

*Planning is bringing the future  
into the present so you can do  
something about it now.*

- Alan Lakein

# Town of Concord Vermont Municipal Plan

*Adopted Date*

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# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	4
1.1 Concord's Planning Process	
1.2 Advantages of Planning	
<b>2. History and Demographic Profile</b> .....	6
<b>3. Land Use</b> .....	10
3.1 Growth	
3.2 Land Use Trends	
3.3 Village Growth and Village Centers	
3.4 Rural Lands	
3.5 Elevation and Elevation Considerations	
3.6 Zoning	
3.7 An Evaluation of Concord’s Open Space Conservation Strategies	
3.7.1 Large Lot Zoning	
3.7.2 Conservation Easements and Restrictions	
3.7.3 Overlay Zoning	
3.7.4 Planned Unit Development	
3.7.5 Conservation Commission	
3.7.6 Acquisition of Conservation Lands	
3.7.7 Open Space Plans	
3.7.8 Subdivision Regulations	
<b>4. Housing</b> .....	22
4.1 Senior Housing	
4.2 Affordable Housing in Concord	
4.3 Affordable Housing Options in Concord	
<b>5. Economic Development</b> .....	28
5.1 Overview	
5.2 Commercial and Industrial Uses	
5.3 Agriculture and Silviculture	
<b>6. Utilities &amp; Facilities</b> .....	35
6.1 Needs	
6.2 Town Hall	
6.3 Emergency Services	
6.4 Emergency Planning	
6.5 Town Clerk’s Office and Town Municipal Building	
6.6 Town Garage	
6.7 Cemeteries	
6.8 Recreation	
6.9 Water Supplies	
6.10 Sewage Disposal	
6.11 Solid Waste Disposal	
6.12 Public Safety	

6.13 Health Services	
6.14 Postal Service	
6.15 Storm Drainage	
6.16 Telecommunications	
6.17 Capital Budgeting and Planning	
<b>7. Recreation</b>	44
7.1 Bodies of Water	
7.2 Clubs	
7.3 Campgrounds	
<b>8. Preservation</b>	46
8.1 Water Supplies	
8.2 Open Land	
8.3 Historic Features	
8.4 Natural and Scenic Areas	
<b>9. Education</b>	49
9.1 Projected Population and School Costs	
9.2 Concord School System Quandary	
9.3 Technical and Adult Education	
9.4 Childcare	
<b>10. Energy</b>	55
10.1 Electricity	
10.2 Transportation and Energy	
10.3 Development Patterns	
<b>11. Transportation</b>	60
11.1 Roadways	
11.2 Road Maintenance	
11.3 Scenic Roads	
11.4 Speed Limits	
11.5 Recreation Uses	
11.6 Other Transportation Services	
11.7 Transportation Advisory Committee	
11.8 State Highways	
<b>12. Flood Resilience</b>	64
12.1 Introduction	
12.2 Existing Conditions	
12.3 Planning Considerations	
<b>13. Adjacent Towns</b>	70
<b>14. Implementation</b>	74

**Maps:**

- Base Map
- Land Cover Map
- Natural Resource Constraints Map
- River Corridor Map
- Zoning District Map
- Proposed Village Center Map



Picturesque View of Shadow Lake

## **Planning Commission**

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Linda Hartwell, Board Secretary

Harold Lunnie, Selectboard Representative

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The updated Concord Municipal Plan required the help of many individuals who attended meetings and completed surveys to express their opinions concerning the overall direction and issues facing the Town of Concord.

*Thank you everyone for your input.*



## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Concord's Planning Process**

The Concord Selectboard has adopted this Municipal Plan based upon work by the Concord Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is comprised of volunteers appointed by the Selectboard. The development of the plan included surveys, with input from residents, forums held with state and local experts and community members with significant knowledge and experience. We have made every attempt to understand the issues and values that are most important to this community, and to develop policies and strategies that best serve the interests of our community.

The Municipal Plan is Concord's principal policy statement regarding development, conservation, and related public investments. It identifies what is important to the town, including our enduring policies as well as new goals and directions, and the plan will guide the community in the future.

Here in Concord, our first Municipal Plan was created and adopted in 1992, and was updated and readopted in 2009.

In the spring of 2014, the town began the process of updating the Municipal Plan by creating and distributing a survey to town residents. Hard copies of the survey were distributed at Town Meeting, and a link to the online survey was made available on the town website. A total of 168 responses were received, and 98% of respondents named Concord as their primary place of residence.

The survey was used to determine what residents viewed as the top planning priorities for Concord. Respondents to the survey identified:

- Roads and Bridges
- Quality of Education for Grades Pre K- 8
- Quality of Education for Grades 9-12
- High Speed Internet
- Business Growth

as the top five priorities for planning in Concord. Results of the 2014 survey are incorporated throughout this document, and a complete report on the survey results are posted on the Town’s website and available at the Town Clerk’s office.

In addition to updating information in each of the 11 sections of the Plan, a new section, “Flood Resilience,” was added in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4382.

## **1.2 Advantages of Planning**

The advantages of planning for Concord are myriad. They include, but are not limited to:

- The ability to update zoning laws.
- The ability to apply for grant monies, many of which are unavailable without an approved Municipal Plan.
- The ability for the town to be involved in Act 250 hearings.
- The ability for the townspeople to chart their own course and define what Concord is, and what we wish Concord to be.

## 2. History and Demographic Profile

The Town of Concord was molded by the environment. Rivers and mountains, floods, and storms dictated the growth patterns and shaped industry.

The lands now known as Concord were first part of a 20,000 acre New York grant, under the name of Kersborough, in the County of Gloucester, granted to Archibald Hamilton and Company, October 13, 1770. In 1777, the General Convention of Vermont declared themselves independent, and in 1779 divided the state into two counties, and each county into two shires. Concord lands were then within the limits of Cumberland County, with Newbury as the shire. The rights of the Town of Concord were given by the legislature in 1780. In 1781 the town, consisting of about 47 square miles, was chartered to Reuben Jones and 64 others. In 1784 the first meeting of the proprietors was held at the inn of Jehial Webb in Rockingham, at which a committee was chosen to “view ye lands in Concord, and if they find a convenient place for a town plot, to lay out a street, or streets, five rods wide, and long enough to lay out fifty acre to each right, fronting fifty rods on one of said streets, said plot to be as neigh ye middle of the said township as ye land will permit.”

The early settlers came from the southern part of Vermont, from New Hampshire, and from the Royalston and Westboro region of Massachusetts. The first settlement was made in 1788 by Joseph Ball on the Connecticut River meadows, a triangle bounded by the Connecticut River, Hall’s Brook, and Mink Brook. (This area has been under the waters of the Moore Reservoir since 1957.)

Joseph Ball built the first grist mill in town, around 1794, on Hall’s Brook. Joseph Morse also came in 1788, cleared some land, then left to spend the winter in Littleton. The Balls stayed through the winter in their shanty made on crotches stuck in the ground for posts. The son, John, born in 1789, was the first child born in Concord. Later the same year, the first girl was born to Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Lewis and named Sarah. Daniel Gregory came in 1789 from Massachusetts with his wife and year-old son, making the journey in six weeks. He built the first frame house in town in the Connecticut River meadows.

The U.S. Census in 1790 lists Concord, Orange County, as having 12 heads of family, and the 1800 Census shows 52 heads of family. The first town meeting was held at the home of Joseph Morse, October 5, 1794, when Captain Samuel Wetherbee was chosen clerk, and Samuel Hudson was chosen collector.

A new settlement was established on the Hill around 1796, in the area now known as Concord Corners. This was intended to be the business center with the stores, blacksmith shop, tavern, school, lawyer, physician, and hotel. The First Congregational Church was here, as was the first normal school for the training of teachers. As the population increased, the settlers spread out towards Royalston Corner, Texas district, East Concord, North Concord, and Miles Pond. In 1838, John D. Chase built a house in what was known as West Concord, now Concord Village. This area became the business center. “The Union Block” was destroyed by a fire, which started on October

19, 1958, forcing relocation of the town offices, businesses, and fifteen persons living in apartments.

North Concord was part of a tract of land granted in 1791 as Thomas Pearsall's Gore. The early settlement was on the Moose River below the Victory town line. In 1803, the Vermont legislature incorporated the land into a town and named it Bradley Vale in honor of Stephen Row Bradley, Vermont's U.S. Senator. In 1856, Bradley Vale was divided between Victory and Concord and renamed North Concord.



**The East Concord Store**

In 1871 Russell Brothers owned a large sawmill in East Concord, and the East Concord rail depot was built. There may have been a settlement in the area known as Tinkerville, but no records remain. There is a record of Capt. F.C. Harrington's exploration of the underground cavern known as Miles Cave on the back of Miles Mountain in 1871. In 1887, there were several mills in Miles Pond and about a dozen dwellings.

In 1901, the Holiday Herald, West Concord, Vermont, noted that "In the

town of Concord, there are five post offices, five churches, three railroad stations, twenty-six manufacturers, mechanics and artisans, fourteen merchants, two physicians, two lawyers, eight secret societies and one not secret, and a public library of 800 volumes." On June 10, 1904, the name of the village was changed from West Concord to Concord Village.

While the town was supported by numerous farm operations in 1880, it was Concord's industrial development that accounted for a peak in Concord's population, which Census figures placed at 1,612 residents. Logging operations in Concord and surrounding communities supplied Concord's industries with huge quantities of saw logs, which were milled



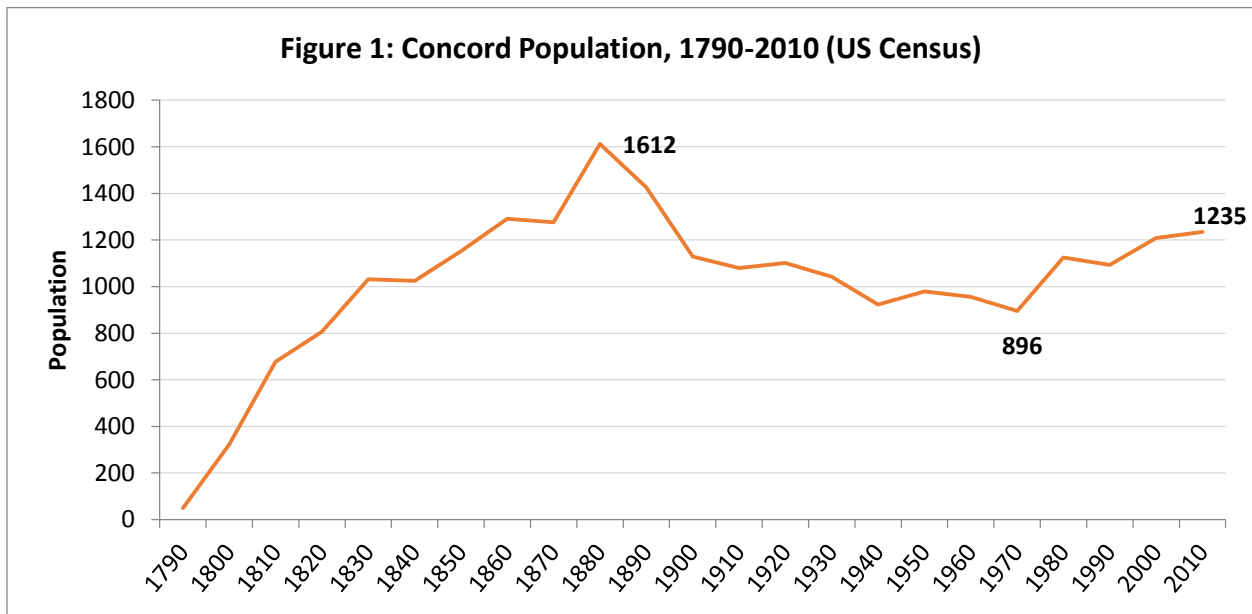
**Concord Village**



into dimensional lumber for use in building construction and other product production. The railroad had created a means to ship Concord's wood and dairy products to the state's larger industrial towns. The town's rivers and streams supplied most of the power that was needed for the town's industries. Many businesses were established during this period to provide services and goods that were in demand by the industries and by the people that lived and worked in Concord's villages. By 1910, census figures show the population had fallen to 1,080. This drop may have been related to the closure of Concord's many saw mills around the turn of the century. The 1927 flood wiped out many of the businesses that remained along the river.

By 1937 the largest business in Concord was the New England Creamery. The town's 40 dairy farms supported the creamery operation. By this time most of the town's original industries and service businesses had closed.

In 1930, the population of Concord was 1,043, with 353 residents in Concord Village. In 1970, U.S. Census figures placed Concord's population at 896 residents. By 1980, census figures show the population had increased to 1,125, but 1990 figures show a population of only 1,093. Since 1990, Concord has experienced a modest growth in population, with the 2010 Census showing 1,235 residents. In 2012, the US Census' American Community Survey population estimate for Concord was 1,266.



The State of Vermont has provided population projections through the year 2030, looking at two scenarios, “A” and “B”. They did these alternate projections to account for the drop in growth that was due to the nationwide economic downturn from 2000 to 2010. The projection “A” was based on the net migration trends of the 1990s, while projection “B” used the migration rates of the 2000s. Both projections indicate a substantial decrease in population of school age children and an increase in those over the age of 50.

<b>Figure 2 Essex County Population Projections by Age, 2010-2030</b>			
<b>Ages</b>	<b>Census 2010</b>	<b>2030 Projection A</b>	<b>2030 Projection B</b>
<5	254	187	111
5 to 19	1064	737	501
20 to 34	803	650	470
35 to 49	1304	1011	834
50 to 64	1661	1011	1293
65 to 74	702	999	1272
75 and older	518	894	999

Source: Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development, August 2013



### 3. Land Use

By the late 1800's, five distinct villages had been established within Concord's borders: North Concord, Miles Pond, East Concord, Concord Corners, and West Concord. The latter, which is comprised of the area from Concord Village west to the Kirby town line, is known as “Concord.” In addition to these five villages, there is also Shadow Lake. Each village has its own distinct characteristics.

Over the years, the villages that make up Concord have seen many changes in the number of local industries, commercial establishments, local farms, woodland and rural agriculture. The town no longer has an industrial base, and very few acres of the town's 28,100 acres of land are currently being farmed. The shift away from agriculture and industry in Concord in the past seventy years is significant. However, 90.47% of Concord’s land cover remains forested, and logging within the town's wooded areas still represents an important part in the town's economic structure. Approximately one third of the woodlands used for silviculture are owned and managed by an individually owned logging operator. Some of the cut-over tracts are being subdivided and sold as building lots.

**Figure 3: Concord Properties by Category, 2013**

	# parcels
Residential Properties with less than six acres of land	243
Residential properties with more than six acres of land	182
Mobile home unlanded	38
Mobile homes, landed	91
Seasonal properties with less than six acres of land	123
Seasonal properties with more than six acres of land	64
Commercial	21
Apartment buildings with more than 4 units	1
Electric utilities	6
Farm	4
Woodland	18
Misc. (included undeveloped land not forested)	223

**Source:** Vermont Dept. of Taxes, “Municipal Listed Values and Equalized Values by Category, 2013”

#### 3.1 Growth

Today, the town currently supports and maintains a small commercial base which is scattered throughout town and largely located on residential properties. A report of Concord's real estate valuations in 2013 shows that 187 properties were classified as “seasonal,” down from 191 in 2009, the time of the last Municipal Plan. This likely reflects conversion of vacation, or seasonal, homes to year-round occupation. The total number of year-round residential properties (not including mobile homes and seasonal properties) increased from 410 to 425 since the time of the last Municipal Plan (See Figure 3). Concord’s current development incorporates a mixture of residential, seasonal, and commercial areas surrounded by rivers and streams, mountains, and hillsides scattered throughout the five village areas that make up the Town of Concord.

### **3.2 Land Use Trends**

The Town of Concord has not yet felt major development pressures, which has allowed the town to focus on planning for possible future development. However, Concord is a major transportation route between St. Johnsbury, VT, New Hampshire, and Maine, making the Town very attractive for residential, commercial, and second-home buyers. Although growth in population and housing has been modest in the last 10 years in Concord, Essex County as a whole actually lost population from 2000 to 2010. Concord's development pressure may continue to grow due to the Burke Mountain ski resort expansion, as well as continued development in Littleton, NH. Although all of the Burke Mountain development that was anticipated at the time of the 2009 Municipal Plan has not materialized, the use of the mountain for bike trails has increased and has been a tourism draw. The current owner of the Burke Mountain ski area has plans for significant expansion, and recently broke ground on a 116-unit slope-side resort and conference center. The hotel complex is expected to open in December of 2015, and will include a restaurant, meeting facilities and a ski shop. It is anticipated that additional commercial development will occur in the Village of East Burke and the Town of Lyndonville, with increased demands on the services of those towns and the roads that connect into and out of the Burke Mountain area. Concord should anticipate some secondary development due to the expanding tourism market and second-home market of the Burke area. A rise in vacation properties in Burke, and subsequently the property values, may result in increased development in Concord to meet the housing needs of those employed at the expanded ski resort and other businesses.

Concord is also experiencing increased development around the Miles Pond and Shadow Lake areas with increased upgrades to existing properties and conversion of single owner seasonal properties to year-round residential and rental properties.

Because of this forecasted increase in development pressure, the Town of Concord should look to guide the development to appropriate areas that will maintain the character of Concord, foster economic development, maintain a mixture of uses in the village areas, and protect local natural resources.

The Town of Concord welcomes an increase in development. The Town has experienced an increase in small business growth, but attracting larger commercial or industrial development has been difficult. The Town recognizes there is significant potential to build upon the local tourism industry as Burke Mountain expands and other recreational activities such as camping, swimming, boating, hunting, fishing, ATV riding, and snowmobiling increase within our borders.

### **3.3 Village Growth and Village Centers**

Facing this new growth, the revision of the 2009 Municipal Plan yielded several goals for the Town of Concord. These goals continue to be relevant. Primarily, the town believes it is important to concentrate growth in the village areas throughout the town. The villages have a significant amount of development potential, which may ultimately help to lessen the tax burden on residents.

Concord’s villages should maintain their traditional design through small-lot sizes, mixed uses, pedestrian elements (such as sidewalks and cross walks), and neighborhood green spaces. Adaptive reuse is encouraged in order to revitalize neglected and under-utilized properties before adding on to existing neighborhoods. The villages should also see the commercial sections of their main streets become popular public gathering areas with additional shops, restaurants, and service businesses. As the villages grow, areas for new residential blocks and streets should be designated to attract development that will fit in with design of existing neighborhoods. The town would like the villages of North Concord, East Concord, and Concord Corners to maintain and/or develop its mixture of uses (mostly residential and/or small businesses), encouraging commercial and industrial development in appropriate locations along Route 2, while avoiding “strip” commercial development – that is, linear commercial development along highways with limited pedestrian access and lack of connection to other land uses. The Town would like to accommodate new rural and tourism-oriented businesses throughout, without sacrificing the rural landscape and scenic views that attract both new residents and tourists.

The 2014 Survey of residents asked respondents to rate the level of importance of various planning issues in Concord Village. The top five by level of importance were “Promoting Business in Concord Village,” “Reducing Vehicular Speeds,” “Encouraging Preservation and Reuse of Historic Structures,” “Ensuring Walkability,” and “Ensuring Affordability of Housing.”

