



# TOWN OF CONCORD

## Planning Board

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To: Select Board  
From: Planning Board  
Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner

**Re: Planning Board Goals/Projects: 2019-2020**

Date: July 17, 2019

### **I. Executive Summary**

The following memo and table below outlines the projects that were accomplished in 2018-2019 and the Goals and Project that the Planning Board will consider for the next year. The Board has provided an opinion on the level of study/work required for each item by the Town Planner and the Board.

#### 2018-2019 Goals & Project Accomplished

- Adoption of the Envision Concord-Bridge to 2030 Comprehensive Long Range Plan, with a special thanks to past Planning Board Chair and Co-Chair of the CLRP Committee Gary Kleiman.
- Formula Business Bylaw amendment to include Concord Center passed Town Meeting limiting the number of formula businesses to 12. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, the Board granted a Special Permit to the first formula business application, which represents the 12<sup>th</sup> such business.
- Wireless Overlay District Expansion in the location of Middlesex School passed by Town Meeting.
- Handicapped Parking was a minor Bylaw amendment that passed Town Meeting to correct the name of the State agency that issues the rules and regulations regarding handicapped parking requirements.
- Groundwater Conservancy District was a minor Bylaw amendment that passed Town Meeting to make the lot size in the Bylaw consistent with the Title V requirement of 40,000 s.f.
- Marijuana Establishment Temporary Moratorium was deleted by Town Meeting from the Zoning Bylaw since a ban on such establishments was passed by the Town.
- Nonconforming Single & Two-Family Residential Structures amendment passed Town Meeting to fix a formatting issues with the existing language.
- Fairs, Bazaars, & Antique Shows amendment passed Town Meeting to allow Town events to be exempt.
- Flood Plain Conservancy District Map amendment passed Town Meeting to incorporated recent FEMA Letters of Map Revisions.
- Large Ground-Mounted Solar amendment passed Town Meeting to include this use in the Table of Uses.

## **II. Potential Goals and Projects**

### **1. Housing Diversity Initiatives**

The 2018 Envision Concord Long Range Plan identifies a number of Goals and Action Items in Section 4.2 Economic Diversity, Section 4.3 Housing and Section 4.4 Land Use that the Planning Board began evaluating to further the goal of housing diversity, while maintaining neighborhood character. The Board decided to move forward with a discussion about expanding the provisions for allowing additional dwelling units, allowing two-family dwellings, and modifications to the PRD Bylaw to take into consideration the differences in projects located within walking distance to village centers and those further out. The Board has begun developing a list of Key Questions & Answers for each initiative with the intention of putting forth potential Zoning Bylaw Amendments.

Estimated Board time: High

Estimated Staff time: High

**Implementation Priority: High – Four Potential 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

### **2. Thoreau Depot Smart Growth Analysis**

The Town's 2018 Envision Concord Comprehensive Plan specifically identified the Thoreau Depot area as an area to encourage redevelopment for mixed-use, multi-family use through the adoption of zoning provisions, such as a 40R Smart Growth or Transportation Orientated Development Overlay District. The Town has been awarded a technical assistance grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to conduct a study on creating a Transportation Oriented Development or Chapter 40R overlay district in the Thoreau Depot village. MAPC will begin this project in late summer/early fall.

Estimated Board time: Medium

Estimated Staff time: Medium

**Implementation Priority: High**

### **3. Parking Requirements & Relief From Parking**

For the past three years, the Board has used the following six criteria to help evaluate applications requesting relief from parking:

- 1) *Has the Applicant provided documentation from parking studies and/or transportation industry publications that show the parking ratios required in the Zoning Bylaw for the proposed use is not in-line with current industry standards?*
- 2) *Has the Applicant provided information on how the proposed use is beneficial and/or contributes to the other businesses, village center and neighborhood?*
- 3) *What is the distance and availability of on-street parking, public parking facilities and alternative transportation?*
- 4) *What is the intensity of the use and the number of employees required?*
- 5) *Are alternative provisions being made for off-site parking for employees?*
- 6) *Is there currently, or is the Applicant proposing bicycle parking?*

The Board will meet with the Zoning Board of Appeals to discuss potential Zoning Bylaw Amendments and discuss whether these criteria should become a required finding for the granting of any requested relief from parking. Additionally, the Board will be reviewing the final MAPC parking report to determine if the minimum number of parking and loading spaces required for various uses still meet today's industry standards and whether there are minimum standards for shared parking situations.

