

Full Comments received from public review of on-line draft report

1 Jan. 25, 2021: I would respectfully request that it be considered to use this property as a Wildlife Management Area, such that it could become a habitat for plants and wildlife, and enjoyed by residents and visitors for recreational activities including hunting as permitted by MA hunting laws, preferably as a stocked area (e.g., pheasant). While we have an active and growing population of hunters in Concord, we do not have such an area anywhere in Concord, the closest being in Hudson or Bolton. WMAs are great locations especially for relatively new hunters such as myself who are working to develop their skills and an appreciation of the activity along with their young family members. Thank you for your kind consideration. I'm happy to be contacted if that is at all desired. All the best, and thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Philip Sailer

2 Jan. 26, 2021: Thank you to the committee for all your hard work on this report. It is impressive in its scope and detail. I will read it more in detail, but in general, I strongly support the conservation aspects that call for using the sphagnum bog side of the property for conservation and passive recreation, as Paul Boehm also described in the 1/26/21 Trails Committee meeting. This bog is a special resource that should be protected while being able to be accessed for enjoyment of its natural qualities.

In terms of access to enjoy viewing of the bog and its habitat, I suggest that the trails on either side of the bog be connected in some way at the northern end of the bog to make the trail "system" a loop (e.g. p. 35, Fig. 4.3), instead of parallel dead-end trails in some other figures. A loop will improve ability to enjoy the area, including reducing congestion. (In times such as now under COVID), we have also learned that it is valuable to be able to make trails be "one-way" at times, which it only possible with a loop trail.)

As this is still in draft form, I have a few editing notes for things I noticed:

p. 31 - Figure 4.1 - The eastern and western designations in the accompanying text are reversed, as far as I can tell.

p. 33 - The "existing trails" key in the legend is not the same as on the maps.

p. 33 - 3rd paragraph from bottom - typo: should be "uses" instead of "sues."

Thank you again for your work on this.

Kathryn Angell

3 Jan. 27, 2021: Please leave the acreage alone. west Concord is already becoming crowded with additional large homes being built on extremely small parcels of land. I would love to have some beautiful undisturbed woods and they've completely disappeared from this portion of town

Catherine Tillman Fledderjohn

4 Jan. 31, 2021: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on NMI Draft Report.

My first comment is regarding the process. I would please encourage the Town to get as much community input as possible. I appreciate that it may be difficult to reach households during the pandemic but the residents who border this site need to be aware of what is going on. Thus, specific outreach to the households on Cranberry Lane, Thoreau Hills and and Black Birch Lane need to be made. Residents in these areas are directly impacted by this project and have had to live with the concerns of living next to or near this superfund site. I encourage some additional outreach in the future.

With respect to the report and future uses, I believe the parcels identified as "A-3 and A-4" should be used for either conservation land or recreational uses. As a resident of Thoreau Hills we enjoy the buffer between the

neighborhood and the active portions of the site and recommend that this be required in any future development of the site. The character of the neighbor provides for wooded lots and conservation land and I would like to see this continue with the future use of this site. Finally, the neighborhood has had to deal with the concerns and risks of this site for a long time and I think it is important to provide a buffer between the abutters and any future development at the site.

Thank you.
Hoaglund Family

5 Feb. 3, 2021: Reply to 2229 Main Street property purchase by Concord

I have read the NSRC draft of 7 Dec 2020 and want to raise several issues regarding the liability the Town of Concord will be assuming.

Executive Summary

- Concord's own experience with unexpected expenses due to pollution risks suggests reconsideration of assuming ownership of the 2229 Main Street property.
- Yesterday's technological principles have always been measured and judged in today's 20/20 hindsight, suggesting nothing but uncertainty as to the risks associated with future health and safety issues of the 2229 Main Street property.
- The three named liable parties, US Army, Textron and Whittaker, have well established avenues of avoiding ongoing liability.
- Concord has much greater strength in contractual protections with a third-party property owner than in direct ownership of 2229 Main Street.

Background of my position: I was serving on the Concord Town Finance Committee during the mid-1980's when the municipal insurance crisis arose, along with a wider general liability coverage shortage. In place of legislators' inaction, courts then were re-writing insurance policy terms to fund much needed toxic cleanup costs. With municipalities, courts were particularly sympathetic.

Knowing of the issue, I alerted both the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen (as known then) to a probable pricing crisis. Response to the inquires of the insurance house servicing Concord's municipal insurance program indicated no increase in rates was anticipated. Ultimately we ended up in Special Town Meeting to authorize another \$100,000 for the mid-year insurance policy renewals. [Remember, that was in 1980's dollars.]

Additionally, medicine and technology are consistently being judged with 20/20 hindsight. Yesterday's best practices have always paled beside today's knowledge. Juries are understandably sympathetic to injured parties, and as understandably weak at grasping the complex technology in question.

Response to the proposal regarding ongoing liability issues to the Town: The proposal identifies a number of entities responsible for the property pollution cleanup, designated since 2001 as a Superfund site. In my 35 years of professional risk management and liability experience, including numerous clients working with radioactive and hazardous material, there is nothing less certain than the funding for ongoing remediation. Escrow accounts for possible future remediation in today's dollars for projected impact using today's science are notoriously underfunded. Prognosticating in the field of public health is fraught with peril. As a contemporary example, the

exploding field of nanotechnology produces particles on the molecular level that are known to attach to every organ of the human body. Today's medical experts do not yet know the ultimate impact on humanity. Five years ago I predicted that nanotechnology will be the next multi-billion dollar health crisis. That was before COVID-19.

The Town states that supervision for the ongoing integrity of the containment sections would be more easily undertaken if Concord were the property owner. There was no substantiation for that position. As we know, costs and liability can be contracted to a third party property owner with municipal oversight and statutory and regulatory support. In fact, transferring risk contractually is a routine commercial practice.

With municipal immunity, Concord is allowed limited liability exposure under statute, which suggests that should future neglect of the property occur, affected citizens will have limited recourse. Commercial entities enjoy no such legal protections. Ergo, a commercial landowner of the property would provide much greater protection to the public, as well as the town.

It is foreseeable that Concord's insurance costs will increase substantially. While I am not privy to the Town's current program, I would anticipate that some manner of site pollution coverage is currently in place. In my professional opinion, taking over 2229 Main Street will increase those rates substantially, as well as pose considerable engineering costs for annual renewal policy underwriting. Referencing my experience in the mid-1980's suggests too, it is entirely foreseeable that pollution coverage and rating would be unavailable at some future time.

It is necessary to also look at the responsible parties contracted for current and future costs; the US Army, Textron and Whittaker [p.16]. Future solvency of the two private parties depends upon good-faith corporate actions with no legal maneuvering to avoid liability, both rare in the corporate world. Government entities are historically prone to legislate themselves harmless from liability. Under joint and several liability, Concord would inevitably be brought into suits against any of the parties.

My conclusion is:

- o Concord should not take ownership of the property.
- o Residential use of the property never be considered viable under any ownership.

Nancy P. James

6 Feb. 4, 2021: Not sure this if this is possible (i.e. legal use of the land), but I would recommend low / moderate income housing on the land, a play area for children, and adequate sidewalks and parking.
Stephanie Chrobak

7 Feb. 8, 2021: The final report of the NMI Reuse Committee is impressive, and the Concord Housing Foundation would like to support many of its suggestions and recommendations. Most importantly, we applaud the Committee for making clear that housing must be part of any reuse option, and for providing examples of other Superfund sites that have included housing after site remediation.

We do believe that housing should NOT be postponed, but should be planned for early phases of site development, with appropriate land preparation and allocation. We also feel strongly that housing must include market rate and work force housing, as well as that which would classically be termed "affordable." With the land cleared up to a standard safe for residences, these should be a priority. Developers should not be allowed to "buy out" of any affordable housing commitments, as there are few alternative sites in Concord where such money could be used to build affordable housing. The Committee rightly notes the need for "risk education." As part of this effort, the next phase of planning should include discussions with potential housing developers about any

concerns that they have about marketing residences built on the STARMET site.

While housing should be a principal focus of site preparation and early phases of development, we recognize that there are arguments for other uses of the site. We believe that some of these are complementary to housing. For example, as shown in one illustrative site plan, a couple of playing fields could be included as part of the open space in a planned residential development. There is almost certainly space where energy storage facilities could be built. An enhanced site for senior services would be consistent with the growing proportion of the Concord population which is elderly.

