solar has secured an approved interconnection plan from Unitil. They also secured conditional site plan approval for the project from the Planning Board in May

2025, as well as all required State development permits. City staff is working with the developer on the final terms of the PILOT agreement and group net-metering agreement; both of which are very close to being finalized.

Through the City's Purchasing Division, the General Services Department procured Kearsarge Solar to install a solar array at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Plant, funded through a grant received from the NH Department of Environmental Services. The project was completed in November 2024.

c) Convert Remaining Ornamental Street Lights to LED

Status: A citywide street light conversion project in 2021-2022 resulted in the installation of 2,005 LED cobra head lights and 20 LED flood lights. Not included in this program were 72 ornamental lights (referred to as the "Bishop Crook" lights) located between Exit 13 and the southern limits of the Main Street Project, and between Exit 14 and the northern limits of the Main Street Project.

In January 2024, City staff worked with a lighting designer to select fixture options that are similar in design to the existing, but meet EnergyStar specifications for energy efficiency. A quote for the fixtures, including installation, was submitted in February 2024.

The FY 2026 budget included \$1.150 million of General Fund obligation bonds to replace the 72 ornamental light poles with new poles and LED fixtures.

GOAL 7. PUBLIC SAFETY

a) New Police Station

Status: On December 15, 2023, the City entered into a Purchase and Sales Agreement to acquire 4 Bouton Street for the purpose of developing a new police station. On April 8, 2024, the City Council received a comprehensive staff report and presentation concerning acquisition of 4 Bouton Street for a new Police Station (CIP #643), as well as projected costs and a schedule for a new station if the City Council elected to move forward with said initiative. Following said report, the City Council unanimously voted to proceed with acquisition of 4 Bouton Street. In accordance with the City Council's directive, the City acquired 4 Bouton Street on May 24, 2024 for the sum of \$3,924,232. The FY 2025 Budget appropriated the sums of \$240,000 to weatherize and secure the building, as well as \$3,131,800 to design the new Police Station.

The building was weatherized in fall 2024. Using a competitive bid process, on October 15, 2024, Milestone Construction was selected to serve as the City's Construction Manager/General Contractor for the project.

On November 13, 2024, the City received proposals from five design teams for the project. Four teams were selected for interviews. Interviews were completed on December 17, 2024. On January 7, 2025, the design contract was awarded to a team led by Harriman. Schematic design has been completed.

Design development is currently underway. It is anticipated that staff will return to City Council in or around October 2025 to seek appropriation to construct the new facility if funding is approved.

Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin on or about April 1, 2026. The current project schedule anticipates the project will be completed in late summer 2027.

In the meantime, staff intends to use \$700,000 of available project funds to advance certain components of the project, such as interior demolition/hazardous building material and utility connections.

A website dedicated to the project has been added to the City's website under the Police Department section. Project updates will be provided as the project progresses.

b) City Hall Campus Master Plan & Schematic Design

Status: On April 8, 2024, City Council was briefed on City Administration's proposed strategy to proceed with a City Hall Campus Master Plan, presuming relocation of the Police Station to 4 Bouton Street. The FY 2025 Budget included \$250,000 to undertake a campus master plan. Using a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process, the firm of Lavallee Brensinger was selected for the project. The project is underway and scheduled for completion in FY 2026.

c) Fire Gear Replacement

Status: The Fire Department continues to wait for PFAS-free gear to become available while the manufacturer works through issues related to garment durability. This setback has caused considerable inconvenience for Department members, as secondary sets of gear are now shared among members of each fire station, as additional sets of gear reach their end-of-life dates. The Fire Department continues to withhold from purchasing additional PFAS-containing gear during this timeframe.

