



# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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

**DATE:** April 1, 2021

**SUBJECT:** 2020 – 2021 City Council Priorities

### **Recommendation**

Accept this report as to the current status of the City Council priorities established on February 18, 2020.

### **Background**

Members of the City Council met on February 18, 2020 to discuss and set priorities for the remainder of Calendar Year 2020, as well as for Calendar Year 2021.

### **Discussion**

Listed below, in ranked order, are the accepted priorities, projects and ongoing initiatives; and their respective statuses as of March 31, 2021.

#### **GOAL 1. BALANCED BUDGET ISSUES: FY 2021 and 2022**

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

**Status:** The City is currently under a collective bargaining agreement with all of its unions. In November 2020, the City began negotiations with CFOA for their contract, which expires on June 30, 2021. In March 2021, the City and CFOA ratified the terms of a collective bargaining successor agreement resulting in all of the City's six unions now featuring high deductible health insurance plans as the premium driver.

##### **b) Health Insurance Costs**

**Status:** The City has received a not-to-exceed rate from Harvard Pilgrim of 8.9% for FY 2022.

##### **c) Capital Financing Alternatives/Storm Water Utility**

**Status:** The Engineering Division, with consultants from Tighe & Bond, gave a presentation to the Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee on their evaluation of the City's potential creation of a storm water utility fund. The committee recommended staff return in the fall of 2020 after conducting public outreach and meetings with stakeholders in the community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project has been put on hold until such time as in-person community meetings can occur safely.

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

### **a) Employment Security**

**Status:** The City continues to market the site of the former NH Employment Security building and discussions with interested parties are ongoing.

### **b) Opportunity Corridor**

**Status:** Storrs Street North Extension (CIP #18): Discussions are ongoing with Pan Am railways and the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) concerning this project. The project was included in the FY 2021 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as an “asterisked” project; meaning that it was not appropriated as part of the FY 2021 budget adoption process. City Administration will bring forward the required resolutions to advance this project once negotiations with Pan Am and NHDOT are concluded.

The South End Marsh property (former planned site for Concord Steam) continues to be on the market. No formal plans have been submitted, but development ideas for the site presented to City staff by various parties have included residential, mixed-use and a bus station.

### **c) Exit 17/Whitney Road**

**Status:** On July 13, 2020, the City Council passed Resolution #9302, which appropriated the sum of \$456,000 of General Fund supported bonds and notes to design and permit a roundabout as part of CIP #30, Hoit Road (US Route 4)/Whitney Road Intersection Improvement Project. The City Council subsequently directed City Administration to enter into negotiations with Interchange Development LLC, concerning a public-private partnership to facilitate development of a proposed regional shopping center and associated improvements to the Hoit Road/Whitney Road intersection. Phase I of the proposed development will include a 13,500 SF NH Liquor and Wine Outlet and an 80,000 SF Market Basket supermarket, with potential for a 20,000 SF attached retail tenant.

On December 16, 2020, Interchange Development LLC secured conditional Planning Board condominium subdivision and site plan approvals for their proposed development.

On February 8, 2021, the proposed Development Agreement between the City and Interchange Development was submitted to the City Council, together with proposed amendments to the Penacook Village Tax Increment Finance District and a \$4.78 million appropriation resolution to construct CIP #30 Hoit Road (US Route 4)/Whitney Road Intersection Improvement Project. A public hearing on these items was held on March 8, 2021. The City Council is scheduled to hold final votes for these items on April 12, 2021. Should City Council approve these items, it is anticipated that construction for CIP #30 will commence around June 1, 2021.

**d) Exit 13**

**Status:** The developer has not formally submitted any plans to date but has been in contact with City staff. The changing dynamics of the economy due to COVID-19 have already impacted this project with retailers/restauranteurs withdrawing due to broader impacts on their businesses. The housing piece of this multi-phase development may move forward first.

**e) Housing**

**Status:** Prior to the economic impact of COVID-19, new market rate housing construction was proceeding at a steady pace. New single-family homes in Concord were selling for \$350,000-\$400,000 in the active developments in the north Concord and Penacook areas. Since the State's gradual re-opening, the City has not observed any significant drop-off in terms of housing transaction volume or price point.

