



# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Thomas J. Aspell, Jr., City Manager  
**DATE:** December 31, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** 2018 – 2019 City Council Priorities

### **Recommendation**

Accept this report as to the current status of the City Council Priorities established on January 29, 2018.

### **Background**

Members of the City Council met on January 29, 2018, to discuss and set priorities for Calendar Years 2018 and 2019.

### **Discussion**

Listed below, in ranked order, are the accepted priorities, projects and ongoing initiatives; and their respective statuses as of December 31, 2019.

#### **GOAL 1. BALANCED BUDGET ISSUES: FY 2019 and 2020**

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

**Status:** The City is currently under contract with all of its labor unions. The City is in negotiations with the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) and the Concord Police Patrolmen's Association (CPPA), both of whose contracts will expire on December 31, 2019. The City completed negotiations and executed collective bargaining agreements with the Concord Police Supervisors Association (CPSA) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) during the fourth quarter of calendar year 2019.

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

**Status:** Health insurance costs decreased in FY 2020. The City has received a not to exceed rate of 6% from its carrier, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, effective July 1, 2020; and hopes to negotiate a better rate before the actual renewal. All City employees now pay at least 10% of the premium costs for health insurance. The City provides insurance to retirees as well, and, in January 2020, the medical portion of the plan will increase by \$5.68 due to the Affordable Care Act Health Insurance Fee. This brings the total Medicare coverage cost to \$373.98 per month.

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

**Status:** City Administration will continue to discuss this issue with City Council and work together to determine if this separate fund is necessary to change how the City addresses storm water issues.

The Engineering Services Division is working to secure consulting services for the analysis required to evaluate a storm water utility.

**d) Enterprise Fund Approach**

**Status:** The Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee had an initial discussion regarding Enterprise Funds at their April 16, 2018 meeting. The Committee further discussed Enterprise and Special Revenue funds at its September 17, 2018 meeting, specifically addressing the Solid Waste, Arena and Golf funds. After consultation with the City's external auditors, the Committee recommended to the full City Council to reclassify the Solid Waste, Arena and Golf funds from Enterprise to Special Revenue, and for the City Manager to include support to other funds in the annual budget process. The City Council approved the recommendation at the November 2018 City Council meeting. The change of these funds to Special Revenue was included in the FY 2020 budget adopted by City Council on June 17, 2019.

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

**Status:** An Economic Development Marketing Tool Kit and a Strategic Plan was accepted by City Council, and a new Economic Development website was launched.

The City Council voted to rescind the use of the 1970's era Army Corps of Engineers flood study as the basis of Concord's flood development regulations. This standard was outdated and unique, creating confusion and placing Concord at a disadvantage compared to other NH municipalities. The City now utilizes the FEMA flood maps as its regulatory base, which is consistent with the rest of the state.

The City is in the midst of updating its zoning ordinance to a form-based code. A public engagement plan was developed, stakeholder meetings were held, and a character analysis and strategy report distributed. A draft of the form-based code districts was submitted in late spring and several public meetings were held in June. Since that time, multiple revised drafts have been reviewed by the Planning Division. The City Planner has also set up meetings with individual City Councilors to review the work product to date. Anticipated adoption of Phase 1 is spring 2020.

City Council accepted the donation of labor and appropriated funds to renovate the terminal lobby and pilots' lounge at the Concord Municipal Airport, to make this entrance into Concord more attractive. This project was successfully completed in the summer of 2018.

City Council authorized ArgenTech Solutions, Inc. to apply for an FAA waiver to locate a drone operations training company at the Concord Municipal Airport. The company located its corporate headquarters in Hangar 4, but soon outgrew the space. It has since relocated to Terrill Park Drive and continues to expand.

Upon unanimous recommendation by the Planning Board, the City Council unanimously approved the rezoning of 28.5 acres of property along Whitney Road, from Urban Commercial and Industrial to Gateway Performance, to encourage the development of said property. The owners of this site have since announced plans to build a Market Basket supermarket. The owners are working collaboratively with City staff with a goal of ultimately designing and building an improvement to the intersection of Hoit Road and Whitney Road, which is necessary to future development.

The Granite Center development project to redevelop 6 Dixon Avenue, 14 Dixon Avenue, and 1 Eagle Square was completed. This was a public/private partnership with the City, which entailed sale of City-owned property, RSA 79-E Community Tax Relief Incentives, and various license agreements for improvements on City-owned property constructed by the developer.

The Rollins Court housing project, on North State Street (former site of St. Peter's Church), is under construction.

An Aldi Supermarket opened on Loudon Road in the fall of 2018, and, according to sources associated with the development, it is outpacing sales expectations.

The OCP Zoning District was modified to allow for the inclusion of housing.

MetalMax, a siding and roofing materials company, opened a location on Locke Road. Coordination and assistance on issues such as the company's energy needs was handled by the Economic Development Office.

The Bank of New Hampshire Stage opened on June 22, 2019. The project is expected to draw 30,000 patrons to downtown annually and create \$1.1 million in new direct, indirect, and induced economic development impacts.

Construction on the TRU Hotel at Exit 12 continued and ground was broken on the adjacent T-Bones/Cactus Jack restaurant.

A co-working space opened in the Capital Commons building.

A re-zoning request for the former Concord Drive-In property off of Black Hill Road (in the vicinity of Exit 13) was adopted by City Council. This change will facilitate mixed use development of that site. In December, Council approved a reduction in the landscaping burden for parking lot construction. This change, a collaborative recommendation of City staff and the private sector, was supported by the Planning Board and will still provide for more than adequate levels of tree and plant material.

### **GOAL 3. PUBLIC SAFETY WORK / CONTINUED SUPPORT OF SOCIAL SAFETY NETWORK**

#### **a) Opioid/Substance Abuse**

**Status:** The Police Department continues to take an aggressive stance in combating the opioid and illegal drug crisis facing the City. The Department has worked closely with other stakeholders on this matter, to include other police agencies, service providers, and other branches of the criminal justice system. The Department is currently working directly with Riverbend's Choices, an initiative designed to provide

comprehensive treatment services for those suffering from substance abuse issues. The Department will continue these efforts and regularly assess personnel assignments and initiatives to most effectively address illegal drug usage in the city.