An area of Concord village encompassing the central civic uses has been identified that may be appropriate for Village Center designation by the State (See “Proposed Village Center” map in appendix). The Planning Commission has also identified an adjacent area to the north and west of the identified “village center” area, extending along Route 2 as far as Barney’s convenience store, that would be appropriate for additional mixed commercial and higher-density residential development. The main obstacle to such development is the lack of off-site water and sewer service.

### 3.4 Rural Lands

There is a mixture of agricultural and woodland corridors, large-to-small lot residential areas, recreation land, wetland areas, open space, forested areas, two recreational bodies of water and a



**The view from Shadow Lake Road**

Road, Streeter Road, Goudreault Hill, the Miles Mountain ridge, the Shadow Lake area, the Miles Pond area], significant forest areas, and important wildlife habitats. As the town grows, these sensitive areas should not end up in isolated pockets due to residential sprawl, but rather be maintained in corridors that complement the local landscape, encourage connectivity to the villages, and provide significant recreation opportunities.

few commercial enterprises throughout the town. The town would like to maintain the sense of rural open and woodland space. To accomplish this, residential development and other uses can continue to be allowed but encouraged to have the least impact on the surrounding landscape. To maintain natural, scenic, and environmentally sensitive areas, the development permitting process should address these elements. Some of these sensitive areas identified by residents include Miles Pond, Shadow Lake, the Moose River and its floodways, traditional farming areas, prominent local hills, scenic viewsheds [Royalston Corner

As Concord was molded by the environment, now the town's future growth will affect the environment. Overall the future vision of the Town of Concord includes bustling village centers surrounded by a scenic rural landscape with all the elements identified in this plan cooperatively working together to welcome economic development and accommodate new growth that protects our natural resources, endorses new technology, and ensures a rich quality of life without changing the character of the Town.

### 3.5 Elevation Considerations

Traditionally, the town's steep slopes and rolling terrains have limited Concord's residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural expansion. Concord's landscape is dominated by the Miles Mountain range, which has the town's highest elevations at 2,432 feet. This undeveloped area is composed of steep forested slopes which drain into a significant watershed area that encompasses many tributaries and wetland areas in Concord and in neighboring towns. This area includes Victory Bog. Goudreault Hill at 2,012 feet, has gentler slopes which guide the area's rain and snow runoff into natural watershed collection areas, including Miles Pond and the Moose River. Shadow Lake is a collection area for Shaw Mountain, 1,800 feet, and surrounding hills. East Concord's elevations average between 800 and 1,100 feet. These lands are made up of rolling hills and some

fairly level areas. Its watershed includes the Connecticut River. Western Concord's lowlands are separated by the Moose River, elevation 800 feet. The higher elevations in western Concord, averaging 1,100 feet in elevation, are predominantly rolling hills that melt into the town's only meadow lands. The higher elevations of North Concord are gentle rolling hills that drain into meadow lands on the Moose River. The town's highlands have provided Concord's residents and wildlife with a number of water supplies. At the same time, multiple elevation changes within the town's lowlands tend to restrict the area's development and agricultural potential.

The town's development districts, or corridors, should be designed to make the best use of these moderately sloped areas.

### **3.6 Zoning**

Concord's Zoning Bylaws were originally adopted on November 15, 1973 and amended in 1975, 1978, 1987, 1988, 1994, and 2012.

In 2011 the Concord Planning Commission held public work sessions to explore how the Town's zoning could be updated to protect Concord's rural and scenic areas, while encouraging and directing growth to nodes which were historically the centers of development activity in the Town. Several ideas were explored at the work sessions, which were summarized in a report dated July 25, 2011. Recommendations that emerged were:

- the creation of a conservation overlay zone;
- the establishment of shoreland and riparian buffer zones;
- the use of planned unit developments to preserve open space through clustering of lots;
- design standards that would minimize the visual impact of new development;
- downzoning (reducing the permitted density) of land in the Goudreau Hill and Streeter Road areas to preserve scenic viewsheds;
- Revising of lot width requirements and setbacks in the Low Density district so as to better achieve the stated land use objectives of this district;
- Village Center Designation as a means to encourage revitalization of business properties.

Although the zoning bylaws, as revised in 2012, do not establish the lakeshore buffers recommended in the 2011 Land Use Investigation report, the State Shoreland Protection Act passed in 2014 now requires a state permit for any development within 250 feet of lakes greater than 10 acres in size. Shadow Lake, Miles Pond and the Moore Reservoir in Concord are all greater than 10 acres and any development, including clearing, within 250 feet of their shores is subject to the State permit standards. A 100-foot setback from the mean water level is generally

required for new development, and impervious coverage is generally restricted to 20% and clearing is generally restricted to 40% of the lot area. Existing lakeshore development is grandfathered, although a state permit would be required if any expansion was proposed. If a Town's ordinance standards meet the level required, the Town is permitted to seek delegation of the State Shoreland Permit Program from the State.

The current bylaws establish the following districts:

Rural Lands (RL)- The objective of this district includes land generally characterized by poor access, poor soil, steep topographic conditions and remoteness from existing concentrated settlement which would be unduly expensive to serve with public utilities and services. Primary uses in this category should be forestry and other non-intensive uses such as agriculture.

Low Density (LD)- The objective of these areas are designed to maintain an open quality through a large part of the more developable parts of Concord by requiring a five acre minimum lot size. Five acres will be needed in this district to support sewage disposal and water needs of a proposed use.

Medium Density (MD)- The objective of this district is focused upon the areas of Concord that are in close proximity to existing areas of settlement, which have good road and utility access. Lots in this district may require off-lot water and/or sewage service. Lot requirements are designed to encourage growth in these areas in close proximity to the town's village centers.

High Density (HD)- The objective of these districts represent the town's pre-existing village centers, which are served by adequate road and utility services. All pre-existing development in these districts is currently served by individually owned water and sewage systems. Future development or redevelopment within these districts shall be limited to the ability of the district's soils and natural water resources to support the proposed development.

Lakeshore (LAKE)- The objective of this district surrounding Shadow Lake and Miles Pond is designed to provide adequate setback from the seasonal high water mark of the water bodies to protect them from water pollution and help protect the visual qualities of the shoreline. It is noted that the current district regulations do not specifically refer to a setback from mean water level, although 35 feet is the required front, side and rear setback. However, the 2014 State Shoreland Protection Act establishes a 100-foot setback from the mean water level, as previously noted.

High density development is restricted to the village areas of Concord, North Concord and East Concord. These areas are generally served by paved and/or dirt roads. Lot sizes and setbacks are set for each zone.

Floodway limits are also incorporated into the town's zoning bylaws, as is site plan review to ensure a site and its soils can support the proposed development. Under Concord's bylaws no structure or site may be used or occupied until a Certificate of Compliance is issued by the Administrative Officer. These bylaws tend to restrict residential and commercial development to areas within the community which are served by town roads and utilities. The current bylaws do



not address or restrict development within wetlands, along stream beds, or in areas where the topography tends to create potential erosion and water pollution conditions. Although these zones have been adequate over the past several years, Concord needs to re-evaluate the current zoning bylaws in light of future development and current land use trends.

### **3.7 An Evaluation of Concord’s Open Space Conservation Strategies**

The Town of Concord is a visual landscape of open spaces, wooded hillsides, and mountains with scenic vistas within its borders. While there are numerous ways to protect these areas through regulatory and non-regulatory measures, Concord’s most effective plan to protect open spaces, preserve prime agricultural lands, protect natural areas and limit the fragmentation of open lands is likely to incorporate a number of strategies outlined below:

#### **3.7.1 Large Lot Zoning**

This technique simply increases the minimum lot size and dimensional standards (such as setbacks). It typically yields lots that are 10 acres or larger in order to preserve the “rural character” of an area (though not necessarily farmland). Areas along Streeter Road and Royalston Corner Road to Leonard Hill Road are served by Class 3 roads, with limited access to utilities. Once the site of several working farms, this area is now characterized by large contiguous areas of undeveloped land, served by heavily wooded roadways that occasionally open up to spectacular views of neighboring communities and New Hampshire. The rural character of this residential area may be best preserved by limited low-density residential development on large lots with large setback areas.



The view from Streeter Road

#### **3.7.2 Conservation Easements and Restrictions**

Conservation easements may be placed on a property title when the property owner requests to conserve an area or sells the development rights. Conservation easements are a permanent element within a property's title and are maintained through property transfer. They may only be removed through permission of the holder of the easement, which usually requires swapping for other land and a detailed case as to why the property now needs to allow development. Less than 1% of Concord's land is currently in conservation. Concord's conserved land is located on Miles Mountain at North Concord Bog. It is a property of the University of Vermont and accounts for just over 270 acres.

Current use restrictions, unlike conservation easements, can be removed from a property at any time. Vermont’s Use Value Appraisal Program (aka “Current Use”) allows property owners to reduce their property taxes by enrolling in the Vermont Current Use Program. The program allows property owners to pay property taxes based on a reduced per/acre amount set by the state for agricultural or forestry uses. When the property is removed from current use or developed, the property owner must pay a Land Use Change Tax, which is 20% of the fair market value of the property. In most cases, this is a significant sum, which encourages landowners to maintain enrollment. This program helps to subsidize farmland and forestland in the state and reduces the loss of these valuable lands to residential development. In 2013, Concord had a total of 59 parcels of land enrolled in Current Use, accounting for 17,278 acres (15,897 are non-residential; 1,381 are homestead acres.) Total enrollment accounts for approximately 61.5% of Concord's total acreage. It is important to note that enrollment of property in current use does not deprive individual towns of property tax revenue, since the state reimburses towns annually for the difference between the municipal taxes paid at use value and at fair market value.

### **3.7.3 Overlay Zoning**

Concord’s zoning currently includes an overlay for areas of flood hazard. Overlays, however, can be used for other purposes, such as preventing fragmentation of open space and minimizing negative impacts to environmentally sensitive lands. 24 V.S.A. §4414(2) specifically authorizes municipalities to adopt overlay districts to “supplement or modify the zoning requirements otherwise applicable in underlying districts in order to provide supplementary provisions for areas such as shorelands and floodplains, aquifer and source protection areas, ridgelines and scenic features, highway intersection, bypass, and interchange areas, or other features described in §4411 of this title.”

Concord can use a Scenic or Conservation Overlay as a way to conserve important natural environments in town, without some of the drawbacks of conservation easements and current use restrictions. Conservation Overlays are an extra coverage over smaller parts of regular zoning districts that can impose extra precautions for development in those areas. This may be accomplished by subjecting all proposed development to conditional use review, as well as establishing more site-specific standards for development within the overlay district. Examples include:

- limiting the amount of clear-cutting that can occur on a site;
- encouraging the preservation of open space by requiring home sites to be established near the perimeter of the property;
- lessening the impact on watersheds by requiring vegetation buffers along waterways;
- protecting views along scenic ridgelines by limiting clear-cutting, placing the development envelope downslope of the ridgeline, limiting the use of lighting; or requiring screening.

- Limiting the height of buildings in important viewsheds.

The best part of a Conservation Overlay is that it can be tailored to the specifics of a town's values, whether it is protecting existing forested areas, higher elevations, watersheds, prime agricultural soils, or important wildlife areas.

### **3.7.4 Planned Unit Development**

24 V.S.A. §4417 encourages towns to allow for planned unit developments (or planned residential developments) under their bylaw. Concord's zoning bylaw does not allow for such development. Planned unit developments may be a very effective tool for encouraging clustering – a technique that concentrates buildings in one area of a parcel so that a certain amount of land will remain open for recreation, common open space, and in some cases, environmentally sensitive features. Clustering in this sense allows the developer to reduce the minimum lot size and bulk requirements, as long as there is no increase in the total number of housing lots that would have been allowed under conventional subdivision regulations. The end result may be less fragmentation of valuable open space that may have occurred if the land were to be subdivided and developed in strict conformance with the bylaw. Oregon Road, for example, may be able to accommodate more housing in this manner. Planned unit development of an appropriate scale and density could help to preserve open space along this corridor.

### **3.7.5 Conservation Commission**

The creation of conservation commissions are authorized in 24 V.S.A. Chapter 118. The commission may be created at any time, either by a vote of the town or by the Selectboard. The members of the commission are volunteers, and they may advise local officials on conservation matters, (such as the Selectboard or the planning commission), but they have no authority over land use issues. Vermont statute spells out the activities that a local conservation commission may undertake. They include:

- making an inventory and conducting continuing studies of the natural resources of the town;
- creating and maintaining an inventory of lands within the town which have historic, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural, or archaeological values in which the public has an interest;
- making recommendations on the receipt of gifts of land or rights thereto, or other property;
- receiving money, grants, or private gifts from any source, for the purpose of conservation activities;
- receiving gifts of land or other property, with the town's consent;
- administering conservation lands held by the town;
- providing technical advice to the planning commission or zoning board of adjustment on specific permits.

### **3.7.6 Acquisition of Conservation Lands**

24 V.S.A. §4431 allows municipalities to either purchase land or development rights for conserving land, provided that it done in a manner that is consistent with the Municipal Plan. Although there is a cost for acquiring conservation lands, there are a few vehicles out to help municipalities foot the bill. Easements are often held jointly with a local land trust or state agency that provides matching funds. And, it should be noted that towns with open space plans will be considered more favorably by conservation organizations that provide matching funds. Municipalities also fund conservation activities through annual appropriations or a dedicated portion of the property tax, or through fundraising. Some towns include their conservation activities into a capital budget and program.

### **3.7.7 Open Space Plans**

Open space plans are one of the supporting plans authorized in 24 V.S.A. §4432. Adopted separately or as an amendment to the current Municipal Plan, the Open Space Plan would be a non-regulatory tool to guide public and private conservation strategies. The Open Space plan typically contains an inventory and map of natural resources to be conserved as open space. It also identifies specific strategies for conserving those resources (e.g. direct acquisition or conservation easements, funding sources for acquiring the land). Although the planning commission would ultimately be responsible for the adoption of the open space plan, a local conservation commission would obviously play a critical role.

### **3.7.8 Subdivision Regulation**

Concord’s current zoning bylaws contain a section on subdivision in section 607. However, this section does not provide comprehensive standards for the review and approval of plats. Subdivision regulation controls the pattern of development, i.e. the way the land is divided up in order to accommodate road access and infrastructure. Here are the aspects of development that subdivision regulation would address:

- Design and configuration of parcel boundaries.
- Lot sizes, in order to assure adequate provision for water, wastewater, stormwater management and utilities, and to avoid the creation of undevelopable lots.
- The placement of storm water management facilities, public and private utilities, landscaping, and any other necessary improvements as may be specified in the municipal plan.
- The layout of roads, in order to maximize traffic safety and ensure adequate access by emergency response vehicles.
- Protection of natural resources and cultural features, as well as the preservation of open space.
- Placement and grade of building envelopes, in order to minimize adverse impacts to neighboring properties from runoff and erosion.

- How lots are recorded in the land records, and the level of detail that must be recorded, such as improvements to the lot, such as culverts and drainage, water and sewer, road access, easements, and the dedication of open space.
- Preservation of open space and rural character is often an overarching goal of the municipality.

Having local subdivision standards would not only let the Concord Planning Commission have more input into how development occurs in town, it also affects the threshold for the State’s Act 250 Review.

In Towns that do *not* have *both* zoning and subdivision regulations, Act 250 review is triggered when a proposed development will result in construction for commercial or industrial purposes on more than one acre, and for the subdivision of land into six or more house lots. In towns that have both zoning and subdivision regulations, this threshold is raised to 10 acres for commercial/industrial developments, and for subdivisions of 10 or more house lots.

## Land Use Goals and Strategies

1. New development should complement traditional development patterns and land uses, and should retain and protect natural features and special scenic areas, ridgelines, bodies of water, and contiguous blocks of agricultural and forestland.
  - Consider the creation of a conservation overlay district as a means to protect scenic and environmentally sensitive features in town
  - Host open space preservation workshops in the community
  - Consider creation of comprehensive subdivision standards that address protection of steep slopes, prevention of erosion and impacts to surface water, protection of natural and scenic resources, conservation of agricultural lands, and energy efficiency.
2. Traditional uses that maintain the rural character of Concord, such as farming and forestry, should be encouraged.
  - Host informational workshops for owners of agricultural and forestry-related enterprises providing information on resources and funds available for business growth.
3. Encourage reinvestment and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and facilitate high-density, mixed-use development in the village areas that provides for a safe and livable work and play environment.
  - Direct tourism-related development to the villages.
  - Collaborate with area towns in preparing for increased development and undertaking expansions in infrastructure and services.

- Seek Village Center Designation for Concord Village from the state, in order to provide tax credits for rehabilitation of income-producing properties.
  - Investigate the logistics of building a municipally owned and managed water and/or wastewater system to serve the village areas. Seek funds available through the Vermont Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program, and USDA Rural Development.
  - Concentrate residential and industrial development in areas where municipal infrastructure, such as water and sewer, may become available.
4. Encourage the redevelopment of areas throughout town that currently contain land uses and/or lot configurations that are incompatible with the attractive, safe and orderly development of the town.
- Consult with other towns in the region to develop a viable way to address buildings that are a threat to public health and safety.
5. Balance the need to preserve the rural character of Concord with the ability to attract and retain employment opportunities, including home occupations and home-based businesses.
- Consider revising lot width and front setback requirements to retain an open, rural character, and protect scenic vistas.
  - Provide for Planned Unit Developments, in accordance with Vermont State statute, in order to enable cost-effective and energy-efficient development that preserves open space through clustering.
6. Protect important scenic view sheds, such as Shadow Lake and Royalston Corner, from impacts from development that is either out-of-scale with what is currently there or obstructs scenic views.
- Provide for the use of Planned Unit Developments in order to maintain flexibility in the siting of new development to protect scenic views
  - Consider acquiring land or development easements on lands that afford important scenic views, such as the view from Shadow Lake Road.

## 4. Housing

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there were 816 housing units, 439 of which were owner occupied, and 83 renter occupied. Of the 294 units identified as “vacant” in the Census, 269 were seasonal homes. This represents an increase of 18.6% from 1990 to 2010, which has outpaced the town’s 13% increase in population over this period. This increase also outpaces growth in housing stock countywide (Figure 4.1).

According to the 2010 U.S. Census data, about three out of every ten housing units (33%) in Concord is a seasonal vacation home. This ratio is roughly in line with the county wide average (38.4%), but significantly higher than the rest of the state (15.6%) (Figure 4.2). It is noted that the 2013 Grand List data for Concord (see Figure 3) presents a slightly lower percentage of seasonal properties – roughly 25% of all residential properties in town.

In 2010 about 16% of Concord’s occupied housing units were renter occupied, the remaining 84% being owner-occupied. These percentages were essentially unchanged from the 2000 census.