Fire Administration will continue to closely monitor this situation, and the availability of serviceable secondary sets of gear. The manufacturer has reported that additional PFAS-free components for gear construction have become available. These are currently being tested against NFPA and their own performance requirements.

d) Build Out Police Department Social Worker Staffing & Funding Options

Status: As of March 31, 2025, the Police Social Worker Unit is fully staffed with a Masters level Police Social Worker, an Outreach Social Worker, and a Masters level Police Social Worker intern; and has quickly developed into a critical component of the Police Department. This specialized unit does intensive follow-up on police related matters involving homebound seniors living in our community; community members experiencing addiction recovery and often co-occurring mental health issues; and Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team (ACERT) follow-up visits.

This unit has greatly improved the police response to our most vulnerable community members, who are often in need of intensive case follow-up. The Police Social Worker Unit works to connect at-risk populations with the necessary service providers in the community. This has allowed police officers to work more on law enforcement issues while providing specially trained social workers to address the police related social issues in the community.

The Police Department anticipates growth in this area and has already developed plans to propose increased staffing in the unit as part of the FY 2026 budget.

The Police Department has experienced tremendous value in its Police Social Worker Unit. The unit is fully staffed with two full-time employees. In June 2025, we added a designated call for service in our records management system to better track police social work services. In the month of June, the Police Social Worker Unit logged 26 calls for service, and just over 45 hours were dedicated to those calls.

As part of the FY 2026 annual budget, the Police Department added a full-time position to its Police Social Worker Unit. This position will add an additional outreach worker. The Department has also incorporated the funding for its ACERT program into the operating budget, where it had been grant funded in the past. We anticipate that this will allow the Police Social Worker Unit more time to provide services to the community, as their time spent on grant reporting will be reduced.

Looking ahead to the upcoming fiscal year, the Police Social Worker Unit has done a nice job with recruitment, and we do not anticipate any problems with filling the additional position in the first quarter of FY 2026.

e) Community Policing

Status: The Concord Police Department continues to work very hard to foster positive engagements with the community. The Department is fortunate to have a dedicated Community Services Division; however, the entire Department is dedicated to community policing.

The School Resource Officers are actively involved at Concord High School and Merrimack Valley High School. Currently, due to workforce shortages, there is no SRO at Merrimack Valley Middle School. The Community Services Officers stay in contact with Bishop Brady High School, Trinity Christian School, and St. John's School as well. Liberty, the Department's comfort dog, also makes frequent visits to the schools in the city. Safety assessments continue to be conducted at several of the public and private schools. Recommendations have been made to the schools to help officers in accessing the schools during threatening events.

On August 6, 2024, the Police Department hosted its annual National Night Out event at Rollins Park. National Night Out is an evening of local and state police officers coming together to help increase awareness of community police programs, which in turn helps build bridges between officers and those they serve to protect. Approximately 4,000 attendees participated in the event.

During the month of September 2024 – Food Action Month - the Police Department partnered with the NH Food Bank and sponsored several food drives. Participants were challenged to "Help Stuff a Cruiser". Three local charities were the benefactors of the food drives. Enough food was collected to provide 3,602 meals and \$1,446 was raised. The Department also participated in two Coffee with a Cop events.

In December 2024, Police Department members teamed up with Toys for Tots to acquire and distribute Christmas gifts to families in need. Police Department members volunteered their time and resources and traveled to Manchester on December 23rd to pick up 30+ large boxes of toy donations for our community.

Beyond having police officers hand out toys on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the Police Department worked diligently to partner with community stakeholders to share these gifts in order to expand the reach of the Police Department. Hundreds of toys were

provided to Concord High School, the City's Parks and Recreation Department, Concord Housing, and Project S.T.O.R.Y.

The Police Department works closely with the New American communities throughout the city in an attempt to open communication and to plan for informational events with the Department. The Department also serves on the Refugee Advisory Council (RAC), which meets monthly. The RAC helps ensure the coordination of services for refugees and immigrants, and raises awareness of issues that affect refugee and immigrant communities throughout New Hampshire.

In April 2025, the Community Resources Unit worked with Broken Ground School to assist them with their evacuation drill. Department members worked with Easter Seals and Alliance Asset Management to provide CRASE training. Department members also provided a security presentation to Merrimack County Savings Bank.

