

Town Manager



Town Manager's Office

The year began with the usual flurry of activity surrounding budget development and preparations for the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. However, an unexpected event quickly shifted our focus. On the evening of January 23, 2024, the Town Manager received a call from the Executive Office of Public Safety notifying us that the Governor's FY25 Budget, to be filed the next day, would include a provision to close MCI-Concord. The proposal called for the Commonwealth's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to oversee the sale, lease, transfer, or disposal of the property.

While Town staff had been in discussions with the Department of Correction regarding the acquisition of the on-site wastewater treatment plant, the potential closure of the prison was entirely unforeseen. Recognizing the significance of this development, the Select Board established the **MCI-Concord Advisory Board** in the winter. Its charge is to educate and advise the Select Board on strategies to ensure that any future disposition of the property aligns with the Town's best interests. The board's work is set to continue through December 2025, aligning with DCAMM's Discovery Phase and the first round of assessment reports from its consultants. Following the 2024 Annual Town Meeting, a ten-member advisory board was appointed, with Mark Howell serving as the Select Board's designee and voting member.

In the spring, a delegation of Town staff traveled to **Washington, D.C.** to attend **Congresswoman Lori Trahan's Third District Day**, an opportunity to engage with the Congresswoman and her staff on issues of local importance. The season also saw renewed progress on **Phase One construction at Gerow Park**, a 7-acre passive recreational area situated between Warner's Pond and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. The completed amenities include walking paths, a pavilion picnic area, and restroom facilities. Around the same time,

the newly appointed **Warner's Pond Task Force** began reviewing management options to improve the ecological health and recreational use of Warner's Pond. A final recommendation is expected in 2025.

A highlight of the summer was Concord's first-ever **Pride Fest on June 22, 2024**, which featured a flag-raising ceremony, rally, and parade. Throughout the summer, both the **250th Executive Committee** and the **Middle School Building Committee** continued to meet regularly to advance their respective work. In September, the Town issued \$39.56 million in debt, including **\$35 million for the new Concord Middle School**. The bond issue attracted strong interest, with KeyBanc Capital Markets of Cleveland, OH, submitting the winning bid at a **True Interest Cost (TIC) of 3.448%**.

In the fall, Concord welcomed a delegation from our **Sister City, Nanae, Japan**. This year's visit focused on education, with teachers and students staying with local host families. It is anticipated that a Concord delegation will travel to Nanae in 2025 for the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each year, the Select Board establishes goals for the Town Manager for the upcoming fiscal year. For FY24, **thirty-two (32) action items** were identified, categorized under six priorities:

- > Organizational Resilience
- > Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- > Effective Governance and Communication
- > Financial Resiliency
- > Regional and State Interests
- > Economic Vitality and Strategic Planning

A summary of these goals, along with their year-end status, follows. Progress is classified as "**some progress**," "**completed**," or "**on hold**," with one item currently under further policy review.

Town Manager Goals & Objectives - FY24

(Last Revised August 27, 2023; updated 8/8/24 with current status)