Historical census data suggests that second home ownership continued to be a significant driver in Concord’s land use patterns from 2000 to 2010, as well as in the County and State. (Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.1: Housing Units**

	1990	2000	2010	Actual Change (1990-2010)	% Change
Concord Housing Units	688	764	816	128	18.6%
Concord Population	1,093	1,209	1,235	142	13.0%
Essex County Housing Units	4,403	4,762	5,019	616	14.0%
Essex County Population	6,405	6,459	6,306	-99	-1.5%
Vermont Housing Units	271,214	294,382	322,539	51,325	18.9%
Vermont Population	562,767	608,827	625,741	62,974	11.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing

<b>Figure 4.2 Housing Characteristics</b>			
	Concord	Essex County	Vermont
Total Housing Units, 2010	816	5,019	322,539
Occupied housing units	522	2,818	256,442
...owner occupied	439	2,260	181,407
...renter-occupied	83	558	75,035
Vacant housing units, 2010	294	2,201	66,097
...for seasonal, recreational, occasional use	269	1,928	50,198
...for rent	6	67	6,232
...for sale only	8	61	4,213

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing

However, a comparison of Concord’s grand list data from 2009 and 2013 indicates a slight drop in the number of seasonal properties during that four- year period.

<b>Figure 4.3: Historical Data – Vacant Housing Units for Seasonal , Recreational, Occasional Use</b>					
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change(1990-2000)</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% increase (2000-2010)</b>
Concord	246	255	3.7%	269	5.5%
Essex County	1828	1844	0.9%	1928	4.6%
Vermont	45,405	43,060	-5.2%	50,198	16.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing

The majority of households in Concord, both owners and renters, moved to their present place of residence after 1990. (Figure 4.4).

### 4.1 Senior Housing

In general, Concord’s adult population has steadily increased since 1980. (Figure 4.5) The American Community Survey’s 5- year estimates released in 2013 indicated that fully a quarter of Concord’s population was 60 years old and over. The State of Vermont’s population projections released in 2013 indicate that this aging trend is expected to continue. Although the overall population in Essex County is expected to steadily drop through the year 2030, the 60+ population is expected to rise, and account for about 42% of the population in Essex County by the year 2030.

<b>Figure 4.4 Year Householder Moved into Unit</b>			
	<b>Concord</b>	<b>Essex County</b>	<b>Vermont</b>
<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>2,831</b>	<b>256,830</b>
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	466	2,335	182,744
Moved in 2010 or later	9	41	5,798
2000 - 2009	162	818	71,882
1990 - 1999	142	617	45,570
1980 - 1989	52	384	29,790
1970 - 1979	38	218	16,745
1969 or earlier	63	257	12,959
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	76	496	74,086
Moved in 2010 or later	30	104	16,860
2000 - 2009	40	274	47,117
1990 - 1999	3	82	6,689
1980 - 1989	0	18	2,138
1970 - 1979	3	3	583
1969 or earlier	0	15	699
U.S. Census Bureau – 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates			

<b>Figure 4.5: US Census – Concord Population by Age Category</b>				
	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
21 to 61 years	573	616	670	691
62 to 64 years	30	22	33	38
65 to 74 years	94	90	90	150
75 years or older	31	47	57	64

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, Table P12



The 2010 U.S. Census shows that there were 214 non-institutionalized individuals in Concord who were 65 years or older. The Census Bureau’s American Community Survey of 2012 estimated this number to be 232, and estimated that 42% had a disability. This data on disability status were derived from answers to a two-part question that asked about the existence of the following long-lasting conditions: (a) blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment (sensory disability) and (b) a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities, such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying (physical disability).

As Concord’s senior population continues to grow, it is likely that there will be an increased demand for housing options that would allow residents to either age in place or remain in Concord for as long as possible. Question 10 on the 2014 Concord Community Survey asked residents to rate 15 different types of facilities and services in Town. “Availability of Senior Housing” was rated as the number 2 area in need of improvement.

While many Vermonters continue to work well into their 60s, and many remain active well beyond 70, many in that age group may no longer have a need for a multi-bedroom home on a large lot. Both formal studies and anecdotal evidence have shown that seniors prefer to remain in their home communities. Even if not restricted to those aged 55 and older (the typical “age-restricted” community) housing developments that are designed in accordance with “universal design” principles allow people of any age and any physical ability to continue to age in place. Universal design features include both interior design features, such as doorways that are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, and exterior features, such as wide walkways and dropped curbs.

Residential care homes are state-licensed group living arrangements designed to meet the needs of people who can not live independently, but do not yet require the type of care provided in a nursing home. When needed, help is provided with daily activities such as eating, walking, toileting, bathing, and dressing. Residential care homes may provide nursing home level of care to residents under certain conditions. Daily rates at residential care homes are usually less than rates at nursing homes. Residential care homes are divided into two groups, depending upon the level of care they provide. Level III homes provide nursing overview, but not full-time nursing care. Level IV homes do not provide nursing overview or nursing care. There is one Level III residential care home in North Concord, which houses about 16 individuals. This is the only residential care home for Essex County. There is no Level IV facility.

#### **4.2 Affordable Housing in Concord**

Housing that meets the needs of the community, is most typically considered “affordable housing,” and according to statute, affordable housing can mean either of the following.

- A. Housing that is owned by its inhabitants whose gross annual household income does not exceed 80 percent of the county median income, or 80 percent of the standard metropolitan statistical

area income if the municipality is located in such an area, as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the total annual cost of the housing, including principal, interest, taxes, insurance, and condominium association fees is not more than 30 percent of the household's gross annual income; *OR*

- B. Housing that is rented by its inhabitants whose gross annual household income does not exceed 80 percent of the county median income, or 80 percent of the standard metropolitan statistical area income if the municipality is located in such an area, as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the total annual cost of the housing, including rent, utilities, and condominium association fees, is not more than 30 percent of the household's gross annual income.

Figure 3.6 shows one method of calculating “affordable housing” using the State of Vermont’s definition. The calculation shows that for a family of four in Essex County, total monthly housing expenses (including utilities, principal, interest, taxes, and insurance), should amount to no more than \$984.

**Figure 4.6: Affordable Housing Calculation for a Family of Four in Concord**

The median household income for a family of four in Essex County (HUD, 2013):	\$49,200
To determine moderate income status, multiply this figure by 80%:	\$39,360
Divide this figure by 12 to determine monthly income:	\$3,280
Multiply this figure by 30% to determine the limit for total monthly housing costs:	\$984.00
Source: www.housingdata.org	

**Figure 4.7: Housing Wages\* in Essex County and Vermont**

Year	Essex County	Vermont
2000	\$11.85	\$15.54
2001	\$13.31	\$17.33
2002	\$13.71	\$17.81
2003	\$13.90	\$18.08
2004	\$14.71	\$17.48
2005	\$15.35	\$18.09
2006	\$16.13	\$19.94
2007	—	—
2008	\$17.13	\$20.91
2009	\$18.73	\$22.86
2010	\$18.85	\$23.02
2011	\$20.23	\$24.75
2012	\$17.85	\$24.45
2013	\$18.06	\$25.73

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition

\*Based on a modest 3-bedroom unit

Figure 4.7 shows the steady increase in “housing wages” in Concord. The housing wage is calculated by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC). The housing wage is the hourly wage a household must earn while working 40 hours a week to afford a rental housing unit at HUD's Fair Market Rent (FMR) and only pay 30% of its income towards housing costs. 30% of income is the federal standard of affordability. HUD's FMRs are published annually by bedroom size and are for a modest apartment, costing about 10% less than the area median rents. (A 2007 figure is not available because NLIHC revised its methodology in 2008). In 2013 the “housing wage” in Essex County was \$18.06/hour.

### 4.3 Affordable Housing Options in Concord

**Rental Units:** Rental units are a traditional source of affordable housing. The American Community Survey of the U.S. Census estimates 76 renter-occupied units in Concord in 2012, about 14% of all occupied housing units. Another recognized form of affordable housing in Vermont is the mobile home. Data provided by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency at [housingdata.org](http://housingdata.org) estimates that 14.6% of owner-occupied units in Concord were mobile homes.

The State statute at 24 V.S.A. requires a municipality to allow for multi-unit housing somewhere in the community. Concord currently allows multi-unit dwellings (a building designed to accommodate three or more families) in the High Density district as a conditional use. Two-family dwellings are allowed in the High Density, Medium Density, and Low Density districts. Mixed-used development, which traditionally allows for commercial/non-residential uses on the ground floor and residential uses on the upper floors, is not specifically defined in the zoning bylaws, although business and retail uses are permitted in the high density district and could be combined with the conditional use of a multi-family dwelling. This plan seeks to accommodate more multi-unit housing in Concord, where appropriate, and encourage the upgrade of existing rental units.

**Mobile Homes:** 24 V.S.A. prohibits a municipality from banning mobile homes from areas where conventional housing is allowed. Similarly, municipalities must provide suitable accommodation for mobile home parks. Since mobile home parks are not addressed in Concord's zoning bylaw, it is implied, by statute, that they are allowed everywhere in town. Mobile home parks, because of the costs of land and supporting infrastructure, are often built at higher densities. The Town of Concord can regulate the density and design through zoning. The Town can also designate certain areas of town that are most suitable to accommodate mobile home parks. Design standards, which can address issues such as layout of internal roads, parking, open space requirements, and buffering should be tailored to meet the needs of residents, without making the development and maintenance of mobile home parks cost prohibitive.

**Accessory Dwelling Units:** Typically called “mother-in-law suites,” these are efficiencies or one-bedroom apartments that are appurtenant to an owner-occupied single-family dwelling. Vermont statute requires towns to treat these as a permitted use if:

- the property has sufficient wastewater capacity,
- the unit does not exceed 30% of the total habitable floor area of the single family dwelling, and
- applicable parking and setback requirements are met.

Municipalities can be more permissive than 24 V.S.A, Chapter 117 but they cannot be more restrictive.

**Planned unit development:** As previously mentioned in Concord’s Land Use plan, planned unit developments are often viewed as a tool for preserving open space, typically through clustering. 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, however, gives municipalities a significant amount of flexibility in order to encourage the development of housing that meets the community’s needs. Mixed-use planned unit developments, may be established to incorporate residential and nonresidential uses either in or immediately adjacent to higher density areas, such as village centers. Such developments may be ideal for senior housing and other special needs sectors of the population. Additionally, Vermont statute allows municipalities to require that a certain number of units in planned unit development meet the community’s defined affordability standards [24 V.S.A. §4414(7)]. The Town of Concord should give serious consideration to allowing for a variety of planned unit developments that are compatible with their respective surroundings.

## Housing Goals and Strategies

1. Maintain a diversity of housing types affordable to a range of income levels, and a choice between rental and ownership, to support the community throughout the town.
  - Establish appropriate standards for mobile home parks.
  - Pursue Village Center designation from the State of Vermont Downtown Program for Concord Village. Designation makes tax credits available for renovation of commercial properties (including apartments).
  - Seek grant funding to undertake a feasibility study for the development of a municipally-owned and managed public water system that would allow for denser development
2. Promote the creation of senior housing, and/or housing built in accordance with “universal design” principles, for those seeking alternatives housing types.
  - Establish planned unit development standards to encourage mixed use developments of an appropriate scope and scale and of a design that is complementary to both existing village centers and less densely settled areas.
  - Explore the feasibility of establishing a retirement community overlay district.

3. Make the public (and potential developers) aware of properties with high potential for redevelopment as housing.
  - Educate area realtors on the potential for redevelopment of properties in town, and of incentives available through relevant state programs
  - Work with housing providers to inventory development capacity for senior and affordable housing.

## 5. Economic Development

*“...there is a more hopeful version of the future: a shift to economies that are more local in scale. Local economies would demand fewer resources and cause less ecological disruption; they would be better able to weather coming shocks; they would allow us to find a better balance between the individual and the community, and hence find extra satisfaction.”*

-- Bill McKibben, Deep Economy

### 5.1 Overview

Concord’s present economy consists primarily of local service and small commercial/industrial businesses employing local residents (Figure 5.1).

<b>Figure 5.1: Employment Activity in Concord by North American Industrial Classification Code (NAICS)</b>				
<b>Industry Code</b>	<b>Total 2011</b>	<b>With 1 to 4 employees</b>	<b>5 to 9 employees</b>	<b>10 to 19 employees</b>
11: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1	1	0	0
23: Construction	5	3	2	0
31-33: Manufacturing	2	1	0	1
42: Wholesale trade	1	1	0	0
44 - 45: Retail trade	2	0	0	2
54 - Professional, scientific, and technical services	1	1	0	0
56: Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	1	1	0	0
62: Health care and social assistance	2	0	1	1
72: Accommodation and food services	1	0	0	1

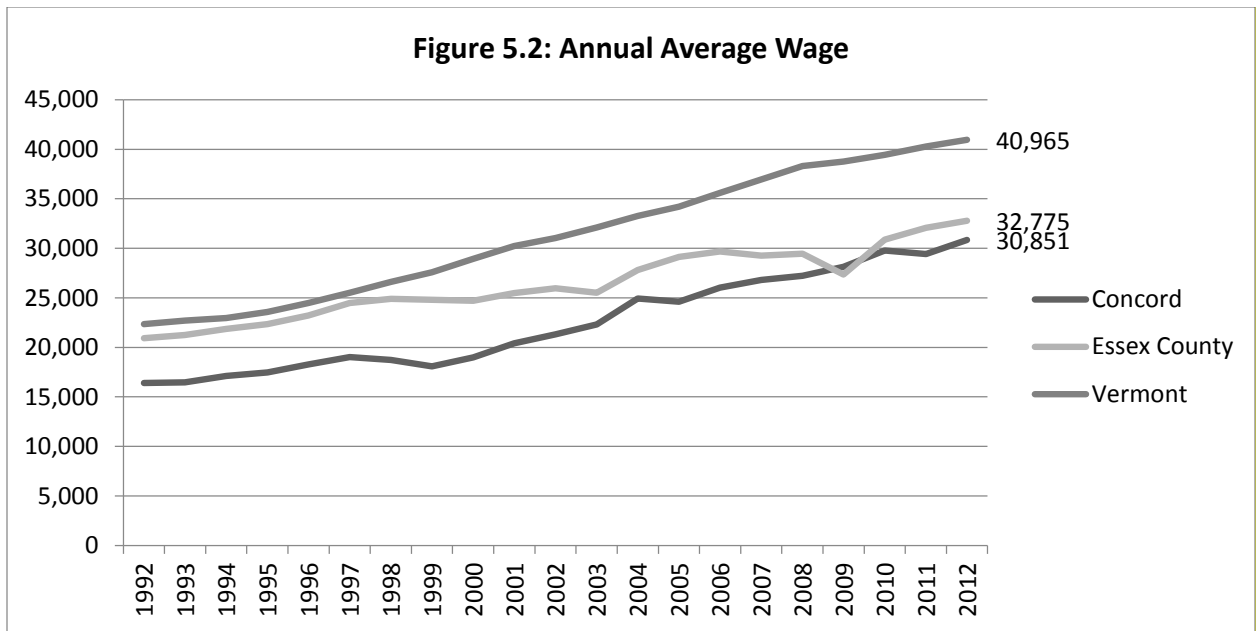
Source: 2011 County Business Patterns

The majority of Concord’s residents, however, commute elsewhere for employment. The 2014 resident survey indicated that only 12% of respondents worked in Concord. According to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (2008-2012 estimates), over 50% of working Concord residents worked outside Essex County, and 27% worked outside the State. However,

commute times were reasonable, with over 60% of workers having a commute under 30 minutes. Less than 10% of residents had a commute time of 45 minutes or longer.

Concord’s future economic growth will likely be in tourism, recreation, and small-scale commercial/industrial development. Factors influencing this growth will be the large quantities of undeveloped land, the rural quality of life in Concord, the town’s education system, availability of telecommunications, and U.S. Route 2, which has three-phase power.

Data from the Vermont Dept. of Labor, Labor Market Information, Covered Employment & Wages show that for years, the Annual Average Income has lagged behind that of Essex County, which in turn, has lagged behind that of Vermont. What’s more, the gap between Concord and the rest of the state has widened significantly over the past decades (Figure 5.2).



Despite these challenges, Concord remains a very attractive community for future growth. We therefore must monitor this growth and find ways to balance the need to create quality jobs with the need to protect the rural quality of life presently enjoyed by the town’s residents and non-residents alike.

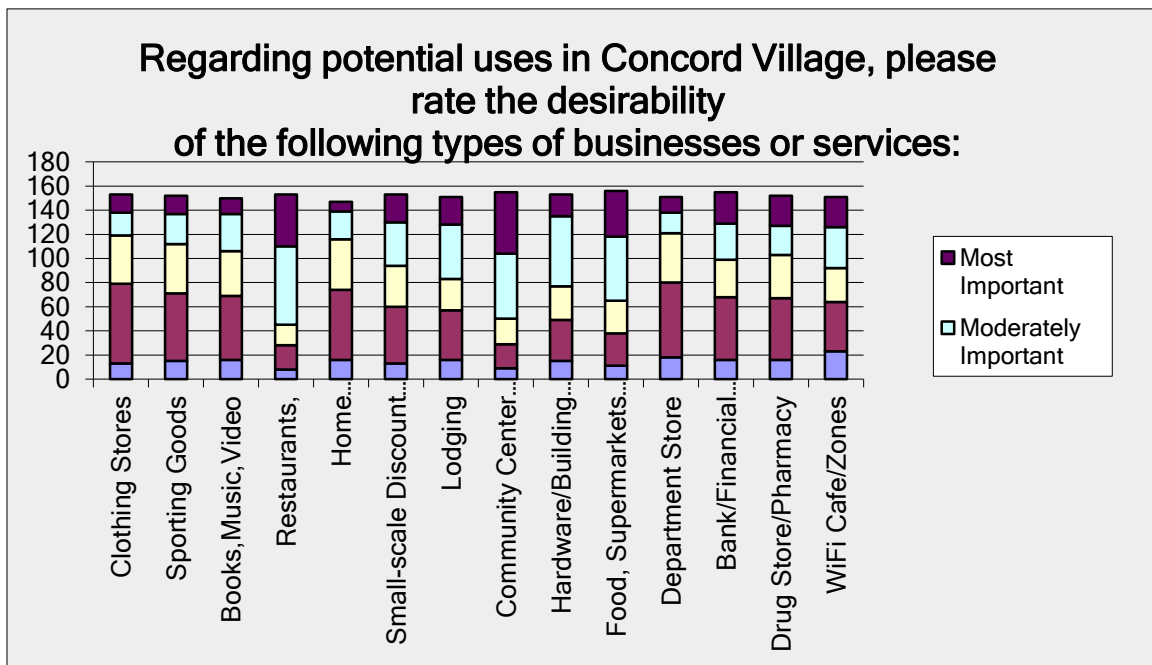
Anticipated developments at Burke Mountain and further north in the Newport area are expected to bring jobs in the tourism industry, manufacturing, and in the biomedical field. A December 2014 report prepared by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development projects 2053 new jobs, 457 new housing units, and an additional \$100 million in income in the Northeast Kingdom region as a result of these developments, assuming all projects are built in a time frame of 2014 – 2016.

The report further notes: “The possibility that the perception of the Northeast kingdom may change from an historic image as a rural backwater to a more current image of economic vitality may lead to growth in the population that cannot be directly tied to any particular economic expansion project.”

## 5.2 Commercial and Industrial Uses

Promoting business development was the number one planning concern for Concord Village, as indicated in the responses to Question 12 on the Concord Community Survey undertaken in 2014. Residents identified St. Johnsbury and Littleton as their main shopping destinations, although noted that they shopped for convenience items in Concord.