In terms of multifamily housing construction, Phase 1 of the Penacook Landing project (34 units) located at 33 Canal Street was completed in October and is fully occupied. On December 17, 2020, Caleb was awarded \$324,837 in tax credits from the NH Housing Finance Authority for Phase 2 of Penacook Landing, which will feature 20 units of affordable housing at 35 Canal Street. Said tax credits are awarded annually on a competitive basis. This particular application round was especially competitive and resulted in only a partial award for Penacook Landing Phase 2. As such, the project has been delayed pending the upcoming 2022 tax credit application process, which begins in August 2021. If successful, construction would likely begin in spring/summer 2022.

In December, the City closed with CATCH Neighborhood Housing on the sale of the Village Street property, which, in conjunction with other adjacent properties, will be developed into a 42-unit housing development featuring affordable and market rate rental units. Construction is currently underway.

The City has also had significant interest from multiple developers for larger multifamily housing developments, including a project for 70 Pembroke Road that was recently conditionally approved by the Planning Board.

**GOAL 3. PUBLIC SAFETY WORK****a) Opioid/Substance Abuse**

**Status:** The Police Department continues to take an aggressive stance in combatting illegal drug issues facing the City. The Department works closely on this effort with stakeholders in the community and throughout the State to include other police agencies, service providers, City Departments and the court system. The Police Department continues its involvement with the Merrimack County Drug Court Initiative. As part of this initiative, the Department has a member assigned to the Drug Court Team. The Team meets weekly to discuss the progress of individuals that have been assigned to participate in the Drug Court process. The Team regularly evaluates the status of each individual in the program and makes recommendations based upon the individual's performance. The Department conducts curfew checks on each participant that resides in the City of Concord.

During the fall of 2019, the Police Department received a grant award in the amount of \$50,000 through the Law Enforcement Opioid Abuse Reduction Initiative (Project Granite Shield). These funds were utilized by the Department to cover overtime costs associated with conducting illegal drug investigations in the City and surrounding towns. The Department will continue these efforts and regularly assess personnel assignments and initiatives to most effectively address illegal drug usage in the city. During 2020, the Department arrested 195 individuals on illegal drug related charges. Additionally, during the first three months of 2021, another 45 individuals were arrested on illegal drug related charges.

The Department also maintains a prescription drug drop box in the lobby of the police station. This drug drop box allows people to drop off their unused or unwanted prescription medications that otherwise could be available for abuse or unauthorized consumption. During 2020, over 189 pounds of prescription drugs were turned in by members of the community. The Department also continues to participate in the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's National Drug Take Back Days. It should be noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department restricted access to the lobby in mid-March of 2020, and thus, prescription drugs have only infrequently been disposed of in the drop box since that time.

The Police Department also works closely with Riverbend's Choices program in helping individuals suffering from drug and other substance abuse issues to find treatment.

The Fire Department, working within Project FIRST grant guidelines, continues with its goals to:

- Educate both first responders and the public about Substance Use Disorder – specifically Opioid Use Disorder;
- Reduce opioid overdoses and opioid overdose deaths by training people on the use of Naloxone and providing opioid overdose response kits; and
- Collaborate with other entities to enhance the “Hub and Spoke” model to facilitate and assist people in seeking treatment for opioid use disorder.

Grant funding for this program expires in September 2021. The Fire Department is exploring other potential grants and opportunities to sustain opioid/substance abuse intervention/prevention programs.

## **b) Community Policing**

**Status:** Prior to the restrictions put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Police Department was involved in a number of initiatives designed to further its relationship with the community. As part of these initiatives, the Department hosted and participated in several community meetings with multiple organizations throughout the city. The Department also actively stayed involved with the New American community. When the restrictions were put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department shifted to virtual meetings with these community groups.