During calendar year 2018, the Police Department made 335 arrests of individuals with illegal drug related charges. Additionally, during calendar year 2019, the Department made over 260 arrests of individuals with illegal drug related charges. The Department continues to utilize Project Granite Shield grant funds to cover overtime costs in conducting illegal drug investigations in the City of Concord and surrounding towns. The Department received an additional \$50,000 in grant funding through Project Granite Shield to continue these investigative efforts through June 2020. The Department was also awarded an additional \$25,000 in grant funding by Project Safe Neighborhood to help combat violent crimes in the city. The Department will continue to seek out grant funding for initiatives geared towards addressing the illegal drug crisis.

The Police Department continues its involvement with the Merrimack County Drug Court Initiative. As part of this initiative, the Department has a member assigned to the Drug Court Team. The Team meets weekly to discuss the progress of individuals that have been assigned to participate in the Drug Court process. The Team regularly evaluates the status of each individual in the program and makes recommendations based upon the individual's performance. The Department conducts curfew checks on each participant that resides in the City of Concord.

The Fire Department has also been very active in collaborative efforts to address substance abuse. It continues to participate in monthly meetings of the Capital Area Substance Abuse Disorders Leadership Team, with representatives from the Concord Police and Human Services Departments, Concord Hospital, Riverbend Community Mental Health, the Capital Area Public Health Network, and Granite United Way, to assure that all stakeholders are aware of addiction recovery resources within the community.

In August 2018, the Fire Department applied for a grant from the NH Department of Safety's Project FIRST (First Responders Initiating Recovery, Support, and Treatment) to enhance the ability for public safety responders to provide follow-up monitoring to persons with substance use disorders, as well as provide training and other resources to their families and households. In November 2018, the Fire Department was approved for \$126,999 in grant funding, contingent on the approval of City Council and the Governor and Executive Council. The City Council approved the grant on January 14, 2019, and the Governor and Executive Council approved it on February 20, 2019. A Program Director was hired on April 28, 2019. The program went live in late June.

Since June, 40 referrals have been made for substance abuse treatment. Nine individuals were enrolled in treatment programs, with three already completing a program. Coaching was provided to two other individuals.

The Program Director has taught 16 classes, attended by a total of 147 responders, and has taught 12 community classes to a total of 182 people. A total of 170 naloxone kits have been distributed in the community. The Program Director offers classes for the public at Fire Headquarters on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, covering Narcan administration and hands-only CPR. The Program Director has also made several visits to homeless encampments to conduct wellness and safety checks related to

substance abuse. The Program Director also provided assistance to the Capital Area Public Health Network during a hepatitis outbreak.

There has been great interest in the capital area in expanding the program beyond the boundaries of Concord. Discussions are in place to begin that endeavor in early 2020.

## **b) Community Policing**

**Status:** During calendar years 2018 and 2019, the Police Department has been involved in a number of initiatives designed to further its relationship with the community. As part of these initiatives, the Department has hosted several community meetings involving the New American community at “Blue and You” events. At these events, officers meet with the New American community and discuss ways to strengthen their relationship with the Department, as well as how to better understand American law enforcement. In turn, Department members learn more about their culture.

The Police Department assisted in planning and hosting a refugee youth summit event to help teach the youth of the New American communities the dangers of drug and alcohol use. The summit covered topics such as where youth can turn for help if they are suffering from addiction, how drugs and alcohol affect the body and mind, and the dangers associated with the use of these substances.

The Police Department takes part in the Refugee Mental Wellness Community Council and assisted in planning an event for New Americans and other refugees to help educate those suffering from drug and alcohol addiction. The event was held on March 15, 2019 and was highly successful.

The Police Department has participated in several other programs to help promote community interaction with children and adults. With the assistance of several local businesses, the Department hosted several “Coffee with a Cop” events throughout the City and conducted “Lunch with a Cop” and “Police Readers” events throughout the schools in the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts. The Department also participated in the “Love Your Neighbor” event at Keach Park, and hosted bicycle rodeos during which children received instruction on safe bicycle operation and the proper use of safety equipment. The Department collaborated with several community agencies and businesses and was able to give away a number of bicycles and bicycle helmets to those who attended the event.

During calendar years 2018 and 2019, the Department has added the D.A.R.E. Program back into most of the schools in both the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts. D.A.R.E. is designed to teach students at an early age the dangers of drug and alcohol use. This program has been highly successful and appreciated by both students and school staff.

During calendar years 2018 and 2019, the Department sponsored 10 Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) programs. RAD is a comprehensive self-defense course for women and includes situational awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance, and progresses to the basics of hands-on defense training. The RAD system is dedicated to teaching women defensive concepts and techniques against various types of assault by utilizing easy, effective, and proven self-defense tactics. The system of realistic defense provides women with the knowledge to make an educated decision about resistance.

Due to the unfortunate trend of mass shootings occurring in businesses and schools throughout the country, the Police Department has been offering active shooter training seminars. During calendar years 2018 and 2019, the Department participated in 25 active shooter trainings with over 800 attendees. The Department has also conducted six safety presentations with local businesses, 15 fraud education presentations for seniors, and seven domestic violence presentations with the New American groups.

Members of the Police Department have presented several internet safety talks in the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts to help educate students about the potential dangers of the internet and how to avoid being victimized.

In 2018, the Department took part in the National Police Lip-Sync Challenge and created a video which has been viewed in excess of 570,000 times. This video helped double the number of followers on the Department's social media platforms.

The Department hosted National Night Out at Rollins Park in August 2018 and 2019. These events promoted positive police and community engagement. Estimated attendance each year was over 3,000 people, with over 100 displays and vendors. The Department's National Night Out has become a banner event for the Department and community, and has greatly assisted in the Department's goal of promoting police and community cooperation and engagement.