Question 13 on the survey asked residents to identify the most desirable uses for Concord Village, out of a choice of 14 potential businesses and services. The top three choices were restaurants, community meeting places, and a grocery/food store.



When asked to identify the value of five approaches to local business development, respondents found that all approaches had value. The top two strategies were identified as “property tax relief” and a “local organization that supports and promotes local businesses.”

<b>How valuable would the following be to encourage the improvement of an existing or development of a new local business?</b>						
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Very Valuable</b>	<b>Moderately Valuable</b>	<b>Least Valuable</b>	<b>Not Valuable</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Availability of Tax Credits for Restoration of Older Buildings in Village Centers	43	47	16	19	23	148
Technical Assistance	28	54	18	20	26	146
"Micro-lending" Sources, such as a Local Revolving Loan Fund	25	49	20	27	24	145
Local Organization that Supports and Promotes Local Businesses	57	40	14	17	19	147
Property Tax Relief	91	22	7	9	14	143
Other (please specify)						9
					<i>answered question</i>	<b>156</b>
					<i>skipped question</i>	<b>12</b>

(2014 Concord Community Survey)

One approach available to address property taxes is the establishment of a commercial tax stabilization policy by the Town to encourage owners of commercial property to make capital improvements without the fear of sharp increase in their property taxes. One example is a policy adopted by the City of Newport, which sets forth criteria and eligibility for tax stabilization to further the goals of the town. Criteria for eligibility include the creation of new jobs and improving the aesthetic appearance of a building. Both short-term and long-term impacts are considered.

Areas in town zoned “High Density” permit the business uses of retail stores and business offices, and conditionally permit additional commercial and industrial uses. Areas zoned “high density” are located in Concord Village and in three other nodes along Route 2 that have been historical areas of development. “Home Industry,” “Industry,” and “Neighborhood Commercial Facility” are uses conditionally permitted in the Medium Density district. The Low Density District also conditionally permits some industrial and commercial uses. In order to guide new commercial and industrial uses to locations where they add to the vitality of existing nodes, permitted commercial uses in the medium and low density districts should be re-examined, particularly in areas not served by paved roads.

Section 605 of the Concord zoning bylaw requires site plan review and approval of all uses except one and two-family dwellings and their accessory structures. On conditionally approving industrial uses, the Zoning Board of Adjustment may require measures to increase setbacks and yard dimensions, limit the building coverage or the building height, control the number of access points; increase the street width, as well as the size of off-street parking and loading; limit signage, require landscaping in order to screen uses.

Light industry is currently defined in the Town’s bylaws as “manufacturing, assembly, converting, altering, finishing, cleaning, or other processing, handling, or storage of products or materials.” The term “industry,” which is allowed in the Medium Density district is not defined,



so it is unclear as to what constitutes a light industry versus a heavy industry, or whether it's determined in scope and size of operation, or emissions, or other thresholds, such as decibel rates. Many industrial uses emerging in the Northeast Kingdom, such as value-added processing for agricultural or silvicultural products, do have certain impacts such as truck traffic, smoke, or noise. Developing clear definitions of industry as it is envisioned for the residents of Concord is therefore of critical importance.

### 5.3 Agriculture and Silviculture

Agriculture and silviculture once made a significant contribution to Concord's economy. The early mills sawed virgin white pine. Their markets were restricted to distances that could be covered primarily by horse and wagon. This changed in the 1880's, when the freight and passenger rail service opened up 25 years of large scale industrial lumbering. With the disappearance of virgin spruce and pine, the last big sawmills closed in the early 1900's.

Between 1800 and 1820 Vermont was known as the bread basket of New England. Forests were cut down and fields cleared by hand and hogs. The first grain raised in Concord was rye, planted by Joseph Morse in 1789. Farmers planted bumper crops of spring wheat. In 1820 the wheat midge infested Vermont fields and the opening of the Erie Canal allowed wheat to be imported from the West. From 1820 to 1840 was the era of sheep. In 1840 there were 1,700,000 sheep in the state. Sheep raising declined rapidly after the Civil War, when the price of wool fell. Since then, cows have been the main farm animal.

The Connecticut and Moose Rivers were used to move logs, to power mills, for boating, fishing and swimming, and ice was harvested in the winter to use in the dairy and ice houses.

As late as the 1940's Concord enjoyed 40+ farms. The majority of the farms ranged in size from 8 to 25 cows. Farmers were able to feed their families, and some even thrived during the Depression. This was achieved by an available market, and maintaining the soils they had through conservative Yankee practices.

In the 1940's however, due to higher wages, more jobs, better roads (in part from Depression era efforts) and the war, Concord started to experience a decline in small farms. These small farms were not as practical as a modern dairy.

Yet farming, as we know it in Vermont, may be changing. Value-added processing in the Northeast Kingdom is an important – yet still emerging – industry sector with significant growth potential. The Hardwick-Greensboro area is home to a number of local food entrepreneurs, such as soy production, farmstead cheese-making, and organic greens. What's more, there is a new appreciation for locally grown food. In his book *Deep Economy*, Vermont writer Bill McKibben notes the emerging counter-trend to industrialized food production:

*“The United States had 340 farmers’ markets in 1970, 1,700 in 1994, and almost doubled to 3,100 by 2002. Two years later, the number is 3,700. Tens of thousands of farmers sell their*

*produce at these markets, and when they do, they get to keep all the money, not the 8 or 10 percent they'd take in by selling through the industrialized food system."*

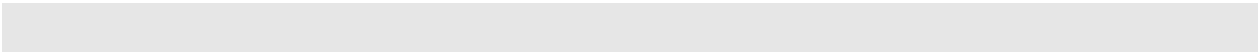
Could it be that the final chapter on Concord's rural tradition has not been written? Is there an opportunity to find a new role for agricultural, albeit one that is smaller, yet more sustainable?

There are 206 acres of federally-classified prime agricultural soils and 726 acres of statewide important soils in Concord (see soils map in appendix). This has developed into only 4 or 5 really practical dairy farm sites; however, all the little farms of a past era are prime for livestock such as goats, horses, sheep and exotics, as well as vegetable production. Many of these little back farms are being used today as small family operations raising the above animals and crops.

Maple Sugaring continues to be one of Vermont's strong industries and presents another opportunity for Concord. With the logging operations of the 1950's, '60's and '70's in Concord's past, more maple groves could be nurtured into production. According to the USDA, Vermont produced 1,320,000 gallons of maple syrup in 2014, more than any other state, accounting for 48.1 percent of the United States' maple syrup production. According to the USDA, the high percentage of bulk sales of maple syrup in Vermont kept average prices lower than those in other states. However, it is noted that the 2014 production was lower than in 2013 due to cold temperatures that year that decreased the production season.

### **Economic Development Goals and Strategies:**

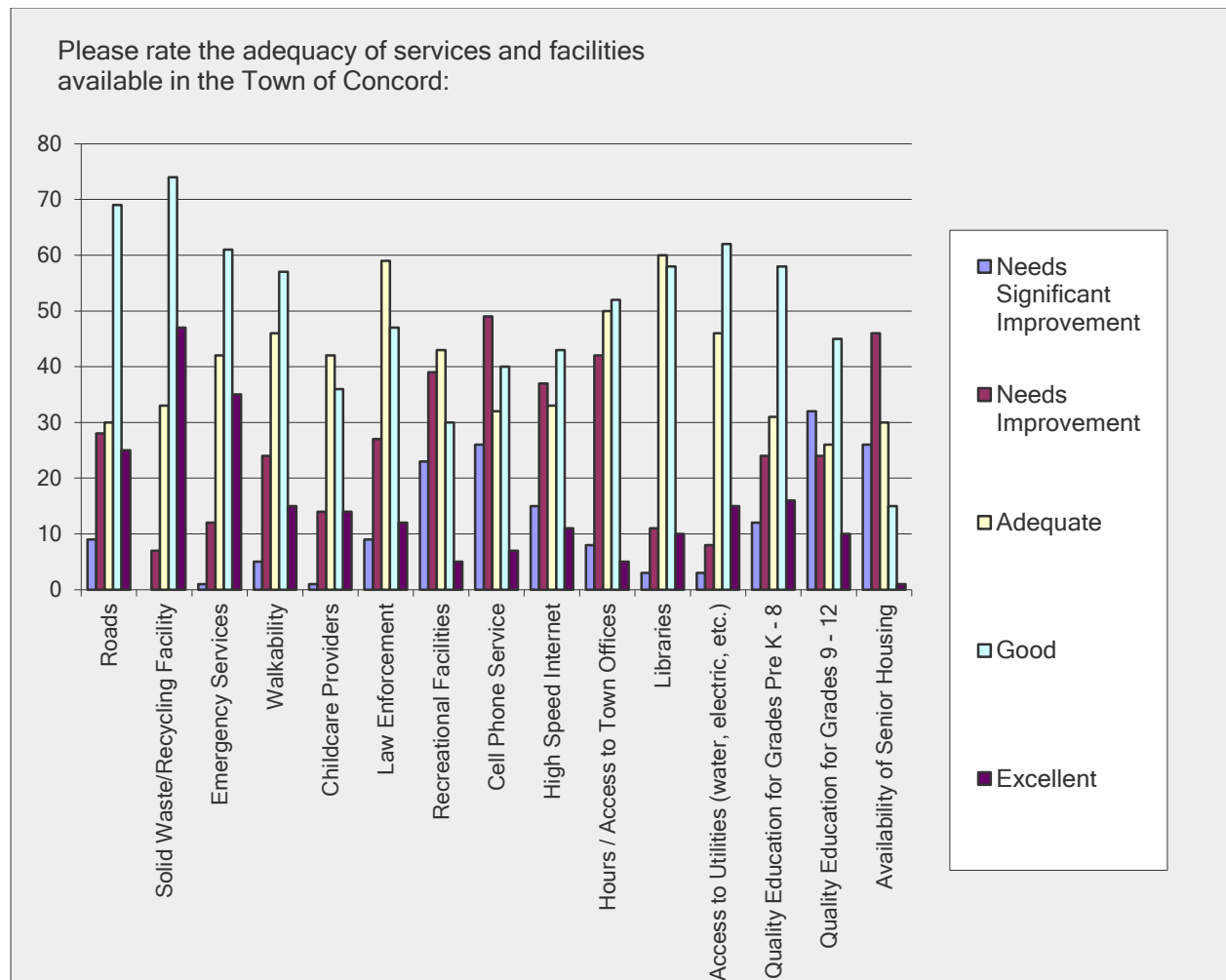
1. Expand small businesses to serve the needs of our citizens. Encourage the development of commercial and light industries of an appropriate scope and scale that will raise income levels and provide employment for present and future residents.
  - Work with the economic development assistance programs and Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) to attract and support new industry and commercial development in town.
2. Create employment opportunities for current and future residents -- without increasing costs of municipal services or education.
3. Make it easier for local entrepreneurs to start and/or expand their businesses in Concord.
  - Establish a business group, such as a local Chamber of Commerce.
  - Encourage the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure in town to attract new business development and support local entrepreneurs.
  - Contact the University of Vermont Extension about conducting a Market Area Survey to identify local need for goods and services, travel patterns, and housing needs.
4. Protect Concord's agricultural and silvicultural resources so that they may be used to tap into new valued-added and local production opportunities in the future.

- Support value-added production opportunities that may help make agriculture and silviculture more profitable in Concord.
5. Strive to achieve a diverse economic base, locally and regionally
- Capitalize on scenic resources by supporting geotourism businesses.
  - Investigate feasibility of using Twin State Railroad as a recreational trail
  - Contact Northeast Kingdom Travel & Tourism about assessing Concord’s tourism resources and developing an actionable marketing strategy.
- 

## 6. Utilities & Facilities

### 6.1 Needs

The 2014 Concord Community Survey asked residents to rate 15 different facilities and services in Concord. Included in the top five areas in need of improvement were cell phone service, recreational facilities, quality education for grades 9 through 12, and high speed internet service.



### 6.2 Town Hall

The Town Hall, a four-story building with a clock tower, was opened on January 20, 1905. The first floor is used for holding elections as well as many meetings. The second floor is the home of the Concord Historical Society and houses a fine museum. The building is in the process of being refurbished. The building is currently used from May through October. The rear of the building is in a flood plain, and the front of the building is Route 2, so there are few opportunities to create parking close to this facility.

## **Town Hall Goals and Strategies:**

### 1. Maintain Town Hall Building

- An evaluation and assessment should be made to decide continued restoration and preservation of the facility.
- Grant monies should be solicited, especially to provide an elevator, central heating and energy efficiency upgrades.
- Parking issues need to be resolved. This will require engineering studies and technical assistance.

## **6.3 Emergency Services**

Concord Fire & Rescue has 16 members that respond to an average of 107 calls per year. These calls average 58 medical first responder and 49 fire calls. The Concord Fire and Rescue building is located on Shadow Lake Road. The Department has a 1998 E-One engine with a 1,000 gallon watertank, a 2008 E-One engine with a 3,000 gallon water tank, an MSA Thermal Imaging camera, and many other pieces of equipment. The Department purchased the 2008 engine for \$250,000.00. FEMA contributed \$237,500.00, and the Town contributed \$12,500.00. The Town of Concord received a grant in 2006 that allowed us to install a dry hydrant in East Concord. This will give us a year-round supply without going to Gilman to fill tankers. There are also dry hydrants in North Concord, Miles Pond, and Concord Village. We also received a small grant to purchase more wildland fire-fighting gear.

The fire station roof was replaced in 2006, and new siding installed in 2014, and we hope to replace the furnace and continue improving the building. The Town of Concord maintains mutual aid agreements. St. Johnsbury, Lunenburg, and Waterford are backup responders.

## **Emergency Goals and Strategies:**

### 2. Provide support to the residents of Concord in emergencies.

- The people of Concord should be urged to properly mark their homes with accurate 911 numbers. Many numbers are either difficult to read or non-existent. In an emergency situation, this can cause a serious delay.
- Continued training for fire and rescue personnel, along with maintaining and updating of equipment is essential.

## 6.4 Emergency Planning

The Town of Concord is a member of Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC) District #9, which includes all the communities of Caledonia and Essex counties. From its creation, the LEPC was designed to provide a forum for emergency management agencies, responders, industry, and the public to work together to evaluate, understand, and communicate chemical hazards in the community and develop appropriate emergency plans in case of accidental release of these chemicals.

In recent years, the LEPC's efforts have been expanded to include emergency planning for a variety of natural and man-made disasters that may affect our communities. Floods, hazardous material spills, wildfires, snow storms, and even terrorism all constitute real challenges facing community leaders today. Federal and state planners have advocated for development of "All-Hazards" planning, which prepare towns for any disaster, not just those from chemical releases.

In 2005, the Town of Concord adopted an All-Hazards Mitigation Plan which was approved by FEMA. The Plan has since expired and an update is expected to be underway in 2014. The 2005 Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies the highest threats to Concord as floods, hazardous material incidents, power failures/winter storms/ice, and highway incidents. (See the "Flood Resilience Section of this Plan for discussion of flood hazards). There have been many accidents along Route 2 mainly due to speed, the curves in the road, and a heavy moose population. Fortunately, there has not been a serious HazMat incident yet. Carr Brook Bridge is considered a high accident location. Fixed-sites for hazardous materials in town include sites with batteries, furniture refinishing glues and other materials, and an underground gas tank. A worst-case scenario would involve a spill on Main St. (Route 2) that could block the fire station.

The town also keeps a Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) which has been updated and adopted July 1, 2014. This Plan is updated annually.

### **Strategies:**

- Keep emergency planning efforts up-to-date.
- Support mitigation projects.

## 6.5 Town Clerk's Office and Town Municipal Building

The Town Clerk's Office and library share a small building on Main Street with adequate parking and office space for both. The library is open on Tuesday and Thursday evenings 3PM to 5PM and Saturday 9 AM to 11 AM.

The 1852 Bouchard House, one of the oldest buildings in Concord Village's historic district, was purchased by the town in November of 2008 to become the town's new Municipal Building.

For many generations, it was known as the Cutting Drug Store. The building now accommodates town offices and provides meeting space. The Veterans Memorial Park is located adjacent to the Municipal Building.

**Goal:**

3. Determine future needs for Town Offices.
  - Investigate whether a new building at a different location may resolve present and future space issues.

## **6.6 Town Garage**

The Town Garage with an addition built in 2009 is located on Brook Road. It is a stick-built, steel-sided structure that was built in 1994. The Department has a 2005 Cat loader, 2004 Cat grader, 1993 Cat backhoe, 2014 Western Star, 10 wheel dump truck with plow, 1997 Int. 6-wheel dump truck with plow, 2011 F550 truck with plow, 2011 International Dump Truck with plow, 1987 Trackless sidewalk plow and sweeper, along with many other pieces of equipment. The town has built an above-ground fuel tank shed in 2014 to replace the underground tank, and a new salt shed is in the process of being built and will be completed in the fall of 2014.

## **6.7 Cemeteries**

There are nine cemeteries in town. Five of these cemeteries – Pike, Frye, Graves, Royalston Corner, and North Concord – are cared for by the Town, and the remaining four are private cemeteries and are cared for by separate boards. Concord’s cemeteries have significant historic value. Civil War veterans are buried there. The Pike Cemetery is one of the oldest because the Connecticut River area was one of the first settled areas. The first white female settler is buried there. The cemeteries have seen some restoration to date. There is a book in the Town Clerk’s office that identifies all of the burial sites.

**Goal:**

4. Continue to support the Town’s efforts to restore its cemeteries.

## **6.8 Recreational**

The Town has a recreation area located at Miles Pond with a shelter. The Town of Concord also has four parks – Folsom Park, East Concord, North Concord, and Syri Park – and two athletic fields within its parameters. The Town intends to install playground equipment at Folsom Park, located on Main Street (Route 2). There was a playground on this site years ago and the Town would like to revitalize this place for the children of Concord.

## **Recreation Goal:**

5. Promote the use of the parks and athletic fields.
  - Restore the playground at Folsom Common

## **6.9 Water Supplies**

There is no municipally-owned community water system in the town of Concord at the present time, although there is a water system serving the Concord School. Water for domestic use is obtained from individual drilled wells, dug wells, or springs. In North Concord a privately-owned system from a spring on Ladd Road feeds 12 units, including mobile homes on Wesley Road and Rte 2. The Mobile Home Park at Glenside Lane is supplied by a private artesian well, with a storage building and treatment facility, feeding 24 units. There are also other small, shared water sources in town.

### **Goal:**

6. In order to forward the goals identified in the Land Use section of this plan for the revitalization and further development in the village centers of Concord, plan for the development of public water systems to serve the village center areas of Concord.
  - Town should investigate available grants and funding sources from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and USDA Rural Development to investigate the feasibility of a public water system.

## **6.10 Sewage disposal**

There is no municipal septic service offered at this time in the town of Concord. Domestic sewage is disposed of individually by means of septic tanks and leach fields. The Town's zoning regulations currently allow high-density development in the village areas and a small area around Miles Pond. However, these areas are limited to development that can provide adequate sewage disposal. These high-density zones were established to allow the continued use of pre-existing homes and businesses that are established in these areas. The Town's current zoning by-laws recognize the limitations of the soils and natural water supplies in these areas.