The Police Department participated in several other programs to help promote community interaction with both children and adults. During 2020, with the assistance of several local businesses, the Department hosted two “Coffee with a Cop” events in the city. These highly successful events offer an opportunity for community members to interact with the City's police officers in a relaxed atmosphere. Officers are available to

answer any questions that residents may have and are able to foster a positive collaborative relationship between the Department and the community. The Department also participated in a Family Winter Fun Day held at Keach Park. This event was sponsored by Waypoint, which promoted families to get out and get together as a community. The Department also participated in several honor parades throughout the community to recognize birthdays, veterans, and other special events that were hindered due to the pandemic. The Department continues to participate with the Concord Safe Communities Coalition of the National Safety Council of New England. This organization monitors issues and concerns facing the Concord community.

The Police Department continues to participate in Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) classes, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in person classes had to be suspended. RAD is a comprehensive self-defense course for women and includes situational awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance, and progresses to the basics of hands-on defense training. The RAD system is dedicated to teaching women defensive concepts and techniques against various types of assault by utilizing easy, effective, and proven self-defense tactics. The system of realistic defense provides women with the knowledge to make an educated decision about resistance.

Due to the unfortunate trend of mass shootings occurring in businesses and schools throughout the country, the Police Department has been offering active shooter training seminars. Since the start of 2020, the Department has participated in five active shooter trainings with over 165 attendees. Four of these trainings were conducted on a virtual platform. The Department also conducted eight safety presentations for local businesses and the New Hampshire Technical Institute, as well as two fraud educational presentations for seniors.

The Police Department continues to successfully utilize its Comfort Dog, Liberty, a two-year old female Labrador retriever. Liberty has been instrumental in interacting with community members and members of the Police Department. She has been deployed to numerous scenes and locations where violent or traumatic events have occurred to help lend relief to those suffering or affected by the incident. Liberty has also engaged those suffering from mental health issues, and has also made appearances at schools, hospitals and other venues. She has participated in many social and community events throughout the city and has a large following of supporters. Liberty has also assisted during interviews of traumatized children at the Merrimack County Advocacy Center. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, Liberty has had to curtail many appearances. However, we are anxious to have her back in the community in the near future.

In December 2019, the Police Department was very fortunate to receive a donation of \$50,000 from an anonymous community member. The donor requested that members of the Police Department identify persons and families in need and make monetary disbursements or use the funds to obtain goods and services for the recipients as appropriate. This mission has been known as *Operation Blue Elf*. *Operation Blue Elf* was a community policing success and continued through 2020.

The Department's Adverse Childhood Experience Response Team (ACERT) launched in October of 2019. This team is made up of a member of the Concord Police Department, a member from Riverbend Community Mental Health, and a member from Merrimack County Human Services. The team deploys to residences where children have been exposed to violence. At the residences, the team meets with the families and assesses

the situation to determine next steps that can be taken for the child, such as support groups, mental health counseling, early childhood education, or child-parent psychotherapy. ACERT made 285 home visits during 2020. However, home visits were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The team continued to follow up with families by phone. The team was able to reinstitute home visits in August, but had to suspend them in December once again. During 2020, the team contacted over 505 families either by phone or in person to assist with services that may be needed. Since the beginning of 2021, ACERT has conducted 175 follow-up calls to families in need of assistance.

The Police Department continued to assist citizens with installing child safety seats into their vehicles. Safety checks were also conducted to ensure that previously installed seats were properly and safely installed.

Police Department staff presented at the IMPACCT (Mastery of Post-Secondary Achievement in College, Careers, and Training) Academy. This group is made up of at-risk kids with disabilities. Presentations covered roles of the police, good decision making, and alcohol and drug prevention.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Police Department has been limited in participating in many of its community-based programs. In an attempt to stay active with the community, numerous officers have participated in birthday and honor parades throughout the city. The Department also participated in a Veteran's Day parade at the Abbott-Downing School.

The Police Department has been working with the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness to assist those that are homeless and trying to find a permanent home. The Department has been actively involved in assisting in cleaning up homeless sites that have been left in disrepair.

