

ARTICLE 12 – SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

The \$600,000 appropriation of Free Cash will enable the Town to perform necessary work following the recommendations from the Land Use Working Group.

The Land Use Working Group (LUWG), established by the Select Board in July 2025, was charged with evaluating the future of Concord's municipal facilities and identifying strategic opportunities to modernize public infrastructure while supporting the Town's broader goals for housing, economic development, and efficient service delivery. Over seven months, the group conducted extensive analysis, site visits, staff consultations, and benchmarking against peer municipalities.

The [Phase I report](#), completed in February 2026, confirms what prior facility assessments have indicated: **several of Concord's core municipal facilities—particularly Public Safety and Public Works—are functionally obsolete and no longer capable of supporting modern operations.** The current police and fire facilities are aging, undersized, and unable to meet current operational standards or future service demands. Critical deficiencies include inadequate training and operational space, limited equipment storage, and buildings that cannot accommodate modern emergency apparatus or personnel needs. Continuing to rely on these facilities would defer necessary investments while future costs rise.

Similarly, the Public Works campus at Keyes Road is constrained by environmental limitations, inadequate space, outdated buildings, and operational inefficiencies that affect fleet maintenance, materials storage, and staff operations. These limitations create safety risks, reduce operational efficiency, and increase long-term costs to taxpayers.

In addition, municipal administrative services are currently dispersed across numerous buildings, resulting in fragmented operations, reduced staff collaboration, and inconvenience for residents who must travel to multiple locations to access municipal services. The Working Group found that **strategic consolidation of administrative functions could improve efficiency, reduce long-term facility maintenance costs, and potentially free valuable town-owned properties for housing or other community priorities.**

Municipal Facilities Planning Timeline

The need to address the Towns' facilities has been recognized for many years. In 2014, part of the Town's capital plan allocated funds to study the Keyes Road campus. These funds are being used to support planning today. In 2018 and 2019 a comprehensive Facilities study identified and quantified deficiencies in almost every Town Department. The Public Safety and Public Works facilities were the top priorities.

From 2020 to 2024, the Town focused on pandemic operations and recovery and building the new Ellen Garrison Building at Concord Middle School. This project, at \$102 million, created a significant increase in debt service for taxpayers. Fortunately, it is now complete, on time and under budget. Over the past 20 years, the Town has replaced all three elementary schools, the high school and now the middle school. Alcott and Thoreau bonds have all been redeemed and the last payment on the Willard bonds will be completed in FY29.

2024 brought new and unexpected opportunity for land redevelopment in the form of the State's announcement that MCI Concord would close and be redeveloped. The Town responded by creating the MCI Concord Advisory Board and then commissioned the [Vision Plan](#) (funded by a state earmark) to understand the potential of the site. In 2025, recognizing the need for comprehensive planning involving the now closed Peabody school, and other Town owned properties, the Select Board formed

the Land Use Working Group to begin developing a comprehensive strategic plan. The LUWG's Phase 1 recommendations were first published in February 2026.

During the 2026 to 2028 timeframe, the Select Board proposes that the Town use some remaining existing resources, from ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021- federal grant funding), prior capital plans, and the funding requested in this Article to advance the priority recommendations enough to provide, cost estimates, timelines, and proposals for re-zoning (if needed) to future Town Meetings. Details of the specific areas are below.

Purpose of the Requested Funding

The Select Board, in consultation with the Town Manager has requested **\$600,000 appropriation from Free Cash**, to fund the next phase of professional work necessary to transform the Working Group's priority recommendations into actionable projects. Those recommendations are summarized below.

1. **Public Safety** – The Phase 1 report identified the need to reconfigure and redesign the existing two locations with a primary focus on West Concord where demand for public safety services has been growing. \$350K of Article 12 funding is recommended to perform feasibility study, schematic design, cost modeling, public outreach, and developing a property acquisition strategy and roadmap for the Public Safety Functions.
 - Priority order:
 - New West Concord Fire HQ – Adding space to meet demand
 - New or renovated Police HQ – At a location to be determined
 - New or renovated Fire Substation – for Concord Center
2. **Public Works** – The Phase 1 report identified three possible locations for Public Works but recommended a primary focus on MCI Concord. \$150K from Article 12 would be combined with \$105K of remaining ARPA funds and \$125K from a 2014 Capital Plan Article to perform feasibility study, schematic design, cost modeling, public outreach and negotiations with the State to develop a roadmap for Public Works.
3. **Municipal Consolidation** – The Phase 1 report identified a strategy that would be likely to create opportunities to improve efficiencies and potentially identify surplus properties that could be disposed of to offset the costs. \$100K of Article 12 funding will support public outreach, analyzing renovation and acquisitions costs for the preferred strategy. A cost benefit analysis for the disposition of Town Property which may be deemed or become surplus because of consolidation will also be part of this program area. If Town Property is to be re-used, re-zoning of the Town parcel may be needed to realize the new purpose.
 - Preferred strategy:
 - Purchase and renovate an existing office building

Specifically, in each area, the funds would support:

- Detailed engineering and architectural feasibility studies
- Site analysis and environmental due diligence for priority locations
- Refined cost estimates and project phasing strategies
- Space planning for public safety, public works, and municipal consolidation needs
- Financial modeling and evaluation of potential property disposition
- Professional facilitation of public engagement and stakeholder outreach

The Phase I report makes clear that **further professional analysis is required before the Town can responsibly pursue any major capital investments.** These studies will allow Concord to refine options, evaluate trade-offs, and identify the most fiscally responsible path forward.

Strategic Opportunity for the Town

The need to modernize municipal facilities coincides with a **rare strategic opportunity** for Concord. Several large parcels—including the MCI-Concord site, the former Peabody Middle School property, and other municipal lands—are either newly available or likely to become available in the near future. These properties create a unique moment for the Town to reconsider how municipal services are organized and where facilities should be located.

Without advancing feasibility studies now, Concord risks missing this opportunity and may instead face a future of piecemeal repairs, escalating maintenance costs, and continued operational inefficiencies.

Fiscal Stewardship

The requested funding is a **critical investment in responsible capital planning.** Major municipal facility projects involve tens of millions of dollars in capital costs per building. Investing in careful feasibility analysis now ensures that future decisions are based on sound engineering, realistic cost estimates, and a clear understanding of long-term fiscal impacts.

In short, this funding enables the Town to move from **conceptual recommendations to informed decision-making,** ensuring that any future capital investments are strategic, efficient, and aligned with Concord's long-term community goals.

Commitment to Public Engagement and Dialog

The Select Board recognizes that there will need to be extensive public engagement and dialog about all these projects. The LUWG reviewed and evaluated a tremendous amount of information in a short period of time. Their recommendations need to be communicated and tested through feasibility studies. Article 12 funding will provide resources to ensure that occurs. The aim is to present the public with clear rationale and choices for the design, timing, and cost of each capital investment.

Conclusion

Approving this appropriation will allow the Town to responsibly evaluate options for addressing critical municipal facility needs while positioning Concord to make informed, fiscally prudent decisions about the future of public works, public safety, and municipal services.

The \$600,000 requested represents the essential next step in translating the Land Use Working Group's findings into a practical and implementable plan for the Town's future.