In 2007, the State of Vermont took delegation of all enforcement of local potable water and wastewater systems. Systems that were previously considered exempt from state regulation may now require a permit. (*See Environmental Protection Rules, Chapter 1, Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules, Effective Sept. 29, 2007.*) Some activities that require a permit include: construction of single-family residences; construction or modification of a wastewater system or potable water supply; making alterations to an existing structure that increases design flows or operational requirements, new connections to an existing wastewater system or potable water supply, subdivisions of land; and repair and replacement of a failed wastewater system or



potable water supply. Many property owners are likely to encounter challenges when redeveloping existing structures. This is especially a challenge on lakefront properties, many of which pre-date WWII and are established on lots as small as one-eighth of an acre. E-coli contamination at Miles Pond beach is a constant concern, and there has been one contamination in recent years.

It is anticipated that any major developments in town will be required to develop their own disposal systems in accordance with the state regulations. The town has no jurisdiction of these regulations, but it can, by statute, withhold a Certificate of Occupancy/Compliance or halt construction until the applicant can present a state permit.

**Goal and Strategies:**

7. Ensure the safe and efficient management of wastewater

- Investigate the feasibility of developing water and wastewater systems to serve high-density districts.
- Provide information to the people of Concord regarding State regulations for onsite water and wastewater systems.

**6.11 Solid Waste Disposal**

The Town of Concord is a member of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District (NEKWMD) and works cooperatively with the District to manage the solid and hazardous wastes in accordance with the District's Solid Waste Implementation Plan.

The Town maintains a solid waste Transfer Station at the Town Highway property on Brook Road. A compactor is used to collect the trash, which is then hauled to a State-approved landfill. A "user fee" system is in place to pay for the waste-related expenses. Concord is one of nearly a dozen communities in the NEKWMD that implements a “Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT)” program, an economic incentive that encourages citizens to reduce waste by paying a fee for each bag or can of trash that they generate. The NEKWMD reports that towns that have implemented PAYT programs generate almost 40% less waste than their non-PAYT counterparts.

**Figure 6.1: Annual Tonnages of Solid Waste In Concord**

Year	Total Municipal Solid Waste	Transfer Station	Recycled	% Recycled
2002	353.24	259.01	86.40	24.5%
2003	371.14	245.28	104.89	28.3%
2004	417.10	285.64	106.79	25.6%
2005	444.27	302.51	112.37	25.3%
2006	409.00	265.48	100.00	24.4%
2007	346.00	258.45	99.00	28.6%
2008	374.00	267.01	77.00	20.6%
2009	N/A	270.83	90.00	N/A
2010	N/A	244.78	72.64	N/A

2011	N/A	223.95	66.26	N/A
2012	N/A	226.95	60.29	N/A
2013	N/A	223.50	63.05	N/A
Source: Northeast Kingdom Solid Waste Management District				

A building is available to help with recycling capabilities at no cost to the residents. Disposal of limited hazardous waste materials is available. Two roll-off dumpsters are available for scrap metals and construction materials. Certain materials that are not accepted at our site can be taken to NEKWMD in Lyndonville. Due to the increasing volume of recyclable materials, the building is nearing the need for expansion. Recycling in Concord dropped precipitously in 2008 (Figure 6.1); this decrease can be attributed to the high cost of scrap metal. The NEKWMD estimates that as much 15-20 tons of scrap metal failed to go through the Concord recycling facility in that year. This loss means lost revenue – and increased costs for the users of the waste management system. (See NEKWMD Plan).

The Town is in compliance with the 2014 Universal Recycling Law (Act 148) timeline of accepting residential recyclables at no extra charge and having the Recycling Center open at the same times as the Transfer Station. The Town is in the process of preparing to accommodate leaf and yard debris by July 2015, and food scraps by July 2017, as required by law.

**Goals and Strategies:**

- 8. Comply with the State’s Universal Recycling Law in regard to the disposal of all recyclables, leaf and yard debris, and food scraps.
  - The Town will seek ways to recycle items that are not presently recyclable at our facility.
  - The Town of Concord should remain a member of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management, as long as it remains economical and effective.

**6.12 Public Safety**

Current police services consist of protection through the State Police and the Essex County Sheriff’s Department. The Vermont State Police B-Troop is located in St. Johnsbury, and the County Sheriff’s Office is located in Guildhall, giving the area excellent coverage. There is a Town Constable to cover town ordinances and tend to minor traffic and civil problems.

**6.13 Health Services**

Concord Health Center, located just east of Concord Village, is a member of Northern Counties Health Care, a nonprofit that serves the Northeast Kingdom. Hospitals covering the area are Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH) in St. Johnsbury; Weeks Hospital in Lancaster,

New Hampshire; Littleton Regional Hospital in Littleton, New Hampshire, and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) in Lebanon, New Hampshire. In emergencies, patients can be transported to DHMC by its DART helicopter. The Concord ball field has served as a landing pad. New specialized services, such as oncology, are available locally, and this greatly reduces the challenges of traveling long distances for quality medical services. Calnex Ambulance Service, which is located in St. Johnsbury, handles most of the emergency calls.

## 6.14 Postal Service

There are two post offices in the town of Concord, one in Concord Village and one in North Concord. The Concord Village office has a part-time regular postmaster, a postal support employee, a rural carrier and a rural carrier associate. The North Concord post office has a postal support employee and two highway contract route drivers. One of the highway contract route drivers transports mail to and from the Granby contract post office. East Concord residents receive their mail via a rural route carrier out of the Lunenburg Post Office.

## 6.15 Storm Drainage

There are 24 storm drains in Concord, which empty the storm water into the nearby Moose River. District 7 State Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance of these drains.

The Passumpsic River Basin Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping Project, completed in March 2014 by the Ecosystem Restoration Section of the Vermont DEC, maps stormwater infrastructure, including the location of a storm drains and catchbasins. This report can be accessed at [www.vtwaterquality.org/erp/docs/erp\\_Basin\\_15\\_report.pdf](http://www.vtwaterquality.org/erp/docs/erp_Basin_15_report.pdf)

## 6.16 Telecommunications

**Radio:** For the most part, Concord residents have the same excellent radio reception as residents of surrounding areas in Vermont and New Hampshire.

**Telephone:** Most Concord residents have access to "land line" telephone service. On the other hand, cell phone coverage is poor. As in many other parts of the Northeast Kingdom, large areas are "blind spots" regarding cell phone signals. The 2014 Concord Community Survey identified cell phone service as one of the top five areas in need of improvement.

**Television:** Virtually all Concord residents have access to television reception by means of cable and/or satellite.

**Internet computer service:** Most Concord residents have access to internet service by means of telephone dial-up, cable, and/ or satellite, but not via wireless/antenna. High-speed (broadband) internet service (that is, any service faster than 300 kbps) is not available through dial-up. At the present time, most people wanting high-speed service must turn to satellite or cable service. Cable service is available to Concord Village, much of North Concord, and the area between those two

regions, but not to the rest of the town. There is still a substantial unmet need for high-speed Internet service in Concord. The 2014 Concord Community Survey identified high speed internet service as one of the top five areas in need of improvement.

### **Goals and Strategies:**

9. Encourage the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure in Concord to attract new business development.
  - Support the coverage goals of Vermont’s Telecommunications Plan (2014).
  - Advocate for universal service coverage in Concord.
  - The Town should investigate the feasibility and desirability of the Town owning a tower that could be available to a variety of telecommunications service providers.
10. Anticipate growth in new areas such as wireless technology, alternative energy sources such as wind power, while protecting the rural character of the town.
  - Actively participate in Act 250 and/or Public Service Board Section 248 reviews for such facilities to assure that they do not negatively impact rural character or scenic views.

### **6.17 Capital Budgeting and Planning**

A municipality with an adopted Utilities and Facilities Plan may adopt a capital budget and program, which is a multi-year scheduling of public physical improvements. The first year is the budget for the upcoming year. The remaining years – two through six – are the capital improvements that are scheduled to take place. A capital improvement can be physical improvement, such as furnishings, machinery, and equipment. It can also include studies or preliminary studies related to a physical improvement, OR it can include the acquisition of land or development rights to land. Although the capital budget and program does need to conform to the Municipal Plan, it is non-binding, so once adopted, the town of Concord would not be committed to make expenditures should some emergency arise. It is a way to

### **Capital Budgeting and Planning Goals and Strategies:**

11. The planning commission should work with the Selectboard and all municipal officials and departments to develop a capital budget and program for the town of Concord.
  - Plan for growth in Concord that keeps pace with the town’s public facilities and services and preserves the town’s scenic and rural character.
  - Work to limit fluctuations in town expenditures from year-to-year, and ensure that expenditures are supportive of Concord’s planning goals and strategies.

## 7. Recreation

### 7.1 Bodies of Water

Concord has several bodies of water within its boundaries including Halls Brook, Mink Brook, Cutting Brook, Carr Brook, Dudley Brook, Roaring Brook, Miles Stream, and the Moose River. There are also numerous unnamed brooks, streams and small ponds. There are also three bodies of open water: Shadow Lake, Miles Pond, and the Moore Reservoir.

The Connecticut River runs along the Southerly border of Concord for approximately eight and one-half miles, and is accessible at the end of Cozy Nook Road and Walker Pit Road.

Shadow Lake is located at Concord Corners, about two and one-half miles from Concord Village. It is one mile long and one-half mile wide. There is no public beach, but a public boat access is maintained by the State Fish and Wildlife Service and is accessible from Shadow Lake Road at the north end of the lake.

Miles Pond is located about seven miles east of Concord Village, just off Route 2: It is approximately two miles long and one-half mile wide at the widest point. A private beach on Miles Pond was used for public swimming until the sawmill buildings and 17 acres were purchased by the Vermont Water Resources Department in 1968, and the area was leased to the town for recreation and swimming. Across from the beach is the Miles Pond Recreation Area Shelter, which is available for rent to the public. The Administrative Assistant can arrange the rental. In 1962 a fishing access area was developed at the east end of Miles Pond, with a public boat access which is maintained by the State Fish and Wildlife Service and is accessible just past the beach on Campers Lane.



**The beach at Miles Pond**

Since 2006, there has been an Aquatic Nuisance Program in place, sponsored by state grants from the Agency of Natural Resources. The program pays monitors to check boats before entering the Miles Pond or Shadow Lake, in an effort to prevent them from becoming invaded with milfoil and other invasive species. These grants were reduced in 2009 by 50%, so the Town of Concord had to hire fewer monitors.

### 7.2 Clubs

**Concord's Top of the World All Terrain Vehicle Club (TOWATV)** is a non-profit organization, affiliated with the Vermont All Terrain Vehicle Sportsman's Association Inc., (VASA). Their goal is to provide safe and responsible operations of ATVs on town roads and private land. TOWATV provides scenic trails that show the beauty of the area and encourages

connections to neighboring towns to expand the trail system. There are sixteen other VASA clubs in Vermont. TOWATV seeks and supports the preservation and protection of the natural environment. As a club, Top of the World members and their ATVs are available to provide assistance in an emergency or disaster as a public service. For more information, log onto [www.towatv.com](http://www.towatv.com).

**Moose River Rock Dodger's Snowmobile Club**-The Moose River Rock Dodgers' Snowmobile Club is an affiliate of Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST). In 1971 a small group of people formed the club, Moose River Rock Dodger's. In the beginning the club groomed 9-13 miles with their own sleds. The club now grooms up to 50 miles in the towns of Concord, Kirby, and Lunenburg. As for the future VAST and the MRRD depend on most gracious landowners and the generosity of landowners, active memberships and Mother Nature. For more information, visit <http://mooseriverrockdodgers.homestead.com>.

### 7.3 Campgrounds

Concord has two campgrounds, both of which are located on Route 2. Breezy Meadows has 74 sites. Ninety percent of its occupants rent sites for the entire season (May through October). Alpine Valley (formerly Rustic Haven) has 64 sites, and roughly half are occupied for the season. Both have retail amenities.

#### **Recreation Goals and Strategies:**

1. Promote and protect Concord's reputation as a "recreation-friendly" town.
  - Consider use of abandoned railroads as recreation trails.
  - Support regional marketing efforts, e.g. Northeast Kingdom Chamber, Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association NEKTTA, and the Connecticut River Scenic Byway Council, to make sure that their efforts includes Concord's myriad of recreational activities.
  - Contact Northeast Kingdom Travel & Tourism about assessing Concord's tourism resources and developing an actionable marketing strategy.
  - Work with landowners who might provide access to additional recreation opportunities.
2. Ensure continued public access and enjoyment of Concord's lakes, ponds, and streams.
  - Protect water quality in Concord.
  - Make residents aware of public access points to the Town's water bodies: the State boat access to Shadow Lake on Shadow Lake Road, and to Miles Pond at Campers Lane; and access to the Moose River near the site of the old foundry and off Wendell Road.

## **8. Preservation**

### **8.1 Water Supplies**

In Concord, the protection of the town's surface and subsurface water systems is limited to the state regulation and, when applicable, Act 250 review. The bylaws do not, and cannot, address independent sewage treatment systems. As previously discussed in the Utilities and Facilities Section, the State of Vermont took delegation of all enforcement of local potable water and wastewater systems back in 2007. Systems that were previously considered exempt from state regulation may now require a permit. Enforcement of violations is largely reactive (i.e. complaints from neighbors), and town enforcement is limited. The zoning officer cannot withhold a permit, but the town's bylaws can either halt the construction of a project or withhold a certificate of compliance until the property owner can demonstrate compliance with the state regulations.

The town's bylaws currently include provisions for development within the 100 year floodplain, but there are no local provisions for runoff and erosion control, such as vegetation buffers around surface waters and erosion and sediment control during construction, especially for small scale projects that will not be regulated by the state (e.g. stormwater management, Act 250.) This issue can be best addressed by developing and implementing low-impact development standards for the Town of Concord. In addition, as noted in the Land Use section of this Plan, the State's recently enacted Shoreland Protection Act now establishes a regulated area of 250 feet around lakes greater than 10 acres. Setback requirements, and limitation on impervious coverage and clearing are addressed by these state regulations.

### **8.2 Open Lands**

The town's development corridors, as established under the existing zoning bylaws, were designed to limit development within the town's interior woodlands. However, open lands that follow roadways as Streeter Road, would lose their character if fragmented into 2-acre parcels. In addition, there are no provisions for development on steep slopes and prominent ridgelines, which could adversely impact the town's scenic landscape. Development in these areas are likely to be visible from numerous vantage points, and stand out in stark contrast with the largely unbroken forest cover that is so characteristic of Concord's scenic backdrop. Lands above 1,500 feet, steep hillsides, and prominent knolls in Concord may be particularly vulnerable to this form of development. The Town of Concord should take special measures to minimize the impact of this development through careful siting of development envelopes and screening. As noted in the Land Use section of the Plan, inclusion of standards for planned unit developments in Concord's zoning bylaws would provide a way for to preserve open space and scenic views by permitting flexibility in design of developments.

### 8.3 Historic Features

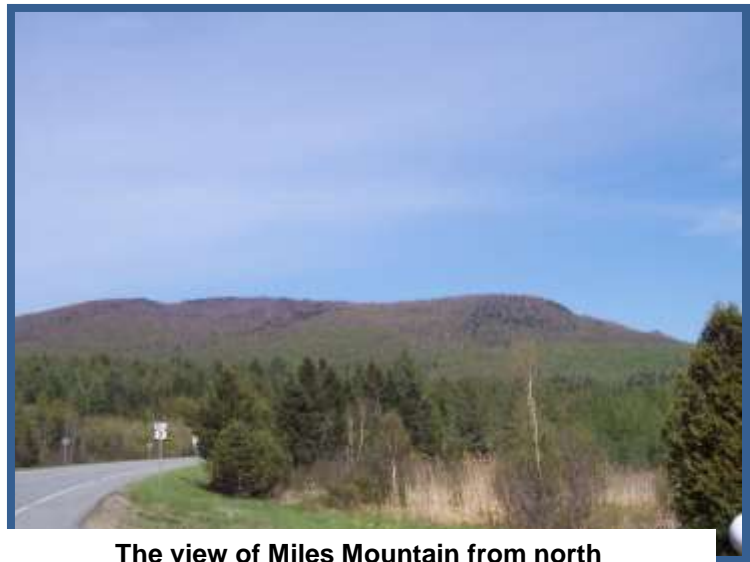
The site of the country's first normal school, which was established at Concord Corners in 1823, is identified by a marker and tablet that was erected in 1923. The Town Hall was built in 1906 and is considered to be an important historic landmark. The Hall is currently the home of the town museum. Several historically significant homes and commercial structures are owned and preserved by Concord's private sector. The town recognizes the importance of these historic landmarks but does not choose to legislate the preservation of privately owned landmarks. The town has no current plans to purchase additional real estate for historic preservation.

Concord has one property on the National Register of Historic Places. The Judge David Hibbard Home was added to the register in 1995. There are two districts on the State Historic Register: Concord Village and Concord Corner. There are 37 properties on the State Historic Register. The State Register is used in reviews of projects requiring Act 250 permits and those involving state or federal funds, licenses, or permits. Sites listed in or determined eligible for the State Register are considered under criterion 8 of Act 250 for proposed projects that require land use permits.

### 8.4 Natural and Scenic Areas

Miles Pond and Shadow Lake are both important natural and scenic resources which are being used, protected, and preserved by the town of Concord. These areas provide excellent recreational opportunities for residents and the town's tourists. The picnic area and boat ramp facility on Miles Pond was established to enhance the scope of the pond's recreational capabilities. Consideration should be given to opening negotiations with the power company to develop an additional public right-of-way to the Connecticut River shoreline. Roadside parks may also warrant review.

In a previous town-wide survey, residents indicated that Concord should preserve its scenic spots and historic structures. The 2014 survey asked residents to rate how best this could occur. The top five means to preserve scenic resources identified in the survey were “Maintain Buffers around Bodies of Water,” “Limit Clear Cutting of Trees,” “Require Screening of New Development,” “Limit Heights of Buildings and Structures in Viewsheds,” and “Place Development Down Slope of Ridgelines.”



**The view of Miles Mountain from north of Copp's Store**

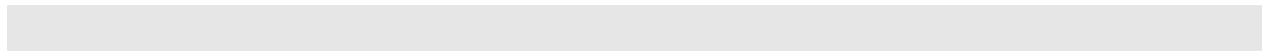


The stretch of Route 2 that goes through Concord is known as the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Highway. In 2005 the Federal Highway Administration awarded national designation to the Connecticut River Scenic Byway, which includes Route 2 in Concord, and runs through all the towns on both sides of the Connecticut River. America's Byways, of which the Connecticut River Byway is now a part, is a distinct collection of American roads and treasured places recognized for their scenic, historic, natural, recreational, cultural and archeological qualities. This is not a regulatory designation. Rather, it encourages the preservation of unique places by attracting tourists to rural America...and much-needed dollars to small communities.

The Connecticut River Joint Commission is composed of 30 river commissioners (15 from each state), who, in addition to obtaining Scenic Byway designation, are working to improve water quality, prevent shoreline erosion, and promote the cultural heritage of the region. The CRJC maintains a River Management Plan, which can be found at [www.crjc.org](http://www.crjc.org).