The Police Department is committed to participating in these types of initiatives and continuing to foster the relationship between the Department and the community. All officers are encouraged to participate in community engagement activities. The success of the Police Department in providing the safest community possible is dependent upon a cooperative effort between the Department and the community as a whole.

c) **Working with School Districts**

**Status:** The Police Department has three officers assigned as School Resource Officers (SRO). Officers are assigned to Concord High School, Merrimack Valley High School, and Merrimack Valley Middle School. Each of these officers is responsible for the safety and security of the schools' campuses, to act as mentors and educators, to be community policing liaisons, and to be problem solvers. The SRO's are also expected to help guide students through personal, educational, and social pressures that are part of being an adolescent.

During 2020 and the beginning of 2021, the Department was extremely active in all of the schools throughout the City to include both public and private schools. The Department currently has six officers trained in D.A.R.E. The D.A.R.E. Program is designed to teach students at an early age the dangers of drug and alcohol use. This program has been widely successful and appreciated throughout the schools. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic shutting down the schools, several of our D.A.R.E. officers

video recorded their lesson plans, with the help of Concord TV. Some of these lesson plans were played by the schools through their on-line learning platforms. While distance learning is still in place at both school districts, arrangements have been made to carry on with the D.A.R.E. Program remotely when possible.

Since the beginning of 2020, officers participated in “Police Readers” throughout the schools in the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts. Officers went into first and second grade classes where they read the class a book and answered any questions the children might have. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, officers made video recordings of themselves reading books. These videos were then shared with the schools where the videos were played over their on-line learning platforms.

Since the beginning of 2020, members of the Police Department presented two internet safety talks in the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts to help educate students about the dangers of the internet and social media and how to avoid being victimized. Officers provided suggestions to students on how to protect themselves from becoming victims.

The Police Department has assisted the Concord School Board by participating as a member of a task force focused on developing a strategic plan for improving student safety and wellbeing. This task force involves a variety of stakeholders from within the Concord community, and is facilitated by Gerri King, Ph.D., a nationally recognized organizational facilitator.

The Fire Department continues its relationship with the Concord High School CRTC Emergency Services Program. Operations are slowly returning to pre-COVID status. This continues to be the largest of the six programs being run in the state, with 26 students currently enrolled. The program is on schedule to have six students achieve Emergency Medical Technician credentials, and six students to achieve Firefighter I certification. The Concord Fire Department maintains a close relationship with the students in the program, with several staff members providing mentorship and serving as instructors. The program periodically utilizes the Fire Department training grounds for realistic training opportunities. Three of the current students are pursuing degrees in Fire Science at Lakes Region Community College, with one of the students being accepted into a live-in program at a Lakes Region fire department.

In coordination with the Capital Area Public Health Network, Concord Fire Department personnel supported the vaccination of area School District personnel.

d) **Recruitment**

**Status:** During calendar year 2020 and through the beginning of 2021, the Police Department has aggressively worked to recruit staff. Staffing and training continues to be one of the Department’s main priorities and will remain so until our agency stabilizes our work force.

During 2020, the Police Department hired 16 new police officers; and during the first three months of 2021, the Department hired three new police officers. Currently, the Department has four officers in field training, and three officers awaiting the start of the next Police Academy in April 2021. One additional new officer, with past law enforcement experience, will begin field training during April 2021 as well. The

remaining new officers hired since the beginning of 2020 have completed their training and are now working in the Patrol Division.

All of the above-mentioned police officer candidates were the result of targeted recruitments. Department staff put in countless hours to identify, meet, and recruit these candidates one on one. We worked to educate them on our hiring process and the transition to become a police officer.

The Department currently has three vacant police officer positions, and is continuing its recruitment efforts to fill the remaining vacancies.

At the beginning of 2020, the Police Department had three vacancies for police dispatchers. A recruitment process took place during the first quarter of 2020 and we were able to hire two new dispatchers on May 17, 2020. One of these dispatchers resigned shortly after taking the position. The Department hired one new dispatcher who began working at the end of August and an additional dispatcher began employment with the City at the beginning of November. This new dispatcher also resigned shortly after taking the position. The Department will be hiring a new dispatcher at the beginning of April 2021, which will fully staff all dispatch positions.