The Police Department continues to work on a new initiative to assist in community engagement. The Department partnered with Hero Pups, an organization dedicated to training therapy dogs for veterans and first responders dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder and other injuries. The Department now has a trained comfort dog that engages citizens that have suffered a traumatic event or suffer from mental health issues, and also helps engage the public at schools, hospitals and other venues. Liberty, the one year old Labrador Retriever, has completed all of her training and is very active within the Department and community. She has participated in many social and community events throughout the City, and has also made many appearances at all of the schools throughout the City. Liberty recently was certified to assist in interviews of children and other victims of violent crimes or trauma. Liberty was the first police comfort dog in New Hampshire to receive this certification.

In December 2018, the Police Department was very fortunate to receive a donation of \$50,000 from an anonymous community member. The donor requested that members of the Police Department identify persons and families in need and make monetary disbursements or use the funds to obtain goods and services for the recipients as appropriate. This mission was dubbed *Operation Blue Elf* and received very good press coverage by the local print and television media in the days leading up to Christmas. Police officers and civilian support staff made great strides in completing this mission by the close of 2018. This same community member has donated an additional \$50,000 to be used for Project Blue Elf during the holiday season of 2019 and into 2020. This program has been highly successful and one in which the Department members truly enjoy participating.

In October 2019, the Police Department, with the assistance of the Merrimack County Human Services Department and Riverbend, implemented an Adverse Childhood Experience Response Team (ACERT). This team is a partnership that has been deployed to serve children who have been exposed to violence. The ACERT members have been trained to respond to incidents, assess situations, and determine next steps

that can be taken for the child, such as support groups, mental health counseling, early childhood education, or child-parent psychotherapy. The Department was awarded grant funding in the amount of \$60,000 from the Granite United Way to assist with the ACERT efforts. The Concord School District also supplied funds to pay for training of all officers in Trauma Informed Policing. Since its inception, the ACERT team has conducted over 125 home visits.

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

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

##### **Status:**

Fire Department: The Fire Department continues to maintain a very active presence in print, electronic media and social networks. The Department's Facebook page has 5,242 followers, its Instagram account has 1,015 followers, and its Twitter account has 1,405 followers. WKXL has a weekly feature that airs on Fridays regarding Fire Department news and activities. The topics for electronic and social media have included Project FIRST activities; renovations to the Department's communications center; a recruitment process for Firefighter/Paramedics; driver training; the Department's involvement in funeral services for a Worcester, Massachusetts firefighter who died in the line of duty; the rescue of several animals at a pet shop fire; and holiday safety tips.

The Project FIRST Director and one of the Deputy Chiefs attended the 10,000 candles vigil, and the same individuals were also speakers at the NH Behavioral Summit held on December 17, 2019.

General Services Department: The General Services Department continues to increase public outreach. The Department promotes public information via website updates, print media, press releases, the City Manager's newsletter, its monthly General Gazette newsletter, and bill stuffers. Social media is used to improve community engagement, continue branding, and increase public awareness of services.

During the second quarter of FY 2020, the General Services Department promoted various tasks and jobs completed by different divisions, including hydrant testing, equipment maintenance, setting up voting locations for the election, upgrades to the Bicentennial Square bathrooms, preparing Christmas trees and holiday wreaths, and response efforts to different weather conditions (clearing drains for heavy rains, removing road debris and downed trees in high winds, and determining if early snow forecasts would disrupt leaf collection). Everett Arena events including ice skating and hockey were also promoted. The Department continues to utilize Twitter and the website's news flash module to alert the public about road closures. Sometimes Facebook and Instagram are used to promote pictures of the sign crew setting up road closures for big community events, such as Halloween Howl or trick-or-treating on Auburn Street. Facebook is also sometimes utilized if there is a road closure due to a water leak, in order to provide pictures and progress updates. The Department continues to promote new employees, employee promotions, retirements, and job openings on Facebook.

Several campaigns were heavily promoted this quarter, including E-Z Pay for WaterSense, Imagine A Day Without Water, Fall Leaf Collection, America Recycles Day, and winter parking bans.

E-Z Pay for WaterSense is an annual contest the Department hosts to encourage Concord water customers to enroll in the E-Z Pay Program for a chance to win a Shower Better Bundle, in celebration of Shower Better Month, to save water, energy, and possibly even money on utility bills, with an assortment of fun and water conservation shower-related items (including an EPA WaterSense labeled showerhead in coordination with the Department's WaterSense partnership). This year's contest had an increased growth in entries and overall awareness due to an initiative to put a bill stuffer in the water bills to directly target the contest audience.

Imagine A Day Without Water included outreach about the importance of water services with a successful open house event for our Water Treatment and Wastewater Treatment facilities, to provide an opportunity for the public to visit the facilities to learn more about the City's drinking water and wastewater services.

Fall Leaf Collection included a strategic promotional campaign of direct mailers to Concord residents followed by an additional mailer to residents in the south end that were impacted by a change in the starting location of collection this year. In addition, the leaf collection web page was updated in detail with all program information (including several maps), and also included a feedback form for residents and a list of frequently asked questions. Social media marketing was also implemented with a Facebook event page, several post updates, and the release of a new video for leaf collection produced by the Department. This new video was shared across various platforms and was advertised on Facebook directly to Concord residents. It was noted that the volume of public feedback decreased significantly this year, perhaps, in part, due to cooperative weather, bagged collection catching on, and various methods of outreach, including this year's addition of FAQ's.

America Recycles Day was another successful campaign that included residents pledging to recycle better and a recycling poster contest for local third and fourth grade classrooms. The underlying message of this campaign promoted the change of the recycling industry and the need to reduce contamination by recycling better.

Winter parking bans returned this quarter with the arrival of snow. Protocol is followed for each ban to release information in several areas, including the City website, a release from the General Gazette newsletter, posting to social media, advertising on Facebook and Instagram, and contacting local media. The Highway and Utilities Superintendent and the Communications Coordinator also hosted an episode on the City's podcast, *Talk Concord*, to discuss Fall Leaf Collection and winter operations. This podcast episode was well received and was intended to answer some frequently asked questions about leaf collection and plowing.