CATEGORY	GOAL/OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEMS	STATUS
Organizational Resilience	<i>Maintain a comprehensive compensation system that attracts and retains a highly competent municipal workforce.</i>	1. In conjunction with the Personnel Board, complete review of recommendations from Personnel Study Task Force report and finalize list of next steps and Implementation timetable.	Significant Progress
		2. Develop a compensation strategy that aligns with the FY25 budget planning process and future years.	Nearly Complete
		3. Analyze the employee benefits package to identify gaps, strategies and programs that will help to attract and retain qualified personnel.	Significant Progress
		4. Analyze all Collective Bargaining Agreements, identify needed adjustments and prepare for upcoming negotiations for all CBA's expiring on June 30, 2024.	Significant Progress
		5. Identify and document recruitment strategy and develop recruitment materials which highlight Concord as employer of choice, with a specific focus on Inclusion. Establish employee task force to help.	Progress
	<i>Deliver high quality public services supported by a strong organizational structure that values efficient operations, effective management and sustainable practices.</i>	6. Fill staff vacancies; continue review organizational structure to determine if current alignment is optimal.	Significant Progress
		7. Review management and reporting structure to ensure efficient and effective operations; to enhance communications; to support optimal organizational performance; and to ensure the efficient delivery of public services.	Significant Progress
		8. Develop a long-term plan, including strategies for training, professional development and succession planning, that can guide future decision-making and supports a highly competent municipal workforce.	Significant Progress
	<i>Maintain a workforce that actively engages its knowledge, skill and talents to promote Concord's success and to deliver excellent municipal services.</i>	9. Provide regular in-house training opportunities for employees with topics that are in alignment with the Select Board's Statement of Vision and Values, promote exceptional customer service delivery model.	Progress
		10. Finalize and implement "Remote Work Policy" designed to balance the provision of excellent public service and municipal operations with the needs and desires of a modern workforce.	On-Hold
CATEGORY	GOAL/OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEMS	STATUS
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging	<i>Support, promote and engage economic, social, racial and cultural diversity and inclusion in the Town of Concord.</i>	11. Review May 2023 DEI Needs Assessment, develop a strategic plan that will move the Town from being (merely) EEO-compliant, to one that integrates and leverages differences to create business value; and begin implementation of plan.	Some Progress
		12. Complete a review and assessment of internal policies and practices; identify opportunities to improve diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.	Some Progress
		13. Continue monthly "Tea with Town Manager" providing employees with regular opportunity to connect with management outside of formal protocol.	Progress
		14. In conjunction with Internal Professional Development Committee, institute monthly diversity training program for employees; utilize existing resources, including current employees. Rotate training venues and modalities.	Some Progress
		15. Work in collaboration with the DEI Commission to research and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices for Town operations.	Progress
CATEGORY	GOAL/OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEMS	STATUS
Effective Governance and Communications	<i>Support town governance by fostering effective meeting management methods.</i>	16. Evaluate automated agenda management systems to improve efficiency, functionality, and access to information; identify resources to support Town volunteers with scheduling, facilities, compliance, training & access to information.	Progress
	<i>Facilitate effective communications between Town departments.</i>	17. Institute monthly management team meetings, inclusive of SMT and division managers; work from formal agenda, providing specific opportunities for division managers to make presentations and be directly involved in problem solving.	Progress
	<i>Foster information sharing between the Town and Concord residents.</i>	18. Coordinate a review of the website to ensure accuracy of information; inclusion of key documents; and that it meets our functionality, utility & communication needs.	Progress
CATEGORY	GOAL/OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEMS	STATUS
Financial Resiliency	<i>Promote fiscal responsibility and financial sustainability.</i>	22. Plan and allocate remaining ARPA Funds; ensure that FY25 ARPA Funds are included as a funding resource for the FY25 Budget and Capital Planning processes.	Progress
		23. Develop Five-Year Capital Plan for FY2025-FY2029; include major projects, cost estimates, debt forecast and tax burden projections.	Progress
		24. Develop 5 and 10 Year Financial Forecasts of revenue and Non-Guidelines Expense and highlighting projection of "Available for Guidelines" to share with Finance Committee.	Completed
		25. In conjunction with the cross-departmental Risk Management Committee, develop a town-wide Risk Management strategy; work closely with CPS/ CCRSD to help identify and mitigate risk.	Completed
		26. Continue to aggressively monitor and track all grant opportunities, applying for those that meet agreed upon business need.	Significant Progress
		27. Review means, methods and formulas for budgetary chargeback to Enterprise and other special revenues to ensure that they accurately capture associated costs. Continue to look for ways to streamline and/or eliminate costs, particularly from General Fund budget.	Progress
		28. Continue to develop relationships with state and federal legislative delegation & staff, state leaders and municipal colleagues.	Significant Progress
Regional and State Interests	<i>Advance Concord's interests in the region and the Commonwealth.</i>	29. Continue work with MWRA and neighboring communities to investigate the feasibility of regional water.	Progress
CATEGORY	GOAL/OBJECTIVE	ACTION ITEMS	STATUS
Economic Vitality & Strategic Planning	<i>Promote the economic vitality of the Town. Ensure implementation of recommendations, goals and objectives of key planning documents.</i>	30. In conjunction with task force, research and report on the potential acquisition of 2229 Main Street, including insurance costs, risk implications and next steps.	Significant Progress
		31. Implement strategies, innovations & staffing models to streamline permitting and regulatory processes in support of businesses, residents and visitors of Concord.	Significant Progress
		32. Identify and develop strategy to ensure implementation of recommendations, goals and objectives of key planning documents and a mechanism to track the same.	Some Progress

Staffing Updates

This year, we welcomed several new staff members to key roles within the Town:

In the Town Manager's Office:

- > Andrea Fountain, Executive Assistant to the Select Board
- > Amanda Moore, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

On the Senior Management Team:

- > Jason Bulger, Director, Concord Municipal Light Plant (CMLP) (internal promotion)
- > Amalia McCaffrey, Chief Information Officer (internal promotion)

We also bid a heartfelt farewell to Dave Wood, Director of CMLP, in recognition of his 29 years of service to the Town. Dave joined Concord in January 1995 as an Engineering Intern and went on to serve as an Electrical Engineer (1998), Engineering and Operations Manager (2006), and finally as Director (2010). We are deeply grateful for his leadership and dedication and wish him all the best in his next chapter.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain inspired by Concord's resilience and our shared commitment to fostering a community that is **responsive, inclusive, healthy, and safe**.