It is critically important to understand that in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our fellow police agencies have postponed their hiring and recruitments. The Concord Police Department has not stopped efforts with regards to recruitment or hiring. We have found creative ways to connect with applicants and conduct interviews in a responsible and safe manner. We have continued to push forward despite these challenging times. Overall, the Department has hired 22 new employees since the beginning of 2020, which includes 16 new police officers, four dispatchers, one records technician, and one fleet mechanic.

The Fire Department is experiencing challenges with the recruitment of Firefighter Paramedics. There were no qualified applicants during the last recruitment process.

#### **GOAL 4. PUBLIC INFORMATION, MARKETING, AND COMMUNICATIONS**

##### **a) Overall Economic Development**

**Status:** The City's Economic Development Director continues to follow up with potential leads. Concord, like much of the country, is facing a significant labor shortage and the Economic Development Director has worked with community partners to attempt to tackle this challenge for our local businesses.

In 2020, the City worked with the community's restauranters to allow for flexibility during the COVID-19 re-opening. Efforts included temporarily waiving requirements for site plan compliance for parking spaces used for outdoor dining in private parking lots, and expanded permitting for outdoor dining on public sidewalks and in public parking spaces. At its October 2020 meeting, City Council authorized the expenditure of \$15,000 to provide financial relief for restaurants in Concord as they prepared themselves for the upcoming winter season in the pandemic. It is expected that City Council will be asked to revisit the expanded outdoor dining program in 2021.

The City, via the Revolving Loan Fund Program, partnered with Provident Bank and the Capital Regional Development Council on a \$4.1 million financing package to

support the construction of a new corporate headquarters for Eastern Analytical, Inc., a Concord-based environmental testing agency and laboratory, to be relocated to 51 Antrim Avenue in the Airport Industrial Park. This undeveloped property has been vacant since the development of the Henniker Street and Antrim Avenue project, approximately 15 years ago. The City's share of the financing package was \$287,000. The project has tangible economic development and financial benefits for the City. Specifically, it will retain a Concord-based employer which has been located in the City for 25 years. The project also retains 32 full-time jobs and will spur the creation of another 3-4 full-time positions in the near future. Lastly, property tax revenues from the new development will be approximately \$43,000-\$55,000 annually. The project began construction in the fall of 2020.

In February 2021, as part of an overall reorganization of the City's economic development activities, the City Council authorized the creation of a Local Government Management Fellowship, in partnership with the International City/County Management Association, to provide much-needed support for a variety of City and economic development projects, and to assist with staff succession planning. After conducting several interviews with candidates from around the country, the City selected a Fellow in March with start date in July.

b) **Concord TV**

**Status:** The City of Concord works closely with Concord TV on a variety of initiatives including informational videos, public service announcements, event promotion and coverage, and monthly podcasts. Though the pandemic derailed some plans and events in 2020, Concord TV partnered with City staff to safely produce several informational videos on a variety of topics, including accessing City buildings, online City payments and services, water safety, trail etiquette, and more.

The Fire Department continues to collaborate with Concord TV. Plans are underway to livestream its upcoming promotional ceremony due to limits on in-person attendance due to COVID.

c) **Concord / Merrimack Valley School District**

**Status:** The City is working with the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts to enhance their presence on the City website. The City and School Districts are also exploring other ways to collaborate.

d) **General City Communications: SeeClickFix**

The City transitioned from its current Citizen Request Tracker module to SeeClickFix in late 2020. This new reporting tool launched in January 2021. The City is partnering with SeeClickFix to make it easier than ever for the community to report a concern using either the online request portal or the MyConcordNH app, available on iPhone and Android phones. The MyConcordNH app also features important City services and information, making it easier to stay informed.

## GOAL 5. WORKING WITH STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

### a) Transportation with NHDOT

**Status:** Mayor Bouley announced that he was going to empanel a committee of citizens to review the I-93 widening project. Due to COVID-19, this initiative has been delayed.