In May 2025, the Community Resources Unit spoke to students at Concord High School and Concord Christian Academy about working in the criminal justice field. Department members attended two Coffee with a Cop events, one at Starbucks and the other at Target. These events provide great opportunities for Department members to build positive relationships with community members.

In June 2025, the Community Resources Unit, along with other department members, collaborated with the Special Olympics to support the Torch Run. This two-day event began with one leg entering the City of Concord on June 5th, and exiting the city on June 6th. The Department had several members involved and arranged for the runners to have a police escort from the Capitol to just beyond the Epsom traffic circle. One member of the Concord Police Department ran the entire distance from the Capitol to the University of New Hampshire, the location of the annual Special Olympics event.

Also, in June 2025, the Chief of Police and other members of the Command Staff attended an event in support of the Boys & Girls Club. The Concord Police Department has a rich history of volunteer work in conjunction with the Boys & Girls Club. Much of the involvement with the Boys & Girls Club is in support of their fundraising efforts to help better support local programs for children.

f) Fire Department Equipment Replacement

Status: The Fire Department continues to wait for the arrival of several apparatus that have been ordered with FY 2023, FY 2024, and FY 2025 CIP funds, comprising two ambulances (one ordered on February 5, 2023 and the other ordered on July 19, 2023); a tanker (ordered on June 15, 2023); a tower truck (ordered on August 9, 2023); and an engine (ordered on July 29, 2024). The tower truck has experienced an additional delay and is now expected to arrive in the fall of 2025. The two ambulances are expected to arrive in the first quarter of 2026. The Fire Department still awaits estimated completion dates for the tanker and the engine.

With the increase in call volume expected over the next few years related to many factors, including the growth of residential units, coupled with the fact that the Department is already at operational capacity, the Fire Department recommends maintaining possession of an engine that would normally be traded as part of a purchase agreement once the next new engine arrives. The Fire Department also suggests that the City consider purchasing an additional engine soon, due to the

extended lead times (3-4 years), to allow for implementation of Engine 1 while also maintaining sufficient backups to use when an engine is out of service for maintenance or repairs.

The Fire Department has ordered new SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) through CIP funds to replace all of the existing air packs. New thermal imaging cameras, used to find victims, hidden fire, and to maintain situational awareness while inside a structure fire were also ordered and received.

g) Continuous Improvement in Public Safety Effectiveness

Status: The Police Department continues to make forward progress with departmental policy improvement. The Department has continued to make positive strides toward State accreditation. This is a lengthy process, and the Police Department has continued to update departmental policies to ensure we are meeting or exceeding the highest standards for the profession. Accreditation ensures accountability and transparency in police operations and promotes trust and confidence within the community.

h) Recruitment and Retention

Status: The Fire Department continues to face significant struggles with recruitment and retention. The City and IAFF Local 1045 are in the negotiation process to secure a new collective bargaining agreement. Fire Administration hopes to include items in the new contract that will assist with recruitment and retention efforts.

One new Firefighter/AEMT was added to the Fire Department, which currently has seven (7) vacancies, and had one member on worker's compensation and two members on short-term disability during this reporting period. These 10 positions needed to be filled with overtime, which causes members to work many hours. Additionally, five (5) members used intermittent Paid Family Medical Leave (PFMLA) during this reporting period. Burnout resulting from employees required to work overtime due to vacancies and injuries continues to be a significant issue. Each time an employee leaves, additional overtime is needed to maintain current service levels, which causes further employee burnout. This compounding problem is near a critical breaking point.

As of June 30, 2025, the Police Department has two Parking Officer Equipment Technician position vacancies and one Police Dispatcher vacancy. However, one Police Dispatcher recently accepted a Police Officer position with the Concord Police Department and will start in early July, leaving two Police Dispatcher vacancies. This new Police Officer will join five other new police officer recruits leaving eight Police Officer vacancies as we begin the new fiscal year. Police Administration is optimistic with Police Officer recruitment in the coming months.

GOAL 8. RECREATION & LEISURE

a) Complete Construction of a New Canal Street Riverfront Park

Status: On April 3, 2024, a ribbon cutting was held for the new park. The park was substantially completed in late fall 2024. A soft opening event was held on December 16, 2024. Final punch list items are currently being completed, following which an official opening ceremony will occur. In the meantime, park programming has been scheduled, including a summer concert series which is being managed by the Parks & Recreation

Department. The City's total budget for the project is \$3.37 million. The project is being funded by a mixture of Tax Increment Finance District supported bonds, Parking Fund supported bonds (new Canal Street Public Parking Lot), development impact fees, as well as a \$500,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant from the State of New Hampshire.

b) White Park Inclusionary Playground

Status: An RFP for construction of the new playground went out in early summer 2024. The City was awarded \$400,000 in Land and Water Conservation Grant funds; received \$50,000 in donations; and appropriated \$350,000 of GO bonds for the construction. The City worked with the Friends of White Park to select a vendor via RFP process for the construction of the new playground. In April, the Friends of White Park, City Administration, and the Parks & Recreation Department raised just over \$60,000 in donations as the project cost came in over budget. The new all-inclusive playground will be built over the summer of 2025 and will open in early fall.

c) Complete New Penacook Library & Activity Center (Divest of 3 Merrimack St.)

Status: The project was completed in August 2024, and the City took ownership of its condominium unit on October 30, 2024. Operations at the new facility began on December 5, 2024. In accordance with Resolution #9518, which was adopted on December 12, 2022, City Administration has initiated efforts to divest of the existing Penacook Library, located at 3 Merrimack Street, for redevelopment. Divestment shall include the requirements to preserve and adaptively reuse the existing building.

d) Memorial Field Design & Partnership Review

Status: The City has held two public meetings to help develop a new Master Plan for the complex. At the last meeting, the residents present were in favor of a full renovation of the entire complex. City staff and the design team presented information to the Concord School Board at their October 2024 meeting and updated the City Council at their November 2024 meeting. The City Council and the Concord School Board created a subcommittee to look at the recommendation with the goal of reporting back to both elected bodies by fall 2025. If the final master plan concept is approved, the next step would be funding the final design and permitting of the new master plan.

e) Keach Park Lights

Status: The first public meeting was held last fall. City staff have met with the H.L. Turner Group on final design and permitting, and have reviewed the project with the Airport Advisory Committee and with NH Fish & Game to make sure there is no impact to wildlife. A second public meeting was held on December 12, 2024. At the second meeting, there was a review of facility scheduling, increased maintenance needs, and other projected operating expenses, as well as new revenue from field rentals and charging user groups when field lights are used. At their March 2025 meeting, the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee voted not to move forward with this project. The Airport Advisory Committee approved the lights as they relate to airport operations. City Council approved moving forward with the project at their May 2025 meeting, provided the FAA permit is received. They voted to have the athletic field lights on, Thursdays through Sundays, from dusk to 10 PM, for "pick-up soccer" (no organized groups/leagues, no rental or light fees charged, and field use is first come

basis). On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, the field can be scheduled by organizations (with field rental and light fees charged) from dusk to 10 PM. The additional operating costs for the field lights (power, additional porta toilets, field maintenance, etc.) will be brought to City Council mid-FY 2026.

f) Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT)

Status: Construction of the 4,000' section of the trail through the city's Gully Hill Sunflower Fields has been completed, and a ribbon cutting ceremony was held on September 27, 2024. Total project budget was \$705,000. The Parks & Recreation Department is handling the regular maintenance of this section of trail (similar to the section of trail at Terrill Park). Negotiations with the City, NH Department of Transportation, and CSX to acquire a 6+/- mile of section of the Northern Main Line, between Horseshoe Pond Lane and the Contoocook River, are ongoing and nearing completion. An updated real estate appraisal and title review have been completed by the City, at its expense, and are under review with CSX. A draft purchase and sales agreement is being refined by the parties and will likely be presented to City Council in July 2025, together with a supplemental funding request to complete this transaction.