We do have some concerns about alternative use ideas which do not feature housing. Light industry is NOT likely to return to Concord, and even if it did, there is no place for the workers to live, and they would have to commute, increasing traffic congestion and pollution. While some local retail uses may make sense for a portion of the land, it would be a mistake to make commercial and retail development a primary element of the final plan. There is already a significant amount of empty office and retail space in Concord, and the pandemic has shown that many medical "Visits" can be done virtually, so that demand for this use in the future may be more limited.

We understand the desire for Concord to be a technology leader, and ideas like the "cloud computing center" or a tech incubator have initial appeal. However, cloud computing is an energy intensive activity with only modest long term employment benefits. The chances that Concord can replicate Kendall Square or the Seaport District at the Starmet site are limited, and this is a risky use of the land that could preclude desperately needed housing. Again, even if the "tech center" is a success, where would the workers live? Or would the higher paid "techies" further drive up house prices in Concord and accelerate the tear down of smaller homes.

Finally, we recognize the obvious interest in a transport hub that would enable workers living further west to leave cars at the STARMET site and take a bus to the West Concord train station. But creating a 500 space parking lot seems inconsistent with the desire to reduce traffic congestion, as well as the trend to more "work from home" jobs in tech industries. Again, housing is a known urgent need which should not be deferred while site plans hinge around a transport center contingent on very uncertain demand.

Frank (Rich) Feeley
President, Concord Housing Foundation

8 Feb. 8, 2021: Thank you for this excellent, articulate report. It encourages me to see a recommendation for cost-neutral uses for this land but I would go a step further and recommend uses that actually generate tax revenues for the town. This should be one a top priority when considering various uses for this property.

Mary R Hartman

9 Feb. 9, 2021: The committee has done a spectacular job with this report. I want to thank them for all their hard work. I agree their three options provide a good mix of possible uses of the site. I currently support Option 1.

Peggy Wargelin

10 Feb. 15, 2021: COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT NMI/STARMET REPORT PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT
Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the January 20, 2021 draft NMI/Starmet Reuse Planning Committee Report. Overall, the report provides a helpful comprehensive history of the industrial use of this property, the public participation process that is part of the effort to rectify the contamination associated with this past industrial use, and conceptual designs for the potential reuse of the property. I appreciate the efforts of the public agency staff and community volunteers who have been deeply involved in this restoration activity. I am a long time Concord resident who has lived in West Concord and has also served as a volunteer on various town boards and committees. My following comments on this draft report primarily address site design policy issues and needs:

Executive Summary section...

The last paragraph on this page appropriately notes that " the Town should begin a process of coordinating NMI/Starmet Site redevelopment planning with other efforts at other sites and facilities in the Town." I agree but strongly urge these efforts also carefully consider critical planning and zoning initiatives in the nearby municipalities that may impact land use actions within one (?) mile of the NMI/Starmet property (Site). As we know, this Site is located within a very short distance of the intersection of the municipal boundaries of Concord, Acton, Maynard and Sudbury. Potential sub-regional impacts, for example, relating to the volume of Rt. 62 traffic, the Assabet River, groundwater resources, air quality, and pedestrian use including access to publicly accessible open space need to be considered within the overall context of the redevelopment of the Site. As we have seen over the past two decades with the commercial development of Baker Avenue area in West Concord, this area still remains significantly disconnected from the nearby West Concord commercial center for pedestrians and cyclists working on Baker Avenue. At the Site, there are similar opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist connections to the shopping and other commercial establishments in Acton along Rt. 62 but limited or non-existent sidewalks and cycling paths as well as needed maintenance of sidewalks is currently inadequate . The development of the Site can be the catalyst for developing and enhancing such connections.

Proposed Re-Use Zones....

In this section, both Figure 1.4 and Table 1.1 summarize potential re-use zones at the Site. This information suggests that Zone A-2 soils might serve as a possible " borrow area " which would entail the permanent removal of the soils in this area to serve as clean backfill elsewhere on the Site. Such a proposed action where it involves the destruction of mature woodlands is inconsistent with the Environmental Stewardship Principles articulated for the remediation efforts at the Site. (see page 11). In fact, the removal of the mature woodlands in this zone as well as in Zone A-3 and A-4 are also inconsistent with these Principles. As noted in Concord's current Comprehensive Long Range Plan, it specifically envisions at this Site a Natural Resource Goal (9) "core action" to promote trail access. As presented in this Draft Report virtually all such proposed trail improvements or enhancements are limited to the eastern margin of the Site. There exists in Zones, A-2, A-3 and A-4 important opportunities, however, to connect new trails with the existing Powder Mills Woods conservation area trail network that should offer adequate vegetative buffers for people and wildlife while connecting existing residential developments in this area with the redevelopment of the Site. In doing so, this site planning approach also acknowledges that the portions of these zones on the Site may be of potential archaeological significance given their close proximity overlooking the Assabet River. If this proves to be the case, it further supports another "core action" (Natural Resource Goal 9) of the Comprehensive Long Range Plan that seeks to ensure the landscape preservation of historical and archaeological sites of value.

I advocate for these site planning objectives as to better serve the interests of the general public, and particularly the surrounding neighborhoods. An oversight of the Draft Report is an insufficient acknowledgment of the scope and magnitude of residential development that has occurred at Forest Ridge-- subject to Town approval -- since 2000 and within the vicinity of the Site. For example, there is a reference to this status on page 37 of the Report which notes " the adjacent Thoreau Hills community, Black Birch development and Thoreau Club property are adjacent to the property." This reference appropriately characterizes the Thoreau Hills residential area as a "community" but not so the other significant nearby residential areas. In fact, the area of Forest Ridge Road is now primarily a residential community comprised of dozens of residential units -- Black Birch, RiverBend and Sweet Birch. While the nearby and recently developed Mews residential development is not adjacent to the Site, the residents of these homes actively utilize the road and sidewalks of the Forest Ridge Road residential areas as well as walking trails of the Powder Mills Woods. Dedicated parking spaces at Black Birch are also available and utilized by the general public for the Powder Mills Woods trail network that is adjacent to the Site.

Recreation Needs section...

In Section 3.4, the Draft Report notes the recreational needs of the Town are rapidly evolving and changing. I agree and would have this subsection include a brief reference to the recent acquisition of properties for municipal recreational purposes at White's Pond and Warner's Pond. It would make sense for the Town to update the Town's Recreation Department Strategic Plan.

Town Ownership section...

I agree with the Draft Report's recommendation that the Town of Concord proceed with the critical next steps involving the acquisition of the Site. The Report's review of potential ownership options and legal/institutional arrangements is a helpful analysis and overview. Within this subsection, I think it is important to briefly remind the reader that the various management options may be directly affected (e.g., available financial resources) by the ultimate resolution of the liens on the Site with the US Department of Justice.

Master Plan Redevelopment Concepts....

This presentation of potential redevelopment concepts provides an interesting range of future alternative uses of the Site. A more detailed assessment of these and possibly other alternative uses will be the subject of significant future studies. The examples of other Superfund restoration projects throughout the country are also helpful and provide a constructive frame of reference. Do we know if these or other similar restoration projects involved settlement of liens and the transfer of funds to the affected communities?

General...

I also note a few typographical errors for your consideration.. on page 3, the sentence including the words "... understand existing lines on the property" should read "... understand existing liens on the property." Also, on page 4, the words "... US Atomic Entergy" should read "... US Atomic Energy ". Finally, I think it would be appropriate in this Report to indicate the public agency staff and volunteers who prepared this draft document.

Thanks for your consideration of my comments.

Gary Clayton

11 Feb. 16, 2021: I have read the NMI Draft Report and would like to commend those who created such a thorough and well-researched document. I am a member of the Commission on Disability and attended the recent meeting at which Pam Rockwell presented the report to the Commission. I would like to make clear my position on the potential scenarios for development of the site.

In order for the site to be developed in any way there absolutely must be a plan in place for transportation to this location which is quite removed from West Concord Village and Concord Center. Assuming the property is developed for recreational usage, playing fields, and especially housing, I cannot imagine it being used to its fullest potential without public transportation. I am not in favor of constructing either affordable housing or a community center of any kind (such as a new COA/recreational building) on the site if there is no reasonable, reliable access to it for a population that may not include people with cars or people who are not able to drive. Perhaps light manufacturing or office space would be best suited, although such a plan must also take into consideration the future economic situation which may be difficult to predict 5-10 years out.

Accessibility is key to the plan and whatever is constructed must be fully accessible to all.

Karen Young

12 Feb. 18, 2021 To whom it may concern:

I would implore the town to consider the needs of West Concord residents in terms of traffic, congestion, and noise when deciding on a course of action for the NMI site.

years, including the existing Muse housing complex and two ongoing projects closer to my home on Prairie Street. At the same time, the traffic congestion on Route 62 has gotten noticeably heavier in recent years. In addition, as you know, West Concord already hosts a prison, a hospital, and a car barn for town school buses. For these reasons, it is clear that West Concord already shoulders a substantial burden when it comes to development, noise, and traffic, probably more than any other residential section of town.

I recognize there are financial considerations that the town must ponder, but the NMI site offers great potential to meet the long-term recreational needs of all Concord residents, especially those in West Concord. I ask that the town keep this top of mind as it weighs what to do with this property in the coming years.

James Williams

13 Feb. 18, 2021 We appreciate being included in the conversation about the NSRC Draft Report. The Concord Housing Authority has always been committed to the provision of affordable housing in Concord. We look forward to continuing to support Concord's efforts to promote diversity, inclusion, and more affordable housing in our community.

Rick Eifler, Chair
for the Concord Housing Authority

14 Feb. 19, 2021 The Town and the Committee have clearly invested significant, thoughtful time on the Starmet site. As a resident of the town, I am appreciative of your efforts.

COST AND LIABILITY

The report provides a thorough discussion of existing liens and limitations of liability should the town take ownership, but I don't see in the report if or how much the town will have to pay for the site. Will there be a purchase price? How much are the existing municipal liens and how would they be handled vis-à-vis purchase, if any, and other existing liens against the property?

The Starmet site is available as a result of the prior owners being poor stewards of the land. Because the site has not been used for the benefit of the public or private sector for many years, if the land were to remain undeveloped for the foreseeable future, it would seem that our community would be in no worse position. In other words, the immediate goal should be to put the site in the hands of good stewards of the land. What would it cost the town to do just that and nothing more?

As the report clearly describes, \$80MM has been invested so far to remediate the site with another \$125MM estimated. The report, though, does point out that there have been additional environmental damages discovered during the remediation process. Perhaps the \$125MM will not be the final cost. The report states the United States and four prior owners are financially liable for additional discoveries, but is there a compelling urgency to acquire/take ownership of the land now rather than waiting a bit further into the remediation process?

As it relates to additional liability, the report states on page 18, "Any past known or unforeseeable contamination is NOT the responsibility of the new owner." Is there legal difference between unknown and unforeseeable? That would seem to be an important distinction if the town were take ownership before remediation is complete. When

would the town propose taking ownership of the site?

USE

As it relates to potential future uses of the site, I am very concerned with the options presented as there is no discussion of the town's population -- its past and more importantly future trends.

Since 1990, the town's population has increased from 15,424 to 16,365, an increase of 827 residents or just 0.6% per annum. Given this relatively stable population, the town's infrastructure and services are much in balance with the town's needs. Any changes, particularly in population, will likely uncover infrastructure and service capacity issues. This was amply demonstrated when the Concord Mews came online several years ago. Any redevelopment plan which would include residential housing should carefully consider the incremental operating and infrastructure costs required to provide town services as compared to the revenue the site would generate. In other words, (i) the town should not only look at what it cost to acquire the site and what it should sell for in a private or public private partnership and (ii) the town should not look to the rest of the citizenry to fund the ongoing financial burden of additional residents.

Also, due to the relatively stable population base for three decades, I would imagine the population profile of the town is weighted towards elderly. If the town were to look out over the next 30 years, how might the demographics change as a result of generational transition and what demands on town services should we expect in future years? The site could offer solutions to longer term challenges the town might face.

Has the committee investigated legal disclosures and documents that would be attached to residential properties located in a previous Superfund site? While one can dismiss lingering environment issues and associated legal liabilities, any documents that would come with a deed or required disclosures will impact viability. (If as the report mentions, there could be restrictions of digging below 10 feet, I would not purchase a home built on a former Superfund site. Period.)

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The town has commitments and needs for its current population base. The town is currently facing \$150MM of capital needs for facilities which are at end of useful life. Has the town identified the next "wave" of capital needs? Also, is the town still in a significant deficit with funding pension and post-employee benefits for its retired municipal workers and teachers? Is the town's tax base appropriately balanced for these near term and intermediate term needs?

The property taxes on my residence have increased 76% in the 14 years we have lived in Concord or 4.1% per annum. Additionally, I suspect that the town's existing borrowings and unfunded personnel liabilities are greater today than 14 years ago when we moved to the community. The rate of increase in property tax along with growing town debt burdens are unsustainable.

CREATIVE USES

Looking to other towns' redevelopment projects, while interesting, may not be applicable. Do we need additional community centers, athletic fields or housing (market rate or affordable)? I don't dismiss the report's considerations, but I would not want to look to other cities' redevelopment sites for a model for our town. We have unique needs. Could the Starmet parcel be used specifically to address looming capital requirements and also improve the quality of life in the coming decades for the town's existing population size.

The town currently has light industrial buildings essentially in the town center and municipal offices spread across a number of buildings, some of which are poorly configured, dated and environmentally deficient. Could the Starmet site be used to consolidate all of these activities to the Superfund site and sell the existing sites to private developers, who in turn could probably do some very wonderful things in our historic town center to serve the town's population in the coming decades?

The Starmet Committee should be commended for its efforts with the report. It contains much information, which allowed me to react as I have and pose these questions. A very serious and thorough financial review along with additional environmental liability evaluation should be conducted before proceeding further. We should not get enamored with development ideas that can't be supported financially.

Breht Feigh

15 Feb. 24, 2021

Hi, I was wondering what steps should the Select Board take to determine whether to accept ownership of the StarMet property? Also, how soon should the Select Board approve ownership? Thanks for the info. Great report.

Another question: what happens if the Select Board chooses not to acquire ownership of the StarMet property?

Karlen Reed

16 Feb. 27, 2021

Dear NMI/Starmet Re-Use Planning Committee Members,

I strongly urge you not to support affordable housing at 2229 Main Street, Concord, MA 01742.

As a former twice elected member of the Concord Housing Authority and as Chair of the Affordable Housing Funding Committee, I am aware of the acute need for housing diversity in Town. In addition, my other professional and non-profit work in real estate has illustrated the mistakes of not having a thoughtful, holistic plan to addressing housing needs and locations.

While I firmly believe that the NMI/Starmet site represents a great opportunity to help our town with its housing challenges, affordable housing here would be a profound mistake.

Instead, our residents and our Town would be much better served by using existing Town parcels for housing and transferring the operations on these parcels to the NMI/Starmet site.

These Town locations total over 500,000 square feet in West Concord Center and in Concord Center. These parcels are underutilized, inefficient, and waste taxpayers' money. Transferring the uses on these sites to the Starmet land allows these existing Town locations to be repurposed for mixed-income, mixed-use, multi-generational housing.

The benefits of housing at these Town locations includes:

- Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) – This decreases car travel and reduces carbon emissions helping our environment and helping our Town reach longstanding environmental goals.
- Supporting local businesses - Residents can walk to local businesses. This keeps these businesses here and maintains Town character.

o Colonial Stores in Concord Center closed last year. It will be replaced with a luxury real estate brokerage. Is this what we want for our Town?

- Revenue for the Town - The assessed value of these parcels is over \$9,000,000. Repurposing them would bring much needed revenue to our Town. This is especially important considering the list of Town capital projects – not including the new middle school project which is expected to cost \$100,000,000. Furthermore, it is projected that the school alone will add \$1,000 to every resident’s annual property tax bill.

o Annual property taxes of these parcels is \$137,000. The Town doesn’t receive this revenue because these properties are tax-exempt. Repurposing these sites brings much higher valuations yielding higher annual property tax to the Town.

- Housing Diversity – These town sites would allow for more diverse housing inventory versus large single-family homes. These locations would provide smaller units for residents looking to age in place, empty nesters, and young couples starting out. This is exactly the type of housing we need.
- Housing Inclusion - Housing in these areas spreads out affordable housing units and integrates them into the Town. This is crucial to making residents in these homes feel part of the community and to preventing a stigma being associated with any one area.
- Demand on Town Services – Utilizing these Town parcels helps to balance the demand on Town services. West Concord has seen an increase in population and an increase in service calls. Utilizing these 2 parcels for housing will help ease that burden.

Please do not take the easy path to solving the complex challenge of housing. Please opt instead for a solution that achieves our housing goals, is fiscally responsible, improves the quality of life for residents, and supports businesses and our Town goals.

I am happy to share further insight about these alternative solutions. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of help.

Todd Benjamin

17 Feb. 28, 2021

I think the NMI site would be a wonderful new location for the CPW and other Town Departments. That way, the current location of the CPW could be redeveloped for housing, making this a vibrant part of downtown Concord and a location for affordable housing. Moreover, some Town employees have expressed an interest of having offices at that site.