### b) Department of Justice / Garages

**Status:** The General Court of New Hampshire, in coordination with the NH Department of Administrative Services, sought proposals for the preliminary study of constructing a new office building to house the New Hampshire Department of Justice, certain Legislative space, and a new parking garage. The work was scheduled to be undertaken in the fall of 2019 and deliverables completed by calendar year end. The City now understands that this project has been tabled in light of the anticipated financial impact on the State from the COVID-19 shutdown.

### c) Stickney Avenue

**Status:** On June 30, 2020, the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) informed the City that it was listing the property for sale. In accordance with RSA 4:39-c:1, the City has a right of first refusal to acquire the property.

On October 21, 2020, the NHDOT notified the City that its bid process had concluded and that one offer to purchase the property, in the amount of \$1 million, was received. The sole bidder indicated that it would redevelop the property for “residential” purposes, but provided no specific details to the NHDOT or the City.

In its October 21, 2020 notice, the State also inquired as to whether the City would have interest in matching the bidder’s offer.

On December 14, 2020, the City Council approved Resolution #9336, which authorized the City Manager to enter into negotiations with the NHDOT concerning a Purchase and Sales Agreement to acquire the former NHDOT Maintenance Facility located at 11 Stickney Avenue in accordance with RSA 4:36-c:1. The NHDOT, at their request, took the initial lead on drafting the Purchase and Sales Agreement. The initial draft was received on February 15, 2021. Negotiations are ongoing.

## GOAL 6. ENHANCED COMMUNITY EVENTS/ARTS

### a) Promote Community Events with Community Partners

**Status:** Unfortunately, the COVID-19 state of emergency has led to the cancelation or postponement of many special events in our community. However, Winterfest was able to be held in February with ice sculptures, music and dance performances.

The Fire Department continues to partner with the State, the National Guard, and the Capital Area Public Health Network to deliver COVID vaccines. To date, Fire Department personnel have administered or assisted with administration of over 50,000 vaccinations. They also participated in a closed point of distribution where New Americans and under-represented communities were vaccinated, as well as a closed point of distribution for staff from area school districts.

## GOAL 7. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

### a) Form Based Code

**Status:** Community Development staff and City legal counsel are meeting regularly to ensure that the document, which will have significant consequences for the future of our community, has the essential fundamentals to ensure compliance and defensibility. Staff hopes to have Phase I before City Council later this year.

### b) Street Light Re-lamping

**Status:** It is anticipated that the City's LED Street Light Re-lamping Project will be completed in 2021. Unitil received approval from the Public Utilities Commission to expand their on-bill financing program to accommodate a higher amount than currently allowed for the City of Concord. The City Council held a public hearing and approved the LED Street Light Re-lamping Project at its January 2021 meeting. The City received two proposals for this project, neither of which fully complied with the RFP. As a result, a revised RFP was issued on March 23, 2021. The project is still slated for completion in calendar year 2021.

### c) Renewable Energy & Conservation

**Status:** At its April 13, 2020 meeting, the City Council approved a recommendation from City Administration to award a bid for a small scale, "behind the meter" facility located at the Hall Street Wastewater Treatment Facility, in the front of the parcel. The City is projected to save up to \$100,000 over the life of the project (slightly less if the system has to export some of the generation due to added costs).

ReVision energy provided the City with a refreshed proposal. Review by the Selection Committee and the City's consultant concluded that the proposal, while it would show support for renewable energy, ultimately was not economically beneficial as presented. Also, there is the risk that electric costs may not escalate as modelled and the City could end up in the red on this project, negatively impacting sewer utility rate payers. The Selection Committee referred the proposal to the City Council for its direction and decision at the July 2020 Council meeting. ReVision Energy further revised its proposal, which was economically beneficial, and City Council voted to move forward with the contract award. Contract negotiations are ongoing.

### d) Recycling

**Status:** The General Services Department worked with property management firms and condominium associations to address significant contamination in the multi-family recycling stream, making changes to programs as needed. Some multi-family properties have suspended recycling programs as a means by which to address persistent contamination. Others have opted for dumpster modifications that prevent large items from being deposited in the dumpsters.