Information Technology and GIS

The Technology Department consists of three Divisions: Information Technology (IT) Operations, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Minuteman Media Network (MMN).

The Department's **mission** is to offer strategic leadership and a clear technology vision for the Town of Concord. It aims to deliver secure and reliable information systems to support all town functions, while also collaborating with various departments to enhance business operations through the effective and efficient use of technology.

The Technology Department's **objectives** include:

- > **Automation and Efficiency:** Optimizing Department processes using technology
- > **Innovation:** Fostering an environment of collaboration leading to innovation
- > **Risk Management:** Identifying threats while mitigating risks
- > **Cybersecurity:** Providing access to and security of information and information systems
- > **Talent and Professional Development:** Investing in the development of the IT, GIS and MMN professionals and building their professional networks to enhance and grow their skill sets

IT Operations

In 2024, the Town continued to work with a third-party managed service provider for Help Desk support. However, there has been again a notable increase in the involvement of internal IT staff, who are now providing increased desktop and phone support to users across the departments. Internal IT staff have consistently delivered exceptional support to end users, ensuring timely and responsive assistance for their department's IT needs and requirements. Over the course of the year, the staff, inclusive of the managed service provider, supported 420 end users, addressed 1800+ tickets and deployed/replaced over ninety workstations, which enabled users access to reliable information systems to conduct their operations.

Security continues to be a major area of focus and concern as malicious actors increasingly see municipal governments as a target of opportunity for network penetration and ransomware attacks. For the fourth year in a row, Concord was the recipient of a grant for cybersecurity awareness training which enabled Town employees to receive training in the following areas of risk: Phishing, Passwords, Social Engineering, Remote & Mobile Security and Security culture. Additionally, the Town was awarded funding under the Municipal Local Cybersecurity Grant Program from the Office of Grants and Research which was used to contract a third-party vendor to assist in development of comprehensive Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans.

IT has also been focused on streamlining and automating onboarding and offboarding procedures utilizing features within the Microsoft 365 suite to increase efficiency. Finally, in conjunction with the Town Network Team, IT technicians played a critical role in network upgrades in early September that enabled a more efficient network design and increased speeds by 10-40x between Town buildings. The IT Operations Division is committed to continued, un-paralleled support of its user population and ensuring that information systems are reliable, available and secure to support department functions.

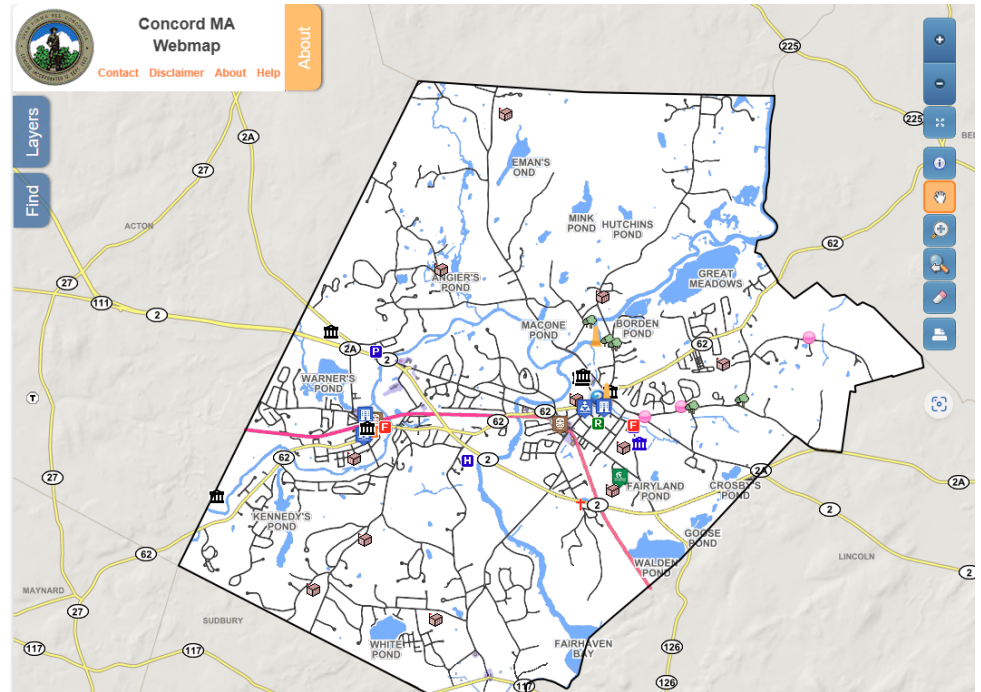
GIS

In 2024, the Concord GIS team supported several Town departments and initiatives, including data processes, edits, and updates to maps and web applications. Key projects included assisting with the annual parcel certification, and collaborating with Public Safety, the National Park Service, and Lexington for the 250th celebrations. The team also supported the Water & Sewer team with field data collection and mapping for the Lead and Copper Rule, as well as the Service Line Inventory submission to MassDEP.