I do not think affordable housing belongs on the NMI site for several reasons. First, as a SuperFund site, putting affordable housing there would stigmatize the site and result in the perception of an environmental justice issue, whether it is or not. Secondly, affordable housing should be within walking distance of shops and the town center as well as transportation. Suggesting that there might be an occasional bus into downtown Concord is not enough to persuade me that there will be adequate public transport at the NMI site.

Janet Cochrane Miller

18 Feb. 28, 2021

To the NSRC:

while I appreciate the hard work going into your report, I am not in favor of the recommendations as I understand them. In my view, development of that site mostly for recreation (beyond use of trails in wooded areas) is misguided, and building affordable housing in that location is a poor idea, because of the location.

Instead, the town should retain that site for town services and also build a solar array (on rooftop and ground mount canopy). The town had a goal of building 25 Megawatts of solar power to convert a significant fraction of the energy we use to be emissions free and generated locally, but since that goal was set there has been very little solar development, nowhere near the goal. As we are in a worsening climate crisis, we need to make hard choices that will help bring about a sustainable future. To ignore this imperative in order to build more sports fields and community centers is in my mind irresponsible, especially in that location.

A solar array covering the A1 and A3 areas together could generate I think 3-5 Megawatts of power, which could have local battery storage as well. The power generated would help to keep electric rates low, and could help the Town be more resilient to power grid failures should they occur. It is very important for electric rates to stay low as this will help our transition to electrified homes and vehicles.

I have discussed this several times with Todd Benjamin, and agree with his suggestion of moving Concord Public Works and other facilities located in the town centers to this location, which can be under solar canopy. This is a good long term solution which would allow for building affordable housing in their current locations near town centers, where most of it should be, supporting local businesses and being convenient for public transportation. Which 2229 main street is not. I think that this will result in less traffic problems through West Concord, though I don;t know if that has been studied.

Bradley Hubbard-Nelson

19 Feb. 28, 2021

I served on the Affordable Housing Funding Study Committee in Concord. Based on that experience and volunteering for Open Table in a number of different capacities, I feel that the town should not plan to use the site at 2229 Main Street for affordable housing.

Many residents of affordable housing do not have cars and this site like the Concord Mews is poorly located for access to public transportation.

There are a number of sites in Concord Center and West Concord Center currently used for municipal purposes. Examples include DPW offices on Keyes Road and Harvey Wheeler Building. These sites could be converted to affordable housing and the municipal use could be moved to 2229 Main St.

People living in these town center sites could walk to and patronize local businesses.

It is best for all parties, those living in "affordable housing", those in "workforce housing", and their neighbors if these categories are mixed or integrated into market rate housing, not clustered.

The report expresses concern for the perception of town residents as to the "safety" of this site. If the site is the location where the town puts much of its affordable housing, that misperception will probably linger longer than it should.

In summary, I think it would be a mistake to use 2229 Main Street for affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration.

James Raymond Andrews

20 Feb. 1, 2021

Please focus on option 1 or 3 -- NOT on making this site a private-sector focused corporate development, which will only exacerbate the affordability problem that Concord has by driving higher-income residents further into Concord. Concord desperately needs more affordable amenities in town. Even though my husband and I could afford an over-priced house in Concord, it is hard to stomach the over-priced childcare and Beede center, Thoreau club, etc. What the region needs, especially on the west side of Concord, is something like a YMCA. The Acton community has been very loud about the desire for something like this as well. Let Baker Ave host the private sector....there is already a noticeable amount of vacancy there.

Haley Orvedal

21 Feb. 2, 2021

This is an impressive piece of work which is being presented by the Committee, and it suggests a number of ways/directions for the Town to proceed in planning for the use of 2229 Main Street. My sincere thanks to the Committee for an impressive step.

May I note, however, that it is not clear to me—and perhaps to others as well—what stage of work this report represents, i.e. where it is in the process? And, going further what kind of a time frame is being considered for further partial reports, as well as the presentation of a final report/recommendation?

My understanding is that the role of this Committee is to help move the cleanup of this site along—and that, of course, means a determination of what degree of cleanup is needed for the ultimate use of the land. As you present this report, it will be helpful if you will Concord citizens as to where you are in this process, and what the next step will be and what will be its time frame.

Dorrie Kehoe