## GOAL 8. RECREATION AND PARKS

### a) Athletic Fields

**Status:** The Parks and Recreation Department coordinates the reservations and maintenance of the City's parks and athletic fields. During the course of the year the following fields are maintained and reserved for numerous user groups: four baseball fields, five lacrosse fields, seven softball fields, two flag football fields, three football fields, one field hockey field, and 19 soccer fields.

Parks and Recreation staff has begun to work with the three high schools, and youth and adult leagues, to ensure a successful spring 2021 season. As of the end of March 2021, all regular spring sports will be held, following all State COVID guidelines.

### b) Citywide Community Center

The Citywide Community Center has remained open during the pandemic, while following all COVID guidelines. The Parks and Recreation Department offered summer camps during June, July and August 2020, and continued offering programs and classes during the fall and winter of 2020/2021. Department staff managed to rearrange class times to ensure good cleaning of the facility. Starting in early February 2021, the Department has seen a steady increase in participation in all program age groups, from youth to adult programs. Registered participant levels are already at pre-COVID numbers for programs starting in late April and May 2021.

### c) Terrill Park

**Status:** The new Master Plan for Terrill Park has been approved and is fully permitted. Phase 1 of the project, completed in the fall of 2020, includes a new upper parking lot, a new dog park, the paved Merrimack River Greenway Trail, and related site improvements. Phase 1 was funded in partnership with the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail, a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the City of Concord. The new dog park at Terrill Park is maintained by volunteers from the Pope Memorial SPCA.

### d) Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT)

**Status:** The City is engaged in ongoing discussions with property owners, stakeholders, and potential partners concerning the possible acquisition of private property to support future development of the MRGT. The Parks and Recreation Department is working on the next phase of this project, which will bring the trail from Loudon Road south to the wetland north of Phase 1 of Terrill Park.

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. Pan Am Systems, owner of the rail line, provided a letter of support for the City's application.

### e) City Trail System

**Status:** As the Governor's State of Emergency was implemented, there was a significant uptick in trail usage leading to some concerns from the general public about parking and lack of social distancing. The Conservation Commission put out messaging to

advise the community of the availability of other less popular trails as alternatives. Staff worked with Concord TV to produce a trail etiquette video and a video about outdoor recreation during COVID-19.

The Parking Committee also reviewed this matter and recommended the installation of emergency No Parking signs along an impacted section of Long Pond Road adjacent to the Swope Trail.

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

**Status:** 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 2019, the City retained a 1.53-acre parcel with approximately 500 feet of frontage on the Contoocook River for the future riverfront park.

The current park concept plan was commissioned by the City in 2015 and had an estimated total cost of \$950,000. The concept included full reconstruction and expansion of the Canal Street Public Parking Lot. Adjusting for inflation, the estimated total cost of the project is \$1.35 million. It is anticipated that the total cost of the park will be supported by the Penacook Village Tax Increment Finance (PVTIF) District, recreational impact fees, and grants. The Parking Fund may also support reconstruction and expansion of the Canal Street Municipal Parking Lot, which is included in the project scope. The project was included in the FY 2021 Capital Improvement Program as CIP #567. Specifically, CIP #567 was an “asterisked” project; meaning that it was not appropriated as part of the FY 2021 budget adoption process, as the project requires amendments to the PVTIF District Development Program and Financing Plan. On February 8, 2021, proposed amendments to the PVTIF District were submitted to the City Council for CIP #567, as well as other projects. A public hearing was held on March 8, 2021, and a final vote is scheduled for April 12, 2021. No appropriations are being requested for design or construction of the park at this time. However, requests for design may be brought forward in the FY 2022 Capital Improvement Plan.

## **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 2. ENHANCED NEIGHBORHOOD STREET PROGRAMS**

**Status:** The FY 2021 Paving Project went out to bid on December 18, 2020 and was within budget. GMI Asphalt was the low bidder and will be the contractor for this summer’s project. The tentative start date is April 1, 2021, weather dependent.