Additionally, staff continues to prepare for additional sections of the trail. Recently, the City acquired easements from Brady Sullivan for future phases of the trail over property located at 11 Stickney Avenue, as part of the Planning Board development permitting process for the new apartment development at that location. Similarly, provisions for future extension of the trail were included in the Comprehensive Development Plan approval for ROI Properties' development located at Black Hill Road. In partnership with the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail, City Administration is working to negotiate an easement at property located at 6 Loudon Road to facilitate a future extension from the Gully Hill sunflower fields to the Loudon Road Bridge at the Merrimack River. The bridge is currently subject to an ongoing Capital Improvement Project (CIP #588), which includes widening the existing bridge to include a 14' wide shared use path to connect the MRGT from the east side of Concord to Downtown. It is anticipated that final easement documents will be executed and recorded this summer.

Also, the City continues to work with the State on provisions to construct that portion of the MRGT between 6 Loudon Road and Horseshoe Pond Lane, as part of the forthcoming I-93 Bow-Concord project.

g) Garrison Park Pool

Status: The City held a community meeting with the neighbors of Garrison Park to discuss the opportunity to convert the pool to a splash pad or keep it as a pool. Everyone present wanted to keep it as a pool, as the City can offer swim lessons there and a pool can be used by all ages of the community, while a splash pad is geared towards younger children. As the Garrison Park Pool had not been open for the past four years, due to lack of lifeguards, residents present requested that the City keep Garrison Park Pool open, even if the City is unable to hire enough lifeguards. Each summer since COVID, the White Park, Kimball Park, Merrill Park, and Garrison Park pools have not been fully open. The Parks & Recreation Department was able to hire enough lifeguards and Water Safety Instructors to open all six pools and splash pads during the summer of 2024. However, Garrison Pool did not open in summer 2025, as the Department was not able to hire enough lifeguards to open all pools.

h) Terrill Park

Status: Terrill Park remains fully designed and permitted. Over the past year, City staff have renewed all required permits for the project and they are in place until 2027. Phase 1 of the park was finished and opened in October 2020. This phase included the construction of the first section of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail, moving the existing dog park and building a new parking lot to support the trail and the dog park. Phase 1 was funded by a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, private donations, and City funds.

i) Kiwanis Park Design

Status: Funds were appropriated in the FY 2024 Capital Improvement budget for final design and permitting of the park. The City has been working with VHB, who was involved with the master planning process for the final design and permitting of the renovated park. The City is now working on a traffic study and permitting for the project.

In addition, the City has brought on a skateboard park designer, Gridline, to help design a new skateboard park. All design documents were completed in late fall 2024. The Parks & Recreation Department is working with VHB on submitting the required permits per the approved master plan.

During the winter of 2023-2024, the Department applied for a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant in the amount of \$500,000 to help with construction costs of a new skateboard park. In December 2024, the City was notified of the grant award.

Parks & Recreation Department staff will continue to work with skateboard park committee members and the community at large to fundraise the required match of the grant award.

j) Identify Additional East Side Greenspace

Status: The Recreation & Parks Advisory Committee has discussed, at several meetings, the need for new parks and safe access to them. The City's Master Plan calls for 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents, and with 2,300+ new housing units in the approval or planning stages (including approximately 1,000 units for the Heights neighborhood in the vicinity of the former Steeplegate Mall), there is a need to work with developers and the community to identify and plan new community parks. Areas east of Keach Park and areas around Thirty Pines have been discussed.

k) Bicentennial Square "Light" Renovation

Status: The FY 2025 Budget included \$100,000 in CIP #579 for design of park improvements. As of March 31, 2025, a design team led by VHB has been engaged for the project. Geotechnical studies and conceptual designs are underway. A community meeting to review concepts will be held in the coming months.