As of December 31, 2019, the Department has 2,353 Facebook likes, 599 Twitter followers, 568 Instagram followers, and 264 YouTube subscribers. In addition, the Department has 10,328 total subscriptions to the Alert Center, Notify Me, and News Flash modules of the City website. Approximately 60 press releases featuring the Department were published by the local media during the quarter and the General Gazette newsletter has 1,226 total subscribers.

Human Resources Department: During the second quarter of FY 2020, the Department posted 17 new full-time, two part-time, and three roster position vacancies. This totaled 22 new postings combined with the 10 that were carried forward from the previous quarter. During this quarter, the Department canceled one posting due to lack of qualified responses.

In the second quarter of FY 2020, 20 job vacancies (FT, PPT, and PT) were filled, of which one was an internal promotion and 19 were new hires. There was an average of 65 days from posting to hiring. This statistic does not include temporary hires, roster/continuous development, interim, or intern postings. There was one recruitment that exceeded 100 days. This was excluded from the statistics as an outlier. Although we have seen an uptick in the average number of post to hire days; in a very competitive market we still are within industry averages for government/municipality hiring. Last quarter, nine of our positions were filled internally. Finally, there was one Police Officer hired from a continuous/roster recruitment, one interim posting, and 22 seasonal/temporary/intern positions were successfully filled.

The Human Resources Department continues to use its standard free resources (the City website, Primex, NHMA, Chamber of Commerce, Concord TV, EEO/AA sites, NHES Job Match, NH Employment Support for Guard and Reserve, and the NH Community College Consortium), as well as paid sources (Union Leader, Indeed, Facebook, LinkedIn, Craig's List, and industry specific job boards) for promoting job postings. These sources typically generate an adequate response for most positions. The Department continues to seek new ways to make open positions visible to the veteran community. The Department also continually looks for new and affordable ways to promote its talent acquisition needs.

Information Technology: Outstanding growth of the City website has shown to be an excellent investment in communication technology. The City website review team completed a new City website, which debuted on June 28, 2018. The new website incorporates the newly designed City seal, a new color scheme, has redeveloped the leisure services sites, and expanded the design on the General Services pages.

Library: In January 2019, the Library began a "#CPLstories" promotion during which a patron-provided, personal story regarding the benefits of Library resources is highlighted each month via social media, the Library's website, and the Library's monthly newsletter. In March, the Library worked with Concord TV to produce a short video called, "Everyone is Welcome at the Concord Public Library," in celebration of the 2019 National Library Week theme, "Libraries = Strong Communities." The video features different Library staff welcoming the Concord community to the Library in a variety of languages, including French, Spanish, Tagalog, Italian, and Magyar. The Library continues to maintain a strong social media presence, including very active Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages; and a monthly newsletter with over 2,000 subscribers, growing by an average of 100 subscribers per month.

In June 2019, the Library (in collaboration with the City's Public Information Officer and Concord TV) released the first episode of a new video series called, "From the Concord Room." The series explores the history of Concord through the lens of postcards and other archival materials found in the Library's "Concord Room" (local history collection). The first episode focused on New Hampshire's State House and was released during its recent Bicentennial Celebration. The second episode told the fascinating history of the Eagle Hotel.

The Library launched “Library Aware,” its eNewsletter and Digital Marketing service. The July-September newsletters were sent out to almost 1,900 people. The Library uses this service to create flyers, bookmarks, social media posts, programming posters, and more. It is geared specifically to libraries, making it much easier to market our collections, programming, and services.

The Library began using Niche Academy to better promote its digital resources, as well as to train patrons and staff on the use of these tools. Niche Academy integrates with the Library’s website to offer slide shows, video tutorials, help buttons, etc. providing a more patron friendly experience.

The Library’s new ILS (BC Analytics) allows staff to create custom reports that can help with marketing efforts. During September, staff created a report of long-expired patron accounts and exported the corresponding email addresses. A reminder was sent to those patrons to visit the Library and renew their library account. Staff plans to use this feature of its ILS (in conjunction with Library Aware) to better communicate with patrons and promote library services.

Parks & Recreation: The Department continues to maintain its website and very active Facebook (over 5,000 followers) and Instagram pages. Department staff continues to send out news releases and works with the City’s Public Information Officer and Concord TV for assistance with marketing needs. This year, the Department created several new trifold brochures to highlight rental opportunities at the three community centers, the Merrimack Lodge at White Park, and, most recently, the Perkins Chapel at Blossom Hill Cemetery.

Police Department: The Police Department continues to utilize a number of social media sites, as well as the City website, to present information about the Department to the public and to keep the public informed of events occurring in the City. The Department’s website includes many pages with valuable information, including guidance on how to obtain reports and other services that the Department provides. The site also provides notification about upcoming hiring processes, drug take-back days, upcoming citizen police academies, and other events. In addition, Police Department press releases are placed on its web page.

The Police Department’s Twitter page has approximately 2,176 followers, and its Facebook page has approximately 7,810 followers. Additionally, the Department’s Instagram page has approximately 1,150 followers. All of these venues are used to disseminate information regarding Department/City events and provide emergency information as necessary.

The Police Department has also created a Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram page for Liberty, the Department’s comfort dog. All of these platforms are used to update the community on Liberty’s appearances and how her training is going. Liberty’s Facebook page currently has approximately 1,236 followers, her Twitter page has approximately 133 followers, and her Instagram page has 752 followers. The Department has received positive feedback on all three pages.

The Police Department also administers the Concord Regional Crimeline, which allows individuals to anonymously provide tips regarding ongoing investigations in Concord and surrounding towns. Tips can be submitted by phone, online, or by text message. During calendar year 2018, over 222 tips were received leading to the arrest of 35 individuals. During 2019, over 280 tips were received leading to the arrest of more than 30 individuals.

The Police Chief participates in a weekly radio show on WKXL, where different topics are addressed based upon events occurring in the city, state, and, on occasion, the nation.

The Police Department's Domestic Violence Officer has appeared on several news outlets to include the Concord Monitor and NH Public Radio to discuss domestic violence and options for victims.

Another initiative of the Police Department is "Coffee with a Cop". This program is designed to promote interaction between the community and the Department by sharing coffee and fostering discussion in a relaxed atmosphere. Since its inception, the Department has held over 20 "Coffee with a Cop" events at different locations throughout the city. All of these events have been well received by the public and business owners.

The Parking Division website was overhauled and updated last summer. It is regularly updated with relevant information about ongoing initiatives, such as the Narrow Streets Project. In addition, the Parking Division has been mailing notices to all property owners in narrow street study areas advertising public forums which have been held to date.

## **GOAL 5. PARKING MASTER PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

**Status:** The City embarked upon a strategic planning process in 2014 for the purpose of making the Parking Fund financially solvent, while simultaneously promoting economic development goals tied to parking, as well as improving customer service and the quality of the City's parking facilities. The Parking Committee presented its final Strategic Plan to the City Council on November 13, 2017. The Strategic Plan included a variety of short and long-term recommendations to be implemented over the next several years. In December 2017, the City Council approved several ordinances to begin implementation of parking reforms. All ordinances took effect on July 1, 2018 (start of FY 2019). On April 9, 2018, the City Council approved \$35,000 to re-program meters and install updated signage in order to implement the above-mentioned ordinance changes. Other financial components of the Strategic Plan were implemented as part of the FY 2019 budget.

The following is a status update for key recommendations of the Parking Strategic Plan:

- 1) **Parking Fund/General Fund Relationship:** Although originally scheduled to be implemented as part of the FY 2019 budget, this portion of the plan was delayed, per the City Council, during the budget adoption process. As a result, all non-meter ticket revenues – estimated at approximately \$100,000 – continue to accrue to the General Fund rather than the Parking Fund during FY 2019 and FY 2020.
- 2) **Technology:**
  - a. **Dedicated Parking Website:** The domain name "ParkConcordNH" was secured in March 2018. A Request for Proposals for a web designer has not yet been issued; however, a temporary parking website ([concordnh.gov/parking](http://concordnh.gov/parking)) was created in June 2018 on an interim basis to help facilitate communication with the public. The interim website was a vast improvement over the City's old website.
  - b. **Online Payments:** On-line payments began in September 2018 and can be made at [concordnh.gov/parking](http://concordnh.gov/parking).
  - c. **Smart Meters & Kiosk Upgrades:** On March 16, 2018, the City received proposals from vendors for new smart meters, as well as future upgrades of pay station kiosks. Vendor interviews were completed in May 2018, and, on August 31, 2018, the City selected two vendors – Flowbird and IPS – for a nine month trial to

- test their proposed products. The trial period began in October 2018 and concluded on July 15, 2019. Based upon the results of the trial period, IPS was selected to be the City's smart meter vendor. However, Flowbird (formerly Cale) shall remain the City's vendor for kiosk pay stations for the foreseeable future. On August 16, 2019, the City issued a Purchase Order to IPS in the amount of approximately \$294,000 to acquire 361 smart meters for Phases I and II of the meter expansion, as set forth in the 2017 Strategic Parking Plan and the FY 2020 Budget. Meters will be installed in early January 2020.
- d. **Pay By Cell App:** On May 22, 2019, the City issued a Request for Proposals to the two pay-by-cell vendors currently operating in New Hampshire. Responses from vendors were received on June 21, 2019. Staff then undertook due diligence, including field testing both apps. The City Parking Committee met on September 23, 2019, to discuss the proposal, as well as to provide guidance to City Administration concerning financial considerations associated with each vendor. Based upon that input, City Administration, subject to negotiation of a contract and other considerations, has tentatively selected Pay by Phone to be the pay by cell vendor for the City's parking system. Pay by Phone is currently used by the City of Nashua. It is anticipated that Pay by Phone will be operational in Concord in January 2020.
  - e. **Transition to Cale Parking Cards:** This began on October 22, 2018 and is now complete.
- 3) **Days/Hours of Enforcement:** This recommendation was implemented on July 1, 2018. New hours of enforcement are as follows:
    - a. On-Street and Lots: Monday through Saturday, 9 AM to 7 PM
    - b. Garages: Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 7 PM
  - 4) **Meter Parking Time Limits (3HR / 10HR):** This recommendation was implemented on July 1, 2018. Metered parking in the downtown central business district (i.e., Main Street and associated side streets between State and Storrs Streets) is now 3-hour parking. All other on-street meters are now 10-hour parking zones.
  - 5) **Meter Rates:** This recommendation was implemented on July 1, 2018. New meter rates are as follows:
    - a. Lots and Garages: \$0.50 per hour
    - b. On-Street: \$1.00 per hour
  - 6) **Meter Expansion:**
    - a. **Phase I (South Main & Concord Streets):** Phase I meter expansion (i.e., approximately 43 meters on South Main Street and Concord Street) was completed in late October 2018. Meters were not installed on Dixon Avenue due to loss of on-street parking spaces associated with the Granite Center redevelopment project.
    - b. **Phase II:** On June 17, 2019, the City Council approved Ordinance #3043 and #3044 to convert 338 on-street parking spaces into metered parking. This total includes approximately 258 meters throughout Downtown Concord, as recommended in the Strategic Plan, as well as 80 +/- additional meters on Storrs Street. Funding to purchase and install these meters was appropriated as part of the FY 2020 budget. These spaces will be managed with single space smart meters. In accordance with the FY 2020 Budget, these meters will be operational in early January 2020.
  - 7) **Changes to Certain Citations:** This recommendation was implemented on July 1, 2018.

- 8) **Time Limit Enforcement for Handicap Parking:** This recommendation was implemented on July 1, 2018.
- 9) **Parking Encumbrance Permits:** On October 9, 2018, the City Council adopted Ordinance #3023 and #3024, which revised the City's policies and fee structure for parking encumbrance permits. The Parking and Engineering Divisions are currently working to revise the City's Street Encumbrance Permit to include parking encumbrances.
- 10) **Lease to Permit Conversion for Garages:** On May 14, 2018, the City Council adopted Ordinance #3010, which gave the City Manager the authority to establish permit parking in certain parking garages and surface parking lots. The State Street garage was converted from leases to permits on July 1, 2018. The School Street garage was temporarily converted from leases to permits on January 1, 2018, in order to facilitate ongoing repairs and renovations through the summer of 2020. City Administration has entered into discussions with long-term lessees about making the permit program permanent, following completion of the current construction project in summer 2020. Lastly, discussions with major lessees of the Storrs Street garage are ongoing.
- 11) **Resident Parking Permits (UNH Law/White Park Neighborhood):** This recommendation was implemented on July 1, 2018. Permit rates were decreased from \$50/permit to \$5/permit in late June 2018, per Parking Committee request to City Administration.
- 12) **Neighborhood Enforcement:** Funding was approved as part of the FY 2019 and FY 2020 Budgets. The recommendation will be implemented pending recruitment of additional Parking Enforcement Officers, which is ongoing.
- 13) **Maintenance & Capital Improvements:** Daily property maintenance responsibilities transitioned to the Downtown Services Team on July 1, 2018, and a new tool cat utility vehicle (financed by the Parking Fund) was purchased to support these efforts. The Public Properties Division remains responsible for electrical and mechanical systems. The Parking Division remains responsible for enforcement activities, maintenance and repair of kiosks and meters, and administration of snow removal contracts for City facilities. City Administration is responsible for oversight of the parking system, staffing the Parking Committee, budgeting, preparing parking ordinances, administration of leases and permits, preparation of bids and Requests for Proposals, as well as capital improvements.
- 14) **Financials:** Parking changes recommended as part of the Strategic Plan were implemented in FY 2019. The FY 2019 adopted budget anticipated that Fund Balance would be (\$67,803). Actual Fund Balance was \$675,943 (a \$743,746 difference). The Fund out-performed budget, in part due to \$176,000 in savings associated with several staff vacancies; \$85,000 savings associated with certain maintenance items; and one-time revenues of \$145,000 from the sale of property. Accounting for these items, net operating income, was approximately \$269,000 or 11.8% of actual expenditures.

## **GOAL 6. FOSTER/ENHANCE DIALOGUE WITH LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION**

**Status:** Working with Senator Feltes, the City put forward a bill (SB 587) to amend certain State statutes concerning motor vehicle registration surcharges to support construction and maintenance of parking infrastructure. The proposal was determined inexpedient to legislate by the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

In June 2018, Senator Feltes submitted a letter to the NHDOT Commissioner raising several lingering concerns on the part of the City concerning the proposed Bow-Concord I-93 project.

## **GOAL 7. ENHANCED COMMUNITY EVENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Status:** The City continued its partnership with the League of NH Craftsmen to facilitate the second year of the League's Capital Arts Fest in September.

The Parks & Recreation Department continues to work with many organizations to offer community events. The Department works with the Black Ice Pond Hockey Association and the Friends of White Park for their winter events held at White Park; continued to enhance its partnership with Concord Crew with a summer "Learn to Row" program; and worked with Red River Theatres to co-sponsor two "Movies in the Park" events last summer. The Department continues to work with the Concord Crush Youth Lacrosse League to handle their registrations, and works with Intown Concord on several of their special events. This year, Department staff also helped with the rebranding and coordination of the annual Wings and Wheels event at the Concord Municipal Airport. The attendance this year exceeded everyone's expectations with several thousand people enjoying the event.

The Parks & Recreation Department once again held a Summer Concert Series, thanks to the generous sponsorship from the Walker Lecture Fund and Coca-Cola. In total, the Department offered 14 summer concerts.

Since the opening of the new citywide community center in June 2018, the Parks & Recreation Department has hosted several events at the center; including the New Hampshire Recreation and Parks first annual maintenance workshop and annual state conference. The new center has also hosted the annual City Employee Barbecue and numerous other private rentals

## **GOAL 8. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES**

**Status:** Form Based Code – Concord Next - In February 2018, key members of the Code Studio consultant team traveled to Concord for a three-day visit to explore the community, meet with key stakeholders, and conduct an initial public kick-off meeting. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to hear from people familiar with the city, local development, and existing regulations. The consultants subsequently provided the City with an assessment of its existing code that clearly notes subject areas for improvement. The first draft of the new zoning districts was submitted in late spring 2019. The consultant and staff held several public meetings in June to gather input on the proposed changes to date. Council review and adoption of Phase I is expected in spring 2020.

The Concord Energy and Environment Committee worked with Community Development staff to develop ways of streamlining the regulatory process vis-à-vis solar energy infrastructure to meet the City Council's aspirational goal of 100% renewable electricity for the Concord community by 2030. Multiple community forums were held in the fall of 2018 to solicit input toward the creation of a solar ordinance, which was eventually adopted by City Council in the fall of 2019.

## **PROJECT 1. BUILDINGS AND PARKS**

### **a) White Park Skate House**

**Status:** Milestone Engineering and Construction was selected for this project on February 27, 2018. Milestone was selected using a competitive request for qualifications and experience proposal process. On June 11, 2018, the City Council approved Resolution #9097, which appropriated \$1.15 million to construct the project. Final plans and specifications for the project were finalized in July, and Milestone bid the project to subcontractors during July and August. Pricing was finalized on August 30, 2018, and the City and Milestone subsequently executed a construction contract for the project on September 6, 2018. Construction began in mid-September. On February 23, 2019, a fire occurred on the interior of the building, which caused approximately \$120,000 of damage and delayed substantial completion of the project from March 25, 2019, to June 10, 2019. The facility officially opened to the public on June 14, 2019. The Mayor formed a committee to raise half of the total project cost.

The building is open approximately 30 hours per week. The Parks & Recreation Department is handling rental requests for the new facility.