### **Preservation Goals and Strategies:**

1. Support and promote responsible stewardship of Concord's natural resources in a manner that protects the town's environmental well-being for future generations.
  - Keep apprised of the planning and outreach efforts of the Connecticut River Joint Commission.
  - Promote cultural heritage tourism along the Connecticut River and Moose River.
  - Consider establishing a local conservation commission that will undertake and inventory of Concord's natural resources.
  - Consider including the provision for Planned Unit Developments in Concord's zoning bylaw.
2. Encourage and provide incentives for adaptive reuse of historic buildings and articulate policies that preserve and protect Concord's rich history.
  - Seek Village Center Designation for Concord Village, which may provide tax incentives for the rehabilitation of historic income-producing and/or non-residential properties.



## 9. Education

Concord currently operates a preschool through 12th grade school within the town.

With a history spanning more than two hundred years, Concord's school system began with a single, rough-log building erected soon after the American Revolution. It then evolved and expanded into ten single-room schoolhouses dispersed throughout the district, and eventually centralized into the one school serving pre-K through high school system we have today.

Concord's early settlers planned to establish schools, and much land was set aside for this purpose. The first schoolhouse was a log building, coarsely constructed on blocking. In 1797 the town voted to construct an academy building at Concord Corners. The Reverend Samuel Reed Hall opened the First Normal School in America for the training of teachers on March 11, 1823, while he was the resident minister of the First Congregational Church. Reverend Hall originated the American system of teacher training and pioneered the use of the black-board system as a schoolroom appliance. In the 1823 fall term, the building known as the Columbian School was changed to Concord Academy, and in 1825 it was made Essex County Grammar School. In 1848 a new schoolhouse was completed on the westerly side of Cemetery Road. In 1899 the Judevine Memorial School was built on the present location of the school. In 1941 a gymnasium, assembly hall, two classrooms, a workshop, and dressing rooms were added. A fire on November 30, 1946, destroyed the school building. The elementary school was sent to East Concord for a time, but some grades returned to Concord's Cutting Block in the winter. The high school held classes in the Masonic Temple, the Town Hall, and the Library. C.H. Davis, a well-known industrialist, helped with a substantial financial contribution to make the school possible and laid the cornerstone for the current building on May 30, 1947.

Miles Pond School closed after the 1919-1920 school year, re-opened in 1931, and closed again in 1935. The last year for the North Concord School was 1949. The first building housing the East Concord School expanded to a room in the United Methodist Church in 1932-1934, and in 1934 the school moved to the building on the Oregon Road in East Concord. This building is still standing today. It closed as a school in 1996. All students were then brought over to Concord School. The old East Concord School sold in 1999 and has been privately owned by its third owner since closing.

In 1999 the present Concord School added to the front of the building to make room for an office, library, and Jr. High and High School stairwell with more classrooms.

In 2014, capital improvements to the school included new flooring in the hallway and cafeteria, a new science lab, and work in the Dickson Gymnasium including a new gym floor, new bleachers, a repainted gym exterior, and a refurbished lobby area.

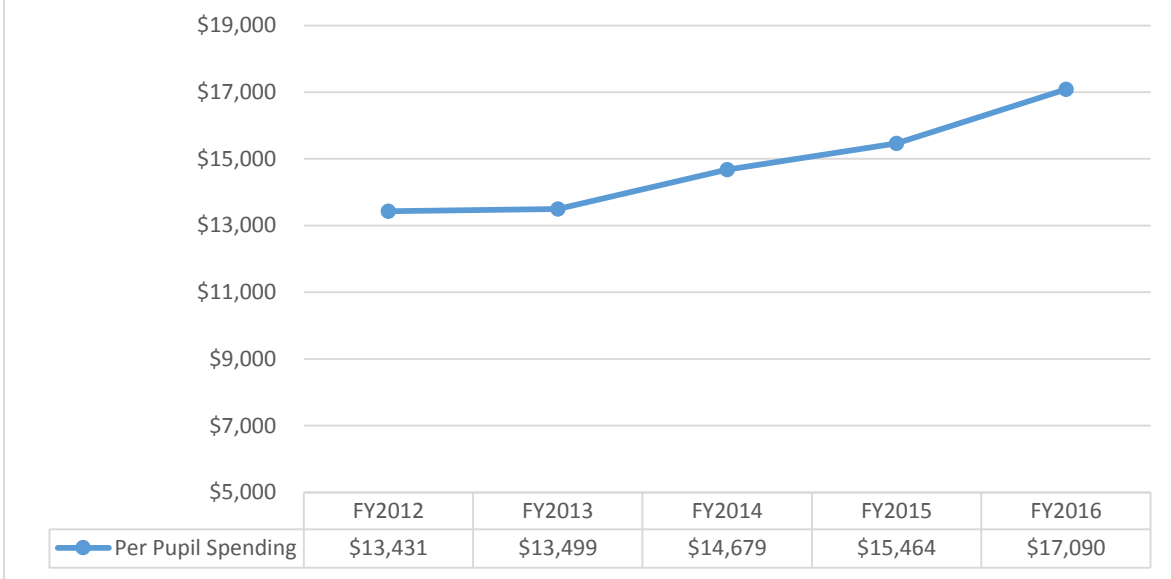
## **9.1 Projected Population and School Costs**

Based on population projections prepared by the State in 2013, the school-aged population is projected to decrease in all three counties of the Northeast Kingdom through 2030. As populations shrink and pupil count goes down, per pupil cost can rise in towns that operate their own schools, resulting in a higher homestead education tax rate. It is important to note that because of the way in which education funding is structured in Vermont, growth in a community that leads to more school-aged children does not result in an increase in the education tax rate in that town, even if the overall school budget increases. Vermont's state-funded education system links property tax rates to per-pupil spending rather than the overall school budget, so districts with high numbers of students enrolled in the local school, or that belong to a union school district tend to see lower education tax rates because of the economy of scale. For school choice towns, per-pupil spending is dependent on tuition rates at the schools to which students are sent, not on the total number of students. In towns that operate an elementary school but tuition out high school students, cost efficiency can be realized by high enrollment in the elementary grades coupled with moderate high school tuition rates.

## **9.2 Concord School System Quandary**

The controversial issue of closing the Concord High School has been debated in Concord for over 20 years with many votes proposed to close the high school losing by a slim margin. In an effort to meet the educational needs of all students, in 2011 the Concord School Board decided to financially support students who requested to go to high school elsewhere. This action lessened the town divide and controversy, but substantially increased educational costs during a time when the town and state is experiencing declining enrollment rates, increased education mandates and increased educational costs.

Figure 9.1  
Concord Per Pupil Spending FY 2012-Proposed FY2016



Source: Vermont Agency of Education and Concord Town Reports

Figure 9.2  
High School-Age Students in Concord 2009 - 2014

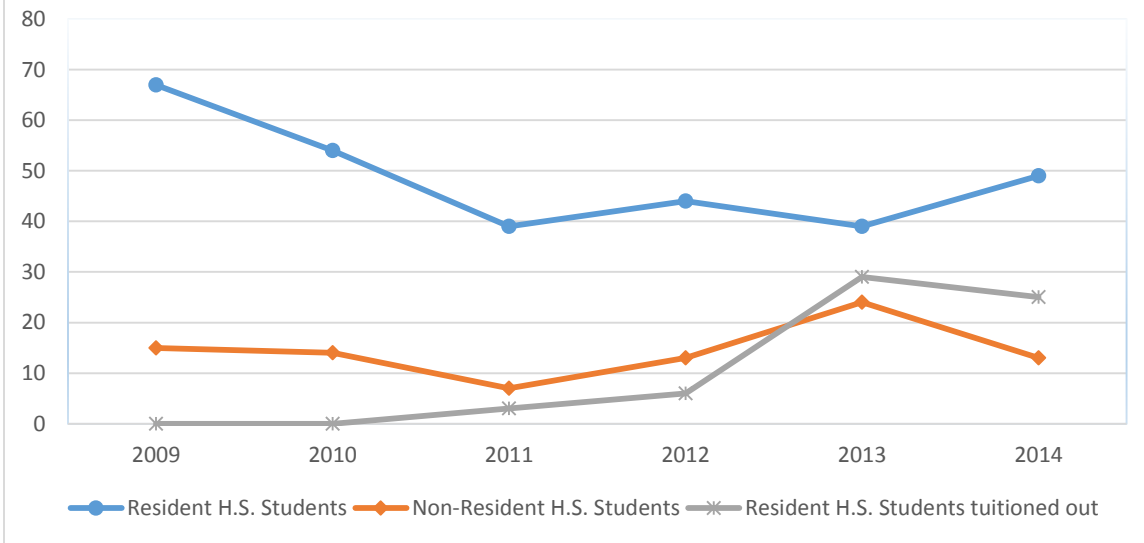


Figure 9.2 above shows high school student population in Concord from 2009 through 2014. Non-resident students from surrounding towns that attend Concord School pay tuition to the Concord school district. It is noted that only students for whom the town pays tuition are represented in the “tuitioned out” series. Students whose families, rather than the town of Concord, paid their tuition to attend school elsewhere are not represented on this graph. In the 2012, 2013 and 2014 school

years, three, six and two high school students, respectively, attended school elsewhere with tuition paid by their families.

Figure 9.3 below shows total enrollment in the Concord School from 2009 through 2014. The total include students tuitioned into the school from surrounding towns. It does not reflect resident students who attend school elsewhere.

<b>Figure 9.3 Concord School Enrollment 2009-2014 All Grades</b>															
<b>2009</b>															
<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>H.S. Total</b>
8	9	20	21	18	16	14	23	23	9	21	14	18	29	243	82
<b>2010</b>															
<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>H.S. Total</b>
18	12	12	18	22	20	17	18	18	21	14	13	12	29	244	68
<b>2011</b>															
<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>H.S. Total</b>
14	15	9	11	16	19	16	16	14	19	15	12	9	10	195	46
<b>2012</b>															
<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>H.S. Total</b>
20	13	16	14	12	11	17	17	17	15	24	16	10	7	209	57
<b>2013</b>															
<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>H.S. Total</b>
13	16	15	15	15	12	10	19	15	11	18	22	15	8	204	63
<b>2014</b>															
<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>H.S. Total</b>
17	9	14	18	22	15	16	12	20	17	10	17	22	13	222	62

Concord School is a member of the Essex-Caledonia Supervisory Union (ECSU). The superintendent and necessary staff are hired on a regional basis through the ECSU; this includes the staff necessary to provide services such as speech, hearing, and other special educational needs. The Concord School works in conjunction with the ECSU when developing a program for a child in need of special education.

### **9.3 Technical and Adult Education**

Technical education allows individuals to specialize in work areas typically not addressed by more traditional secondary school programs, and to earn industry-recognized credentials. These programs serve both high school-aged students and adult learners.

Technical education centers accessible to Concord are the Lyndon Institute Technical Center and St. Johnsbury Academy Applied Technologies Center.

The St. Johnsbury Academy program offers course in the career clusters of Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources; Arts and Communication; Architecture and Construction; Business; Hospitality and Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Transportation; and Distribution and Logistics.

Lyndon Institute offers career sciences programs in Automotive Technology, leading to NATEF certification; Human Services with an emphasis on Early Childhood Education; Allied Health, leading to LNA certification; Precision Machining; Welding, leading to AWS certification; Innovation/Engineering Career Academy; and Environmental Stewardship.

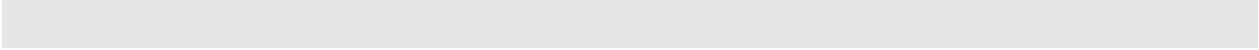
It is noted that educational offerings for adults have been underutilized by Concord residents.

### **9.4 Childcare**

There are five licensed providers in registered homes to provide daycare in Concord. State statute allows a home daycare of up to six full-time children as a permitted use of a single-family dwelling. Providers must notify the town’s Emergency Management Director of their operations. A list of registered providers and location can be found on the state website of the Division of Children and Families at <http://www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/>

### **Education Goals and Strategies:**

1. Meet the educational needs of all Concord students within a financially sustainable framework.
  - Assess costs and benefits and review all options for the education of high school students.
  - Investigate options for combining school resources with adjacent towns to improve the quality of K-8 education.
  - The town will take a more active role in local, regional, and state affairs. Concord should draw on these regional resources and add its experience and wisdom to this resource pool.

2. Maintain the sense of community that a local school can foster.
    - Utilize the school building for adult education, area clubs, and activities of community interest.
  3. Provide for Adult Education Needs
    - Increase communication to residents about the adult education offerings at the regional vocational centers.
- 

## 10. Energy

### 10.1 Electricity

Green Mountain Power Corp is the sole provider of electricity in Concord. Green Mountain Power (GMP) serves approximately 265,000 residential and business customers in Vermont and has a vision to be the best small company in America by empowering customers to save money and move to clean energy sources. GMP recognizes the role of electric utilities is changing and is focused on a new way of doing business to meet the needs of customers with integrated services, while continuing to generate clean, cost-effective and reliable power in Vermont. With a residential rate of \$0.14741 per kilowatt hour (effective September 19, 2014) GMP overall rates place them in the middle of the cost matrix of similar investor owned utilities in New England.

Some areas of Concord, such as Concord Village, are rarely subject to outages. However, other areas of the town that are served by distribution lines not adjacent to roads or highways experience a higher frequency and longer duration of outages.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a variety of heating fuels are being used in Concord to heat home with fuel. Oil and wood are the most commonly used fuels. (Figure 10.1)

**Figure 10.1: Housing Units by Heat Source, in Percentages**

	2008-2012 Average	
	Concord Town	Concord CDP (Village)
Utility Gas	0.4%	0.0%
Bottled, tank or LP gas	10.7%	6.3%
Electricity	0.0%	0.0%
Fuel Oil, Kerosene, etc.	58.5%	73.9%
Coal or Coke	0.0%	0.0%
Wood	26.8%	19.8%
Solar	0.0%	0.0%
Other	3.7%	0.0%

Source: Selected Housing Characteristics, American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

Figure 10.2 looks at the cost to heat 1,500 and 2,500 square foot homes. These numbers are estimates and may be on the low side. Variables such as the age, condition, and quality and amount of insulation will play a significant role in the cost to heat a home. Heating fuel distributors are located in Lyndon, St. Johnsbury, Lancaster, NH, and Littleton, NH.



**Figure 10.2: Cost Estimates for Heating a Home**

Type of Energy, Unit	\$/unit	\$/MMBTU	1,500 sq. ft.		2,500 sq. ft.	
			Monthly	Yearly	Monthly	Yearly
Fuel Oil, gallon	\$ 3.86	\$ 19.81	\$ 99.05	\$ 693.35	\$ 158.48	\$1,109.36
Kerosene, gallon	\$ 4.30	\$ 39.35	\$ 196.75	\$1,377.25	\$ 314.80	\$2,203.60
Propane, gallon	\$ 3.39	\$ 46.21	\$ 231.05	\$1,617.35	\$ 369.68	\$2,587.76
Natural Gas, therm	\$ 1.46	\$ 18.28	\$ 91.40	\$ 639.80	\$ 146.24	\$1,023.68
Electricity, kWh, resistive heat	\$ 0.15	\$ 43.46	\$ 217.30	\$1,521.10	\$ 347.68	\$2,433.76
Electricity, kWh, cold climate heat pump	\$ 0.15	\$ 14.49	\$ 72.45	\$ 507.15	\$ 115.92	\$ 811.44
Wood, cord (green)	\$ 193.33	\$ 14.65	\$ 73.25	\$ 512.75	\$ 117.20	\$ 820.40
Pellets, ton	\$ 247.00	\$ 18.83	\$ 94.15	\$ 659.05	\$ 150.64	\$1,054.48

Source: Vermont Department of Public Service, Vermont Fuel Price Report, January 2014

Monthly estimations are 1,500 sq. feet=5 million BTUs per month; 2,500 sq. ft=8million BTUs

Yearly estimation is based on 7 months of heating costs

## Renewable energy devices

In order to encourage the use of renewable energy devices, the Vermont State Statutes at 24 V.S.A. Section 4413 exempts from local regulation the installation of rooftop renewable energy devices that serves to heat water, space, or generates electricity; and does not permit local bylaws to prohibit the installation of other types of solar collectors or energy devices based on renewable resources.

## PACE Program

The State of Vermont and the regional planning commission support local participation in the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program. Town participation in the program helps eligible residents finance weatherization and efficiency improvements or install renewable energy systems on their properties. The value of those improvements is added to the assessed value of the property with the cost of the improvements paid back as an assessment over a period not to exceed twenty-years. Since the payments are tied to the property rather than the owner, PACE financing payments can be transferred to a new homeowner at any time. For more information see the “PACE Decision Making Packet” prepared by Efficiency Vermont and available on their website: <http://www.encyvermont.com>

## Energy Standards for New Construction

State statute at 24 V.S.A. § 4449, requires that when a municipal land use permit is sought, the administrative officer shall provide the applicant with a copy of the applicable building energy standards under 21 V.S.A. §§ 266 (residential building energy standards) and 268 (commercial building energy standards). This requirement is intended to increase compliance with the energy standards.

## 10.2 Transportation and Energy

This part of the Energy Element attempts to gain some understanding of the cost of transportation. However, it should be noted that the estimates of transportation costs are based only on one's travel to and from work. These estimates do not include travel for shopping, visiting friends and relatives, or other forms of pleasure travel.

Census data that have been used in the analysis of energy costs related to transportation to work included Place of Work, Means of Transportation to Work, and Travel Time to Work. This data, along with several assumptions, have been used to estimate the cost of commuting to work. The estimates and the assumptions used to calculate them appear below.

**Figure 10.3: Place of Work**

Work in County	114	20.4%
Work Outside County	295	52.7%
Work Outside State	151	27.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2008-2012

Even without the Place of Work data, it is obvious that Concord is a bedroom community. The vast majority of the Town's residents must travel to other communities for work.

**Figure 10.4: Travel Time to Work for Concord Commuters Who Drive Alone**

Less than 10 minutes	12.5%
15 - 29 minutes	60.9%
30-44 minutes	17.2%
45 or more	4.7%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2008-2012

A majority of Concord's working residents (73.4%) had a travel time to work of under 30 minutes. The estimated costs of commuting to work in Figure 10.5 are based on several assumptions as follows:

- Price of gas: \$3.47 per gallon.
- Days worked per week: Five
- Weeks worked per year: Fifty
- Average speed: 40 miles per hour.

**Figure 10.5: Annual Fuel\* Cost of Commuting to Work**

Travel Time to Work (in minutes)	Round Trip Distance	Miles Per Gallon		
		20	30	40
15	20	\$ 867.50	\$ 578.33	\$ 433.75
20	27	\$ 1,156.67	\$ 771.11	\$ 578.33
30	40	\$ 1,735.00	\$ 1,156.67	\$ 867.50
45	60	\$ 2,602.50	\$ 1,735.00	\$1,301.25
60	80	\$ 3,470.00	\$ 2,313.33	\$1,735.00
75	100	\$ 4,337.50	\$ 2,891.67	\$2,168.75
90	120	\$ 5,205.00	\$ 3,470.00	\$2,602.50

Gas Price: Gas Buddy, accessed February 3, 2014

\*This formula does not include vehicle depreciation.