Estimated Board time: Medium

Estimated Staff time: Medium

**Implementation Priority: Medium– Potential 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article**

#### **4. 2018 Envision Concord-Bridge to 2030 Comprehensive Plan**

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan Section 5 Implementation Action Chart that has a total of 188 Action Items with the Planning Division referenced in 140 and the Planning Board referenced in 54 Items. The Board will review these Action Items on an annual basis, identified timing, whether the Board should take the lead in moving forward and develop a list of Goals & Projects for the next 2 to 4 years.

Estimated Board time: High/Medium

Estimated Staff time: High/Medium

**Implementation Priority: Medium**

#### **5. Research Site Plan Rules & Regulations**

Zoning Bylaw Section 11.8.4 states that a Site Plan application shall be submitted in accordance with the rules and regulations. However, the Board has not adopted any. This is not a simple task given all of the elements and variables that go into a well thought out and successful site plan. The Town Planner will begin researching other communities that have adopted regulations and the Board will begin listing components that they feel fit with the goals and characteristics of the community.

Estimated Board time: Medium

Estimated Staff time: High

**Implementation Priority: Medium - Rolling development as staff time allows**

#### **6. Active Role in Exploring Alternative Transportation Options for the Town**

The Town has been a member of CrossTown Connect (CTC) Transportation Management Association since October 2017. In coordination with CTC, the Town submitted a Community Transit Grant application to the State to implement a shuttle from the two commuter rail stations to MCI-Concord Prison, Baker Ave. and Baker Ave. Ext., Emerson Hospital, Concord Center and employment sites on Virginia Rd. The Town is still waiting to hear on whether the grant has been awarded. If awarded, the Board will begin discussing ways the Board can take a more active role in participating and promoting CrossTown Connect and seek mechanisms to foster and promote alternative transportation options when evaluating and permitting development applications.

Estimated Board time: Low

Estimated Staff time: Medium

**Implementation Priority: Medium**

## **7. Wireless Communications Overlay District Deficiencies & Impediments Analysis**

With the on-going changes in the wireless industry, there needs to be a more comprehensive Town-wide analysis of the adequacy of the wireless communication needs of the community and wireless providers, the deficiencies and impediments. This is a process that the Town went through in 2003 through the hiring of a consultant to evaluate wireless deployment issues and to look at issues with the Zoning Bylaw. From these two reports, subsequent amendments were made to the Wireless Overlay District Map and Zoning Bylaw. The Board would need assistance from an outside consultant to pursue the project and will need to work with the Select Board and Town Manager on seeking funding. The Board notes that the changes in the industry to 5G technology appears to primarily be impacting areas within community's road right-of-ways, which is under the purview of the Select Board.

Estimated Board time: Low

Estimated Staff time: Medium – Consultant Assistance Needed

**Implementation Priority: Low/Medium - Further Study & Planning**

## **8. West Concord Design Guidelines & West Concord Business/Industrial/Village Zoning Districts**

A Board Goal from last year was to discuss further with the West Concord Advisory Committee the possibility of strengthening the West Concord Design Guidelines and amending the West Concord Business, West Concord Industrial and West Concord Village Zoning Districts to streamline the uses in the three districts and determine if the current uses are appropriate. The Board believes this is still a worthwhile process, but has not had any further discussions with the WCAC to advance the idea. The Board would like to keep this important topic on the table, but has lowered the priority due to other commitments.

Estimated Board time: Medium – Significant input from WCAC

Estimated Staff time: High

**Implementation Priority: Low**

## **9. Subdivision Rules & Regulations**

The new MS4 Permit requirements under the EPA's National Pollution Discharge & Elimination System (NPDES) Program have been issued, litigated and are now in effect. The Public Works Department will be submitted the Town's MS4 Plan for review and approval. One milestone action item in the Plan will be updating the Subdivision Rules & Regulations. The Town Planner has done some preliminary review of the current Regulations with the Town Engineer and investigated some communities who have done recent updates. However, with the departure of the Town Engineer again, as well as other Engineering staff, there will not be sufficient Engineering staff to assist with a substantial overhaul of the construction standards until January 2020 at the earliest. Revisions to the Rules & Regulations will require a legal notice, public hearing and adoption by the Board.

Estimated Board time: Low

Estimated Staff time: High

**Implementation Priority: Low – Rolling development as staff time allows**

## **10. Senate & House Zoning Reform Bills**

Once again there are a number of bills going through the Senate and the House regarding zoning reform. There will be opportunities for communities to comment on these bills as they move through. It is not likely that any zoning reform will impact the Board in the next year. However, should something pass, it will require a significant amount of time in 2020 to review the Zoning Bylaw and develop appropriate Bylaw amendments. The Town Planner will continue to monitor the various bills.

Estimated Board time: Low

Estimated Staff time: Low

**Implementation Priority: Further Study & Planning**