### **b) Athletic Fields**

**Status:** The Parks & Recreation Department continues to work with leagues to review and increase the usage of its athletic fields. Again this year, there were over 270 scheduled youth and adult baseball games played on the City's four baseball fields. The Department also continues to increase use of the new youth lacrosse field at Memorial Field. NH Wild, a new semi-professional baseball team, had their second season this past summer, playing their home games at Memorial Field. The NH Wild is planning on returning next summer.

### **c) Terrill Park:**

**Status:** The first phase of this project, inclusive of a portion of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail, a relocated dog park, and some parking and lighting improvements, was approved by the City Council in the summer of 2019. Work is expected to begin on this phase in the spring of 2020 and should be completed by the end of August 2020.

### **d) Penacook Branch Library**

**Status:** Library staff met with the Penacook Village Association to discuss the future of the Penacook Branch Library. The Library Director has begun visiting potential library spaces around the Penacook community to evaluate viability. Staff has contacted other libraries that have recently launched new bookmobile services to obtain some usage statistics. The Library Director has been in contact with the Caleb Development Corporation to evaluate if there is a potential for a Library, in some fashion, at the apartment complex that will be built at the Tannery site.

### **e) Cemetery Improvements**

**Status:** The Parks & Recreation Department coordinated the improvements to the Perkins Chapel. Improvements included a new heating system, new exterior lighting, a new walkway, and painting the inside of the chapel.

## **PROJECT 2. FUTURE CIP PROJECTS**

**Status:** The final portion of the Manchester Street project design has begun. Construction on the Abbott Road/Sewalls Falls Road roundabout was completed in the spring of 2019.

### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 1. OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **a) Former NH Employment Security Property**

**Status:** The State of New Hampshire declared the former NH Employment Security property at 32 South Main Street as “surplus property” on September 12, 2012. The property consists of a 26,000 SF building set on a 0.74 acre lot, with 73 parking spaces, in the City’s central business district. The State’s asking price for the property was \$1.75 million.

In accordance with RSA 4:40, the City invoked its right of first refusal to acquire the property on October 2, 2012.

The City issued a Request for Qualifications, Experience, and Proposals to developers on January 25, 2013. Multiple proposals were received in the spring of 2013; however, none of the proposals were acceptable to the City.

In June 2014, the Governor and Executive Council voted to sell the property to the City for \$1.575 million. This was the minimum amount the State could accept without additional action by the Legislature.

The City closed on acquisition of the property on October 31, 2014. The City financed the acquisition, weatherization, and other related holding costs for the property with interest-only Bond Anticipation Notes in the amount of \$1.99 million, which are supported by the Sears Block Tax Increment Finance District.

Upon acquiring the property, the City issued a Request for Proposals to engage a commercial real estate broker to assist the City with efforts to market the site to potential developers.

On March 25, 2015, the City engaged the NAI Norwood Group of Bedford, NH, to market the property. On the advice of Norwood, the City commissioned a design team to prepare a conceptual redevelopment plan for the property. This plan called for the demolition of the former NH Employment Security building and the construction of two new buildings at the site totaling 68,000 SF, featuring 49 apartments, 16,000 SF of ground floor commercial space, and approximately 57 parking spaces.

In September 2015, the property was listed for sale with an asking price of \$1.6 million.

On April 19, 2017, Dol-Soul Properties submitted a Letter of Intent to acquire the property for the purposes of developing a 120,000 SF mixed use project featuring 109 +/- market rate apartments, on-site parking, and a 5,000 SF commercial space (likely a restaurant).

On October 10, 2017, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a Purchase and Sales / Development Agreement with Dol-Soul Properties for their proposed project. The sale price for the property was \$1.075 million. To support the project, the City agreed to demolish the former Employment Security building, as well as provide a limited quantity of permit parking spaces to augment on-site parking provided by the developer.

As Dol-Soul began due diligence and preliminary design, the scope of their project evolved into a 180,000 square foot mixed use project, featuring approximately 125 market rate apartments, 5,000 square feet of commercial space, and 125 parking spaces.

The developer's due diligence period for the project, which was originally set to expire in early April 2018, was extended to provide additional time to complete market studies, as well as secure construction estimates and to further study utility issues for the project.

During the fall of 2018, the Developer reported that its project had a \$7 million funding gap (\$30.4 million project cost vs. \$23.4 million financeable project). Thus, the Developer's project was unable to move forward unless the gap could be bridged.

Over the ensuing months, City Administration and the Developer reviewed a variety of potential strategies to help resolve the funding gap. These included RSA 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentives, New Markets Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants, and Tax Increment Finance (TIF) supported on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements. Upon review, the TIF strategy was determined to be the only viable option.

On June 10, 2019, a proposal was submitted to the City Council whereby the City and the Developer would equally split the gap.

A public hearing on amendments to the Sears Block TIF District, as well as to the City's Purchase and Sales Agreement required to implement the proposal, were held on July 8, 2019. The final vote was delayed due to requirements set forth in RSA 162-K.

The City Council, in accordance with RSA 162-K, held its vote on these items on August 12, 2019. The City Council voted not to proceed with the revised Agreement or supplemental financial support for the project. As a result, Dol-Soul Properties withdrew from the project.

City Administration, working with the Norwood Group, has re-activated efforts to market the property.

In accordance with RSA 162-K, the \$1.99 million Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs) may only be used for a period of five years. Consequently, these BANs will be converted to permanent debt service in December 2019.

#### **b) Elm Grove Properties**

**Status:** In September 2017, the Elm Grove Companies acquired four properties in Downtown Concord for redevelopment. Elm Grove plans to renovate all four properties and will add 31 new market rate apartments, combined, at 5 South State Street and 15 Pleasant Street. On December 11, 2017, the City Council granted RSA 79-E

Community Tax Relief Incentives with six year terms to support renovation of the two above-mentioned properties. Apartments at 15 Pleasant Street were completed in the spring of 2019, and all of the apartments have been leased. Renovations of 5-7 South State Street were completed in December 2019 and leasing is currently underway. Work at 19 and 26 Pleasant Street has also been completed.