Despite temporary shortages of some resources, such as wood pellets, there are no known scarcities among traditional and renewable resources, yet cost continues to be a barrier. *Affordability* is more an issue than *availability*.

Concord’s bylaw and development standards should allow and encourage energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy resources. Any development and land use activity that accomplishes this shall to the extent possible be done so as to mitigate undue adverse impacts to the rural character of Concord.

### 10.3 Development Patterns

Where people live and the design of our communities make a huge difference in the amount of energy we consume. Development densities should be the highest either in or immediately adjacent to Concord’s village centers, in order to limit the potential for energy-inefficient scattered development. New planned unit development can be sited in a way that maximizes energy efficiency and makes use of renewable energy possible. Rehabilitation of existing structures is almost always more cost-efficient, and the savings can outstrip even that of new “green” construction. Energy efficiency should therefore factor into any decision over whether to rehabilitate a public facility or build a new one. In addition, making more provisions for telecommuting may allow more people to work from home, thereby reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

### Energy Goals and Strategies:

1. Maintain patterns of development that conserve energy
  - Establish standards for mixed use and/or planned unit developments that encourage innovation in design and more efficient use of land and energy.

- Identify and promote pedestrian and cycling opportunities. Seek planning grant for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure plan
2. Accommodate growth of wireless technology, alternative energy sources such as wind power, while protecting the rural character and scenic resources of the town.
    - Update zoning bylaws to comply with recent changes to state statute regarding energy devices.
  3. Encourage Carpooling
    - Identify locations for a park and ride
  4. Promote energy efficiency for all residents
    - Increase education on new energy technologies that harness local renewable energy sources for residential electric use.
    - Consider the creation of a town energy committee to conduct energy audits and identify opportunities to save energy within the community.
    - Seek out grant funding assistance for energy planning (such as Clean Energy Development Fund) as needed, and seek grants to update municipal buildings.
    - Schedule upgrades to municipal buildings to incorporate energy efficient systems.
    - Educate the public about “green” building practices.
    - Support the State’s plan to expand telecommunications development to allow more individuals to work from home.
    - Provide information to residents regarding grants and financial incentives for energy audits and upgrades that increase energy efficiency in private homes.



## 11. Transportation

Concord has an extensive network of roads and trails including state, town, and private roads. Many of these roads were built to accommodate the transportation needs of the early inhabitants and form the nucleus of the transportation infrastructure that is required to facilitate present-day traffic demands. The diversified interest groups who travel these roads include local commuters, commuters from surrounding towns, school buses, tourists, freight transport, through traffic, and others.

US Route 2 is the major corridor through the villages of Concord, North Concord, and Miles Pond and, though providing significant benefits to the local economy, it creates major issues due to the amount and speed of traffic on very narrow lanes of travel. There have been a significant number of accidents along this corridor, caused by speed, curves in the road, and moose.

### 11.1 Roadways

There is a total of 78.225 miles of public roadways in Concord classified as follows:

State Highway 1	10.765 miles
CLASS 2	11.710 miles
CLASS 3	43.10miles
CLASS 4	12.71 miles
Total	78.285 miles

### 11.2 Road Maintenance

Concord roads (65.575 miles) are maintained by three (3) full-time employees with equipment housed at the Town Garage located on Brook Road. The Department has a 2005 Cat loader, 2004 Cat grader, 1993 Cat backhoe, 2014 Western Star, 10 wheel dump truck with plow, 1997 Int. 6-wheel dump truck with plow, 2011 F550 truck with plow, 2011 International Dump Truck with plow, 1987 Trackless sidewalk plow and sweeper, along with many other pieces of equipment.

The rear of the Town garage area has been excavated and provides space for storage of winter sand and gravel for road maintenance, both of which are purchased locally.

In 2014, a new salt shed was erected.

(See the “flood resilience” section of this plan for a description of a recent inventories of road infrastructure and projects planned to mitigate against future flood damage).

### **11.3 Scenic Roads**

Due to the rural and pastoral nature of Concord in general, there are many scenic roads and vistas that are enjoyed by residents, non-residents and tourists alike. These include Goudreault Hill Road, High Ridge Road, Royalston Corner Road, Shadow Lake Road and Streeter Road. The Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Highway (Route 2 in Concord) is part of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway, which is more than 500 miles, and incorporates both sides of the Connecticut River. The nearest Waypoint Interpretative Center (Welcome Center), which supports increased tourism along the byway, is in St. Johnsbury.

### **11.4 Speed Limits**

All town roads have a speed limit of not more than thirty-five (35) miles per hour for gravel-surfaced roads and not more than forty (40) miles per hour for paved roads in accordance with the Town of Concord Traffic Ordinance adopted August 3, 2006. Speed limits for US Route 2 are governed by the State of Vermont.

### **11.5 Recreation Uses**

Although there are no published cycling routes per se, there are a number of recreational uses that occur along Route 2, particularly cycling. There are no bicycle or pedestrian lanes, and this creates a number of safety issues. The area that crosses Carr Brook Road, for example, is exceptionally dangerous. This area has seen many accidents, some of them fatal. Trucks traveling in this area tend to speed in order to maneuver tight bends and steep grades in the road. What's more, there are small pull-outs for individuals to park their cars, which can lead to even more perilous situations.

Some "ancient roads" may be used for recreational purposes in Concord. These forgotten town roads have created a host of problems in title searches and for private landowners whose properties these roads may cross. On July 1, 2015, unidentified corridors are automatically discontinued, and the land reverts back to the owner(s) of land the highway passed through or abutted. A town can reclassify an unidentified corridor as a Class 4 highway or a trail in that period between 2010 and 2015, but it must follow a process established by Vermont Statute for researching and laying out of highways or trails. This process may also include compensation to an affected landowner.

### **11.6 Other Transportation Services**

Locally, Rural Community Transportation (RCT) provides limited bus service. Caledonia County State Airport in Lyndonville and Whitefield Regional Airport in Whitefield, NH, are approximately 25 miles from Concord. Major airlines serving the area are in Burlington, VT, Lebanon, NH, and Manchester, NH. The former Maine Central Railroad line through town is independently owned but has been dormant for many years. In addition, there are numerous

potential landing sites for the DART medical transport. These sites are documented in the Town’s Emergency Operations Plan. Finally, waterways have been used for pontoon plane landing sites on occasion.

## **11.7 Transportation Advisory Committee**

Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) accepts suggestions for projects from the regional planning commissions. These suggestions usually come out of the monthly Transportation Advisory Committee meetings. They are prioritized and then submitted to the Secretary of Transportation for approval. If approved they, too, are added to the State Transportation Improvement Plan.


Concord is part of VTrans Maintenance District 7. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) for Concord’s region meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Community officials, public transportation providers, interest groups, and individual citizens are encouraged to attend these meetings. Each year a list of suggested projects is compiled from the TAC meetings and is sent to the Secretary of Transportation for approval and possible inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

## **11.8 State Highways**

In July of 2014, the State statute was revised to require that local site plan approvals involving access to a State Highway include a “Letter of Intent” from the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The letter should confirm that the Agency has reviewed the proposed site plan and is prepared to issue an access permit under 19 VSA section 1111, and include any conditions that the Agency proposes to attach to the permit. This would affect site plans for developments adjacent to Route 2.

### **Transportation Goals and Strategies:**

1. Provide financial support for town Highway Department in their efforts to improve roadways in Concord. Advocate for a transportation system that is safe, efficient, and affordable.
  - Ensure that the Town of Concord continues to be represented on the Transportation Advisory Committee.
2. Encourage and improve safety of alternate modes of transportation, including walking.
  - Improve and maintain existing sidewalks. Extend sidewalks from Shadow Lake Road to the school.
  - Investigate feasibility of using unused railroad for recreation purposes.
  - Investigate traffic-calming measures that can be used to reduce speeds along roads as they approach the villages.

- Advocate at TAC meeting the clear marking of a crosswalk near the Post Office with a caution light.
3. Work with VTrans to establish signs at Exit 1 on Interstate Route 93 identifying Concord and mileage.
  4. Establish signs on Class 2 and 3 roads at major intersections for directions similar to those in surrounding towns.
- 



## 12. Flood Resilience

### 12.1 Introduction

One of the State planning goals is to “encourage flood resilient communities.” Specifically, state statute directs:

(A) New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

(B) The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.

(C) Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be encouraged.

### 12.2 Existing Conditions

The northwestern portion of Concord is located in Basin 15, The Passumpsic River Water shed and the remainder of Town is located in Basin 16, the upper Connecticut River Watershed. Within the Upper Connecticut Watershed, there are two subwatersheds in Concord: the “Commerford and Moore Reservoir” and the “CT River Direct – Taylor Brook to Miles Stream.” Within the Passumpsic River Watershed, Concord is within the Moose River subwatershed.

Concord has several bodies of water within its boundaries including Halls Brook, Mink Brook, Cutting Brook, Carr Brook, Dudley Brook, Roaring Brook, Miles Stream, and the Moose River. There are also numerous unnamed brooks, streams and small ponds. There are also three bodies of open water: Shadow Lake, Miles Pond, and the Moore Reservoir.

The Connecticut River runs along the Southerly border of Concord for approximately eight and one-half miles, and is accessible at the end of Cozy Nook Road and Walker Pit Road.

Concord has a history of flooding, with the most recent flood event occurring in May of 2011. This flood event resulted in damage requiring \$817,250 in repair work, which was eligible for reimbursement through FEMA project assistance funds.

Areas that have been flooded in the past include sections of Prospect Street, Willson Road, Ranney Road, George Street, Shadow Lake Road, Fournier Road, Brook Road, Long Hill Road and Folsom Ave/High Street.

There is a man-made dam on Miles Pond and a natural dam on Shadow Lake. Upstream on the Connecticut River there is the Gilman Dam and the Stratford Dam. There is little or no residential or business population along Connecticut River.

## **Mapped Flood Hazard Areas**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Concord was last revised in 1992. The FIRM identifies “Special Flood Hazard Areas” (SFHA) in Concord on 4 separate panels.

If a property owner thinks their property has been inadvertently mapped in a Special Flood Hazard Area, they may submit a request to FEMA for a Letter of Map Change (LOMC). A SFHA is defined as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. A LOMC reflects an official revision/amendment to an effective Flood Insurance Rate Map. If the LOMC request is granted, property owners may be eligible for lower flood insurance premiums, or the option to not purchase flood insurance. A number of LOMCs have been issued for the FIRM that covers Concord.

The number of structures currently within the FEMA-mapped flood hazard area is not currently known; however, this information will be gathered as part of the work on the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, work on which is expected to start in 2015.

The State Agency of Natural Resources has mapped river corridors in Concord, which identifies the fluvial erosion hazard areas adjacent to rivers and streams.

## **Existing regulations, programs and plans**

Concord is a member of the National Flood Insurance Program and includes flood hazard area requirements in Article 4 of its Zoning Ordinance. Membership in the NFIP enables property owners in the FEMA-mapped flood hazard area to obtain insurance. According to the FEMA database, there are only two properties within the FEMA special flood hazard in town that currently have flood insurance. While there may be properties within the mapped flood hazard area that do not have flood insurance, if a federally-back mortgage is sought for the property, flood insurance would be required as a condition of obtaining the mortgage.

Concord updates its Local Emergency Operations Plan every May. This plan identifies emergency responders, local contacts and the location of emergency shelters in Town.

Concord’s All Hazards Mitigation Plan was prepared in 2005 as an annex to NVDA’s Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan identifies critical facilities in Town, and areas that are most vulnerable to various types of hazards, including flood hazards. The plan also outlines mitigation measures that can lessen the severity of emergency events. The Town will soon begin working on a new Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to be submitted to FEMA for approval. An up-to-date, FEMA-approved plan will enable the Town to access grant funds available through FEMA to undertake a variety of hazard mitigation projects.

In 2009 the Essex County Natural Resources Conservation District completed a Phase II Stream Geomorphic Assessment report on six reaches (or sections) of the Moose River. Recommendations included the establishment of forested riparian buffers in reaches M7, M9, M10 and M13 and fencing and installation of riparian buffer in Reach M08 below Concord village, where grazing areas are adjacent to the stream.

The Watershed Management Division of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources released the *Passumpsic and Upper Connecticut River Tactical Basin Plan* in the summer of 2014, which summarizes work and plans undertaken throughout the tactical basin and provides direction on future actions to improve water quality and flood resilience.

#### ***Passumpsic River Basin Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping Project***

This **March 2014** report primarily addresses projects to mitigate non-point source pollution, including the upgrading of existing detention basins to treat runoff before it enters the receiving waters. The maps of stormwater infrastructure, including the location of storm drains and catch basins, are also useful in assisting with emergency preparedness during events of heavy rains or spring snowmelt. The full report, which includes mapping and evaluation of three other Northeast Kingdom communities can be accessed at:

[http://www.vtwaterquality.org/erp/docs/erp\\_Basin\\_15\\_report.pdf](http://www.vtwaterquality.org/erp/docs/erp_Basin_15_report.pdf).

The *Natural Resources Atlas* at <http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra/> contains a “road erosion risk” layer, which ranks the erosion risk of unpaved Class 2, 3 and 4 Town roads as well as driveways longer than 1,000 feet. Features considered in assessing risk include undersized culverts, elevation and slopes, soil types, and proximity to rivers, lakes, and wetlands. The result is an identification of road segments that have a “low”, “moderate” or “high” erosion risk. This is a useful tool for communities to identify potential road hazards during storm events. It can also be useful to the local road commissioner and public works supervisor as a starting point in prioritizing road infrastructure maintenance projects.

## **12.3 Planning Considerations**

### ***Inundation Areas and River Corridors***

Flood areas identified as Special Flood Hazard Areas on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) are inundation areas, areas that may become flooded by rising water levels. Any mortgages, grants, or loans (including disaster aid) to a structure in the FEMA-identified Special Flood Hazard Area must secure flood insurance.

Land located in close proximity to streams and rivers is particularly exposed to damage not only by flash flooding, but by bank failure and stream channel dynamics. While the FIRM maps identify inundation areas, the River Corridor maps being developed by the Vermont Department

of Environmental Conservation identify the fluvial erosion hazards associated with rivers and streams. The River Corridor includes the area adjacent to a river or stream that provides area in which the stream can move in order to maintain equilibrium conditions over the long term.

### ***Transportation infrastructure***

A culvert and bridge inventory noting the location, size and condition of all culverts and bridges in Concord has been undertaken with the assistance of the Lyndon State College GIS department and entered into the Vermont Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool (VOBCIT). This database is a good resource for local officials, planners, and state agencies. The Town is in the process of adding all the “Short Structures” (under 20 feet) to the VOBCIT.

However, the compatibility of culverts and bridges with the geomorphic conditions of rivers and streams is also critical information in determining the adequacy of these structures to withstand flooding events. The Essex County Conservation District has submitted a grant proposal on behalf of the Town of Concord to undertake a culvert and bridge assessment that will determine geomorphic compatibility of bridges and culverts, as well as “aquatic organism passage” (AOP) compatibility. Assessment of structures for AOP is a measure of habitat connectivity. Poorly designed culverts can limit the movement of fish and other aquatic populations to critical spawning, feeding and refuge habitats, and thus affect the State’s fisheries. Capital improvement projects undertaken by the Town that address both flood hazard issues and fisheries issues can draw from a greater variety of funding sources.

The Town, with the assistance of a Better Backroads Grant, completed a road erosion inventory in 2014. Twelve road infrastructure projects have been identified, six of which are budgeted and scheduled to be completed by 2016.

This work will reduce long term road maintenance costs and alleviate impacts to streams, wetlands and waterbodies.

### ***Vegetated buffer areas and coverage limitations***

Maintaining natural vegetation and limiting impervious surfaces in areas close to lakes and streams helps prevent potential sedimentation of streams and water bodies and reduce stormwater runoff that could contribute to downstream flooding.

### ***Upland and wetland areas***

The management of upland areas plays a role in flood hazard management. As these areas are cleared and become developed, storm water, instead of infiltrating naturally into the soil,

quickly runs off hard surfaces picking up pollution and carrying it to waterways. Increased flows during storms can destabilize stream channels and adversely affect water quality. Limiting the extent of disturbance and development of impervious surfaces on upland slopes helps to reduce the amount of storm water runoff, and helps to avoid overwhelming existing stormwater infrastructure, including roadside ditches and culverts. Avoiding steep slopes greater than 20% when clearing and developing land, and requiring that stormwater runoff from new development be managed on-site will also help mitigate future flood hazards.

Wetlands provide an important floodwater storage function, storing stormwater runoff and flood waters that overflow riverbanks. As flood waters recede, the water is released slowly from the wetland soils. By holding back some of the flood waters and slowing the rate that water re-enters the stream channel, wetlands can reduce the severity of downstream flooding and erosion.

The State of Vermont regulates activities in and adjacent to wetlands in accordance with the Vermont Wetland Rules. State permits are necessary for activities in or within 100 feet of Class I wetlands, and within 50 feet of Class II wetlands. A permit can only be issued if it is determined that the use will have no undue adverse impact on protected functions, unless such impacts are mitigated.

Protection of steep slopes and wetland areas can also be achieved through securing conservation easements in critical locations and by encouraging enrollment of managed forested areas in the current use program.

### ***ERAF***

The Emergency Relief Assistance Fund (ERAF) helps Vermont municipalities repair damaged infrastructure after a presidentially-declared disaster. ERAF funding typically covers half the required 25% non-federal match for approved projects.

After October 23, 2014 Towns must adopt four flood hazard mitigation measures in order to maintain level state funding in the event of such a disaster: 1) Adopt Flood Hazard Regulations that meet minimum standards for enrollment in the National Flood Insurance Program; 2) Adopt the most recent Agency of Transportation Road and Bridge Standards; 3) Adopt a Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP); and 4) Update and adopt a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and submit to FEMA for approval.

## Flood Resilience Goals and Strategies

1. Mitigate flood hazards and maintain good water quality by undertaking restoration projects, reducing stormwater runoff from new development, and assuring long-term protection of the River Corridor from incompatible development and uses.
  - Create a capital improvement plan to address the projects identified for Concord, beginning with the highest priority projects.
  - Amend the Flood Hazard regulations to regulate development within the River Corridor areas mapped by DEC, in order to mitigate flood hazard risks and protect investments made in restoration projects.
  - Consider establishing impervious coverage limitations as part of the town's zoning district standards to limit stormwater runoff that can contribute to flooding and degrade water quality.
  - Include Planned Unit Development provisions in the Town's zoning bylaws to better enable developments that have reduced clearing and impervious coverage, and enable flexibility in siting developments outside of floodplains and river corridors.
  - Hold a flood hazard area education event to inform local residents.

## 13. Adjacent Towns

### Waterford

Waterford's updated Municipal Plan was adopted in 2008, and work began on an update in 2015. As Concord's neighbor to the west, any continued commercial or industrial growth along the Route 18 corridor has the potential to impact Concord.

Waterford's industrial and commercial enterprises currently exist along State Route 18 and the Duck Pond Road. Development along Route 18 and Interstate 93 will increase traffic on US Route 2 through Concord to eastern markets. The Cross Road connecting Waterford and Concord is a heavily traveled corridor to passenger cars, school buses, and heavy construction vehicles. Waterford plans to target any future commercial or light industrial growth in this area.