Internally, the GIS platform was upgraded and the team delivered staff training sessions on updated software. Additionally, several applications transitioned to new formats improving ease of use. The team also assisted

the Planning Division with zoning compliance related to Multi-Family Zoning for MBTA communities. This required several rounds of modelling and mapping ahead of the 2024 Annual Town Meeting and prior to the official submission to the Commonwealth at the end of the year.

Finally, the GIS team presented at the 2024 Fall Northeast Arc Users Group conference, sharing innovative work and insights. The GIS team remains committed to delivering high-quality products for the Town of Concord in 2025.



Sustainability

Concord's Sustainability Division is responsible for developing and implementing programs, policies, and initiatives that reflect and support the community's climate and sustainability goals as outlined in Sustainable Concord, the Town's comprehensive climate action and resilience plan. These efforts are conducted in collaboration with a broad spectrum of Town departments, committees, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders.

As a community, Concord continued to make progress towards achieving our greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets. The Town was recognized by the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities program for achieving a 20% reduction in energy usage in FY2024 (compared to a 2011 baseline level) at the inaugural Green Communities Summit in November. An updated Town-wide GHG inventory was completed in 2024 with the assistance of the

Climate Action Committee based on 2022 emissions data. The results showed that Concord's tracked GHG emissions have decreased by 37.5% compared to the 2008 baseline, and that energy use for buildings (63%) and transportation (32%) continue to dominate the emissions sources. The GHG emission reduction targets for the Town were updated at 2024 Town Meeting to more closely reflect those of the State, including goals of 50% reduction by 2030, 75% reduction by 2040, and 85% reduction by 2050. These changes were made in conjunction with Concord's formal declaration of a Climate Emergency and the need for the Town's progressive action to mitigate and adapt to that crisis.

Following several years of efforts, two new sets of building codes that accelerate building electrification became effective in 2024. The Specialized Stretch Building Code, effective in January, requires higher energy efficiency standards for new residential and commercial building construction and is intended to promote net-zero development. Additionally, Concord's participation as one of only ten pilot communities in the MA DOER Fossil Fuel Free Building Demonstration Program, effective in July, supersedes the Specialized Code and prohibits the use of fossil fuels in new residential and commercial building construction and major renovations. Both policies will be essential tools for reducing the use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment. The impacts of these policies will be amplified by the fact that 100% of Concord's electric supply is now carbon-free, courtesy of the Concord Municipal Light Plant.

Concord residents continue to reduce GHG emissions through high adoption rates of electric vehicles. The Town had the third highest percentage (17.7%) of zero-emission and hybrid vehicles registered in the





Commonwealth in 2024 (up from 13.8% in 2023), according to the MassDOT Vehicle Census. The Sustainability Division participated in an electric vehicle showcase event hosted by CMLP and Energy New England in September during which over 120 participants were able to explore several dozen different EV models and engage with their owners. The Town continues to add BEV and PHEV vehicles to the municipal fleet via our 'EV First' vehicle replacement policy and is anticipating the installation of five additional Level 2 charging stations at our Public Works

campus to accommodate our growing municipal electric fleet. Efforts are also underway to explore EV charging infrastructure on school properties, including improved charging for the Town's three electric school buses.

The Sustainability Division also worked to actively engage with residents through several public events. Two Sustainability Roundtable events were held in 2024 (June and December) to bring together key stakeholders and the public to learn about sustainability initiatives and progress, including the updated GHG emissions inventory. It is anticipated that additional Roundtable events will be held twice annually. A Climate Festival was hosted by Sustainability and Mothers Out Front in April that attracted over 200 participants and featured resources and activities from over two dozen Town departments and organizations, including a small EV showcase. Sustainability also partnered with CMLP and the Climate Action Committee to host two Green Home tours in the Spring that allowed participants to tour a selection of Concord homes to engage with homeowners and CMLP energy coaches to see firsthand the successful adoption of heat pumps, electric appliances, solar arrays, and electric vehicles.

Looking forward, Sustainability priorities in 2025 are anticipated to include creating a decarbonization roadmap and applying for Climate Leaders designation from the MA Green Communities Program, completing investment-grade energy audits and securing an energy services performance contract for all municipal buildings, and beginning the process of formally revising the Town's original Climate Action and Resilience Plan launched in 2020.

Concord's Community-Wide GHG Emissions (2008, 2016, 2019, 2022)