**c) Hotel Concord**

**Status:** During the fall of 2017, Capital Commons, LLC, began renovating approximately 20,000 square feet of its office building located at 11 South Main Street into an independent, 38-room boutique hotel, on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> floors of the building. The initial phase of the project was completed in August 2018. The second phase of the project was completed in early 2019. To support the project, on June 11, 2018, the City Council approved Resolution #9103, which authorized the City Manager to enter into a license agreement for certain private improvements on City property.

**d) New Concord Theatre**

**Status:** On December 27, 2017, local developer Steve Duprey, doing business as New Concord Theatre, LLC, acquired the former Concord Theatre located at 16-18 South Main Street for the sum of \$483,500. Mr. Duprey, working in partnership with the Capitol Center for the Arts (CCA), undertook a \$6.9 million renovation of the property to create a new performing arts venue. Construction began last summer and the project opened to the public on June 22, 2019. The new venue is a second location owned and operated by the CCA. This new venue features an auditorium with capacity to hold between 270 guests (seated) to 450 patrons (standing), and is capable of hosting a variety of performances, including small plays, concerts, lectures, and movies. The auditorium is equipped with retractable stadium seating for easy configuration of the space, depending upon the event. The Theatre also has banquet capabilities for meetings, parties, weddings, and other special events.

On August 12, 2019, the City Council approved the appropriation of \$150,000 to support relocation of aerial utilities located near the theatre. This effort is in partnership with Unitil, the Duprey Companies, and Bank of NH Stage.

In related news, on July 13, 2018, Steve Duprey announced that he had entered into a Purchase and Sales Agreement to acquire the Families in Transition (FIT) property at 20.5 South Main Street. Mr. Duprey explored development options for this property, as well as an abutting parcel he owns located at 20 South Main Street. On June 6, 2019, Mr. Duprey filed a notice of intent to demolish the former FIT property.

**e) Former Allied Leather Tannery**

**Status:** On May 8, 2017, the City Council approved a purchase and sales agreement to sell approximately 2.5 acres of the 4-acre site to the Caleb Development Corporation for the sum of \$540,000 (a full price offer) for the development of a 54-unit housing project. The remaining 1.5 +/- acres of the site will be retained by the City for a potential future riverfront park, currently scheduled in CIP #567 in FY 2020 for \$1.2 million, as added by the City Council during the FY 2018 budget adoption process.

Caleb secured all required approvals from the Planning and Zoning Boards in 2017.

On October 25, 2018, the NH Housing Finance Authority awarded \$714,000 in Low Income Housing Tax Credits to support the project. Once monetized, the credits will generate approximately \$5.95 million in funding for the project.

On November 1, 2018, the NH Community Development Finance Authority awarded the City a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to finance on and off site improvements associated with Caleb's project. Bids were received for CDBG funded improvements on May 23, 2019, and the project was awarded to Jeremy Hiltz Excavating.

Work on CDBG funded improvements began in July and was completed in September.

On September 18, 2019, the City and Caleb Development Corporation closed on the sale of a 2.5 acre parcel for Caleb's housing development. After closing costs and real estate broker commissions, the City netted approximately \$496,800. The closing was held simultaneously with Caleb and its various financiers for this project, including the NH Housing Finance Authority and Peoples United Bank. These funds were accepted by the City Council on November 12, 2019, and deposited into the Economic Development Reserve Fund as reimbursement for prior investments in the site. Phase I of Caleb's development is scheduled for completion in September 2020, features 34 housing units, and has a total budget of \$7.715 million (excluding \$467,000 in Community Development Block Grant improvements recently completed by the City, at the site, on the project's behalf prior to the closing.)

It is anticipated that Phase II of the project will begin in 2021.

#### **f) Storrs Street Extension**

**Status:** The City has held a scoping meeting with the engineering firm that will design this project. Communications continue with Pan Am Railways to find a better solution to the current conflict with the rail and projected roadway. The NH Department of Transportation's I-93 project is still uncertain, yet most accounts do not seem to impact the City's plans. Appropriation of the funds to undertake this project will require NEOCTIF amendments, which would be forthcoming over the next few months.

### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 2. CITYWIDE MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER**

**Status:** The new Citywide Multi-generational Community Center opened in June 2018. As a result, the Department has been able to increase the number of programs offered and increase its hours of operation.

### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 3. CREATE AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS**

**Status:** The City continued its partnership with the League of NH Craftsmen to hold an event on South Main Street in September 2019.

Mayor Bouley announced the kickoff of the public portion of the fundraising effort for the White Park Multi-Use Facility, with the co-chairs of the campaign being Jennifer Frizzell and Chris Brown. In addition, Tom Champagne, Councilor Byron Champlin, Kristyn Van Ostern, Laura Simoes, and Luke Bonner volunteered their time and effort to see the project

through. The HL Turner Group donated over \$70,000 of free labor to put the designs and planning together. The new facility opened in June of 2019.

On April 25, 2018, local developers Jon Chorlian and Steve Duprey, d/b/a Granite Center, LLC, confirmed that they had secured purchase and sales agreements, as well as financing commitments, to redevelop 4-6 Dixon Avenue, 8-14 Dixon Avenue, and 1 Eagle Square; as well as associated parking lots. To move forward, the developers desired to secure a variety of items from the City. These included acquisition of the City's seven-space Dixon Avenue parking lot, RSA 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentives for three of the properties, and permissions to construct certain improvements on public property. In order to accommodate deadlines associated with the developer's use of New Markets Tax Credits, a purchase and sales/development agreement, and related items required to support the project, had to be negotiated, drafted, and approved by the City Council by mid-July 2018. Typically, these projects take a minimum of six months to complete; however, the City met this aggressive schedule and approved all related items on July 9, 2018. Financing and real estate transactions for the project closed on August 3, 2018. The project has since been completed.

#### **ON-GOING INITIATIVE 4. CONTINUE EXPANDED NEIGHBORHOOD STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

**Status:** Continental Paving completed the FY 2019 Paving Project in mid-November. They have two streets to pave in the spring because the gas company had work that has since been completed.