Waterford operates an elementary school (grades pre-school to eight) within the Town and tuitions its high school students to many secondary educational schools including St. Johnsbury Academy, Lyndon Institute, and Concord High School. The potential exists for more Waterford students to attend Concord High school.

Among the development sites in Waterford that may impact Concord are the High Ridge Road and Shadow Lake Road. These two areas have recently seen the construction of new homes, and Concord may also see this type of development.

### Kirby

The town of Kirby is situated to the northwest of Concord village in Caledonia County, and its border runs along an area slightly to the north of the US Route 2 corridor. The updated Kirby Municipal Plan was adopted in November 2012 and received regional approval in 2013.

Kirby has designated the southern tip of town adjoining Concord as their only light industrial/commercial zone. Concord zoning currently has this area of town zoned as Medium Density, and the current use is residential. A bed and breakfast, heavy truck repair, welding shop, and golf course already exist in this section of town.

Kirby has experienced moderate growth over the last ten years with a population of 456 in 2000, increasing to 493 in 2010. Much of Kirby's residential growth has been in three areas of growth, and south Kirby is one of these. Burroughs Road (Bullock Woods Rd.), Kirby Mountain Road, and Wood Lane (Brook Road) all pass through Concord as primary travel corridors to US Route 2, and, because of geography, these residents tend to be more oriented toward Concord in their commuting and lifestyle patterns.

Kirby residents cite the availability of school choice as one of the advantages of residing in the town. There are no plans to change the system, and continued increase in population could cause

a potential increase in the number of student's tuitioning into the Concord pre k-12 school population.

Many South Kirby residents utilize the Concord Transfer Station as their primary means of rubbish disposal, and Concord Fire and Rescue is the primary provider of emergency services on the southern side of Kirby Mountain.

Kirby cites its "bedroom community" status as its biggest problem, and indicates it is creating stress on their tax base. Their plan looks to strengthen that base through more diversification, citing South Kirby as the primary center for this type of growth to occur.

### **Victory**

To Concord's north is the town of Victory. The northern and southern parts of town are separated geographically, and the area south of Victory Bog Wildlife Management Area tends to be oriented toward Concord rather than their neighbors to the east and west. A proposed Municipal Plan was offered in July of 1993, but no current active plan exists. The town has no zoning.

Much of the recent growth has been in South Victory and the Victory Hill areas which are closest in proximity to North Concord and the US Route 2 corridor.

There are no longer any schools located in Victory. School choice is offered to all residents with students in pre K-12.

The North Concord Post office maintains a rural route for residents of South Victory. Some South Victory residents use the Concord Transfer Station as their primary means of rubbish disposal. Concord Fire and Rescue is the primary provider of emergency services for all sections of Victory south of Damon's Crossing.

### **Lunenburg**

Concord shares its northeastern border with the town of Lunenburg. The original Lunenburg Municipal Plan was submitted in 1990, not adopted, and has not been re-adopted or re-written. The town of Lunenburg has no zoning. The greatest potential impact on Concord from Lunenburg comes from school choice. Lunenburg offers no secondary education facilities. Therefore, some Lunenburg students choose to attend Concord High School. The former Gilman paper mill has impacted Concord residents by eliminating over a hundred good paying jobs from the local economy.

The Lunenburg town line runs along the Oregon Road. In some areas of Lunenburg residents can only access their homes through Concord.



## Littleton, NH

Littleton, New Hampshire, is situated to the south of Concord, separated by Moore Dam reservoir on the Connecticut River. Access to Littleton is available through Gilman to the east and Waterford to the south. Littleton has a Master Plan that was adopted in 2004.

Littleton has a small urban environment and is experiencing rapid growth in all sectors. The rapid growth has created a large number of new jobs and shopping opportunities for area residents.

Commuter routes to and from Littleton through Concord are experiencing an increase in traffic flow, particularly on Shadow Lake Rd., the Cross Rd. and Leonard Hill Rd. Concord and its close proximities to Littleton has the possibility of becoming a bedroom community.

## St. Johnsbury

St. Johnsbury is situated to the west of Concord. The St. Johnsbury Municipal Plan was updated in 2011 and received regional approval in 2013. Tourism plays an active role in the St. Johnsbury plan.

The eastern rail line (the old Maine Central) which is privately owned, is noted for its potential to serve businesses and promote growth into East St. Johnsbury which borders Concord.

Given the current availability of housing in the immediate area, and the cost of raw land, Concord could experience a need for affordable housing and municipal services to a number of these new residents. There is a lack of senior housing in Concord, which means that many of Concord's older residents eventually end up moving to St. Johnsbury.

**Figure 13.1: Town Population Projections, 2010-2030**

Town	Census 2010	2030 Projection A	2030 Projection B
Concord	1235	1116	1114
Waterford	1280	1376	1367
Kirby	493	575	571
Victory	62	56	56
Lunenburg	1302	1151	1149
St. Johnsbury	7603	7384	7335

Source: Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development, August 2013

## Regional Plan

Concord is a member community of Northeastern Vermont Development Association, the regional planning commission and economic development corporation serving Essex County. NVDA's Regional Plan, currently in the process of being updated, recommends that future

development should follow traditional development patterns, while providing for economic development opportunities and livable communities. It notes the importance of preserving traditional development patterns and supporting the vitality of the region's village centers, such as Concord. Traditional village centers are characterized by denser residential patterns than the surrounding area, as well as businesses that serve the local population, community buildings (such as libraries, town halls, churches), and emergency services.

The regional plan includes the following strategies for town and village centers that may pertain to Concord:

1. Assist communities applying for designation under the Vermont Village Center program.
2. Encourage mixed-use development (residential, commercial, and appropriate light industrial) in town centers.
3. Direct public investment for new elderly and affordable housing towards town centers. Aside from promoting traditional development patterns, this will put seniors and low-moderate income residents closer to such amenities as transportation, shopping, and community activities.
4. Encourage towns to plan for community recreational and social needs.
5. Make reasonable accommodations for housing in town centers.

For rural areas, NVDA's strategies include encouraging open space planning and recreation infrastructure. Goals related to rural lands include:

6. Sustainable forestry should remain an economically viable tool to preserve woodlands, open space for recreation, and local character.
7. Farming and agriculture should remain an important and viable sector of the regional economy.
8. Contiguous tracts of prime agricultural soils should be preserved.

## Plan Implementation Goals and Action Steps

The following table identifies the goals and recommended actions that have been identified in each section of the Municipal Plan. Each action is identified as “regulatory” or “non-regulatory” and identifies the party/parties that would implement the action.

The goals and action items are grouped by plan section.

<b>Land Use</b>		
<b>Goals and Action Steps</b>	<b>Type of Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party/Parties</b>
<b>1. New Development should complement traditional development patterns and land uses, and should retain and protect natural features and special scenic areas, ridgelines, bodies of water, and contiguous blocks of agricultural and forestland</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the creation of a conservation overlay district as a means to protect scenic and environmentally sensitive features in town</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host open space preservation workshops in the community</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission, non-profit (e.g., VLT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the creation of comprehensive subdivision standards that address protection of steep slopes, prevention of erosion and impacts to surface water, protection of natural and scenic resources, conservation of agricultural lands, and energy efficiency</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<b>2. Traditional uses that maintain the rural character of Concord, such as farming and forestry, should be encouraged.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host informational workshops for owners of agricultural and forestry-related enterprises providing information on resources and funds available for business growth.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission, non-profit (e.g., UVM extension)
<b>3. Encourage reinvestment and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and facilitate high-density, mixed-use development in the village areas that provides for a safe and livable work and play environment.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct tourism-related development to the villages.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with area towns in preparing for increased development and undertaking expansions in infrastructure and services.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard, adjacent towns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek Village Center Designation for Concord Village from the state, in order to provide tax credits for rehabilitation of income-producing properties.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard, DHCD

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the logistics of building a municipally owned and managed water and/or wastewater system to serve the village areas. Seek funds available through the Vermont Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program, and USDA Rural Development.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concentrate residential and industrial development in areas where municipal infrastructure, such as water and sewer, may become available.</li> </ul>	Both	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<b>4. Encourage the redevelopment of areas throughout town that currently contain land uses and/or lot configurations that are incompatible with the attractive, safe and orderly development of the town.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with other towns in the region to develop a viable way to address buildings that are a threat to public health and safety.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<b>5. Balance the need to preserve the rural character of Concord with the ability to attract and retain employment opportunities, including home occupations and home-based businesses.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide for Planned Unit Developments, in accordance with Vermont State statute, in order enable cost-effective and energy-efficient development that preserves open space through clustering.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<b>6. Protect important scenic viewsheds, such as Shadow Lake and Royalston Corner, from impacts from development that is either out-of-scale with what is currently there or obstructs scenic views.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide for the use of Planned Unit Developments in order to maintain flexibility in the siting of new development to protect scenic views</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider revising lot width and front setback requirements to retain an open, rural character, and protect scenic vistas.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider acquiring land or development easements on lands that afford important scenic views, such as the view from Shadow Lake Road.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard, Non-profit land trust
<b>Housing</b>		
<b>1. Maintain a diversity of housing types affordable to a range of income levels, and a choice between rental and ownership, to support the community throughout the town.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish appropriate standards for mobile home parks.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue Village Center designation from the State of Vermont Downtown Program for Concord Village. Designation makes tax credits available for</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard, DHCD

renovation of commercial properties (including apartments).		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek grant funding to undertake a feasibility study for the development of a municipally- owned and managed public water system that would allow for denser development</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<b>2. Promote the creation of senior housing, and/or housing built in accordance with “universal design” principles, for those seeking alternatives housing types.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish planned unit development standards to encourage mixed use developments of an appropriate scope and scale and of a design that is complementary to both existing village centers and less densely settled areas.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the feasibility of establishing a retirement community overlay district.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission, Selectboard
<b>3. Make the public (and potential developers) aware of properties with high potential for redevelopment as housing.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate area realtors on the potential for redevelopment of properties in town, and of incentives available through relevant state programs</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with housing providers to inventory development capacity for senior and affordable housing.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<b>Economic Development</b>		
<b>1. Expand small businesses to serve the needs of our citizens. Encourage the development of commercial and light industries of an appropriate scope and scale that will raise income levels and provide employment for present and future residents.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the economic development assistance programs and Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) to attract and support new industry and commercial development in town.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<b>2. Create employment opportunities for current and future residents -- without increasing costs of municipal services or education.</b>		
<b>3. Make it easier for local entrepreneurs to start and/or expand their businesses in Concord.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a business group, such as a local Chamber of Commerce.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Business owners, non-profit assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure in town to attract new business development and support local entrepreneurs.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the University of Vermont Extension about conducting a Market Area Survey to identify local need for goods and services, travel patterns, and</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission

housing needs.		
<b>4. Protect Concord’s agricultural and silvicultural resources so that they may be used to tap into new valued-added and local production opportunities in the future.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support value-added production opportunities that may help make agriculture and silviculture more profitable in Concord.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission (direction for Act 250 projects)
<b>5. Strive to achieve a diverse economic base, locally and regionally</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalize on scenic resources by supporting geotourism businesses.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission (direction for Act 250 projects)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate feasibility of using Twin State Railroad as a recreational trail</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Northeast Kingdom Travel &amp; Tourism about assessing Concord’s tourism resources and developing an actionable marketing strategy.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<b>Utilities and Facilities</b>		
<b>1. Maintain and make needed improvements to Town Hall Building</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An evaluation and assessment should be made to decide continued restoration and preservation of the facility.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant monies should be solicited, especially to provide an elevator, central heating and energy efficiency upgrades.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking issues need to be resolved. This will require engineering studies and technical assistance.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>2. Provide support to the residents of Concord in emergencies.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The people of Concord should be urged to properly mark their homes with accurate 911 numbers. Many numbers are either difficult to read or non-existent. In an emergency situation, this can cause a serious delay.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Town E911 Coordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued training for fire and rescue personnel, along with maintaining and updating of equipment is essential.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Fire Department
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep emergency planning efforts up-to-date.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support mitigation projects</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>3. Determine future needs for Town Offices.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate whether new building at a different location may resolve present and future space issues.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>4. Continue to support the Town’s efforts to restore its cemeteries.</b>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>5. Promote the use of parks and athletic fields</b>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore the playground at Folsom Common</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>6. In order to forward the goals identified in the Land Use section of this plan of revitalization and further development in the village centers of Concord, plan for the development of public water systems to serve the village center areas of Concord.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town should investigate available grants and funding sources from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and USDA Rural Development to investigate the feasibility of a public water system.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>7. Ensure the safe and efficient management of wastewater</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility of developing water and wastewater systems to serve high-density districts.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information to the people of Concord regarding State regulations for onsite water and wastewater systems.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Zoning Administrator
<b>8. Comply with the State's Universal Recycling Law in regard to the disposal of all recyclables, leaf and yard debris, and food scraps.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town will seek ways to recycle items that are not presently recyclable at our facility.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town of Concord should remain a member of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District, as long as it remains economical and effective.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>9. Encourage the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure in Concord to attract new business development.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anticipate growth in new areas such as wireless technology, alternative energy sources such as wind power, while protecting the rural character of the town.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard/Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the coverage goals of Vermont's Telecommunications Plan (2014).</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard/Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for universal service coverage in Concord.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard/Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town should investigate the feasibility and desirability of the Town owning a tower that could be available to a variety of telecommunications service providers.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard/Planning Commission
<b>10. Develop a Capital budget and Program for the Town of Concord</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for growth in Concord that keeps pace with the town's public facilities and services and preserves the</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard

town’s scenic and rural character.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to limit fluctuations in town expenditures from year-to-year, and ensure that expenditures are supportive of Concord’s planning goals and strategies.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>Recreation</b>		
<b>1. Promote and protect Concord’s reputation as a “recreation-friendly” town.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider use of abandoned railroads as recreation trails.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support regional marketing efforts, e.g. Northeast Kingdom Chamber, Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association NEKTTA, and the Connecticut River Scenic Byway Council, to make sure that their efforts includes Concord’s myriad of recreational activities.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Northeast Kingdom Travel &amp; Tourism about assessing Concord’s tourism resources and developing an actionable marketing strategy.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with landowners who might provide access to additional recreation opportunities.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	VAST/ Top of the World/Planning Commission
<b>2. Ensure continued public access and enjoyment of Concord’s lakes, ponds, and streams.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect water quality in Concord.</li> </ul>	Both	State/Planning Commission/Private land owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make residents aware of public access points to the Town’s water bodies: the State boat access to Shadow Lake on Shadow Lake Road, and to Miles Pond at Campers Lane; and access to the Moose River near the site of the old foundry and off Wendell Road.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<b>Preservation</b>		
<b>1. Support and promote responsible stewardship of Concord’s natural resources in a manner that protects the town’s environmental well-being for future generations.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep apprised of the planning and outreach efforts of the Connecticut River Joint Commission.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote cultural heritage tourism along the Connecticut River and Moose River.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider establishing a local conservation commission that will undertake an inventory of Concord’s natural resources.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider including the provision for Planned Unit Developments in Concord’s zoning bylaws.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<b>2. Encourage and provide incentives for adaptive reuse of historic buildings and articulate policies that preserve and protect Concord’s rich history.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek Village Center Designation for Concord Village, which may provide tax incentives for the rehabilitation of historic income-producing and/or non-residential properties.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<b>Education</b>		
<b>1. Meet the educational needs of all Concord students within a financially sustainable framework.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess costs and benefits and review all options for the education of high school students.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	School Board/Supervisory Union
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate options for combining school resources with adjacent towns to improve the quality of K-8 education.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	School Board/Supervisory Union
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The town will take a more active role in local, regional, and state affairs. Concord should draw on these regional resources and add its experience and wisdom to this resource pool.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	School Board/Supervisory Union
<b>2. Maintain the sense of community that a local school can foster.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize the school building for adult education, area clubs, and activities of community interest.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	School Board
<b>3. Provide for Adult Education needs</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase communication to residents about the adult education offerings at the regional vocational centers.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	School Board
<b>Energy</b>		
<b>1. Maintain patterns of development that conserve energy</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish standards for mixed use and/or planned unit developments that encourage innovation in design and more efficient use of land and energy.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and promote pedestrian and cycling opportunities. Seek planning grant for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure plan.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<b>2. Accommodate growth of wireless technology, alternative energy sources such as wind power, while protecting the rural character and scenic resources of the town.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update zoning bylaws to comply with recent changes</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard

to state statute regarding energy devices.		
<b>3. Encourage Carpooling</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify locations for a park and ride</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<b>4. Promote energy efficiency for all residents</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase education on new energy technologies that harness local renewable energy sources for residential electric use.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Efficiency Vermont
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the creation of a town energy committee to conduct energy audits and identify opportunities to save energy within the community.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek out grant funding assistance for energy planning (such as Clean Energy Development Fund) as needed, and seek grants to update municipal buildings.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard/Energy Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule upgrades to municipal buildings to incorporate energy efficient systems.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate the public about “green” building practices.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Zoning Administrator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the State’s plan to expand telecommunications development to allow more individuals to work from home.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information to residents regarding grants and financial incentives for energy audits and upgrades that increase energy efficiency in private homes.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Efficiency Vermont
<b>Transportation</b>		
<b>1. Provide financial support for town Highway Department in their efforts to improve roadways in Concord. Advocate for a transportation system that is safe, efficient, and affordable.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the Town of Concord continues to be represented on the Transportation Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>2. Encourage and improve safety of alternate modes of transportation, including walking.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve and maintain existing sidewalks. Extend sidewalks from Shadow Lake Road to the school.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate feasibility of using unused railroad for recreation purposes.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate traffic-calming measures that can be used to reduce speeds along roads as they approach the villages.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard/Transportation Advisory Committee

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate at TAC meeting the clear marking of a crosswalk near the Post Office with a caution light.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>3. Work with VTrans to establish signs at Exit 1 on Interstate Route 93 identifying Concord and mileage.</b>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>4. Establish signs on Class 2 and 3 roads at major intersections for directions similar to those in surrounding towns.</b>	Non-regulatory	Selectboard
<b>Flood Resilience</b>		
<b>1. Mitigate flood hazards and maintain good water quality by undertaking restoration projects, reducing stormwater runoff from new development, and assuring long-term protection of the River Corridor from incompatible development and uses.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a capital improvement plan to address the projects identified for Concord ...beginning with the highest priority projects.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend the Flood Hazard regulations to regulate development within the River Corridor areas mapped by DEC, in order to mitigate flood hazard risks and protect investments made in restoration projects.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider establishing impervious coverage limitations as part of the town's zoning district standards to limit stormwater runoff that can contribute to flooding and degrade water quality.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include Planned Unit Development provisions in the Town's zoning bylaws to better enable developments that have reduced clearing and impervious coverage, and enable flexibility in siting developments outside of floodplains and river corridors.</li> </ul>	Regulatory	Planning Commission/Selectboard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a flood hazard area education event to inform local residents.</li> </ul>	Non-regulatory	Planning Commission/National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator