

Concord's Long Range Plan: Envision Concord – Bridge to 2030

What is the Livable Built Environment for Concord's Future?

What does the Livable Built Environment mean to you? What could it look like in 2030? The Comprehensive Long Range Plan Committee is asking these question as part of the new Long Range Plan: **Envision Concord – Bridge to 2030**. Based on the American Planning Association's Sustaining Places Principle, the Committee did a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis for a *Livable Built Environment*, which ensures that all elements of the built environment – including land-use, transportation, housing, energy and infrastructure – will work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working and recreating with a high quality of life. The Committee's came away with the following summary includes:

- Concord's three village centers are accessible to transit and pedestrian friendly, but the majority of town is low density and automobile dependent. Altering our existing road network and adding bike lanes and sidewalks presents challenges.
- Mixed-use development is one way to reduce car trips, but the lack of available land and pedestrian/bike infrastructure, along with lack of awareness and motivation by residents, can stand in the way.
- Infill development - increasing density within existing village centers and other areas that could be further built-out - but the high cost of land and "greenfield" development sites may limit potential.
- Retaining the Town character is a priority concern of Town residents. Refining and simplifying our zoning by-laws should continue to provide developers consistency and flexibility and by avoiding conflicting regulations.
- Concord's "hazard zones" include areas vulnerable to future flooding due to climate change and partially remediated brownfields. We need to strengthen our planning for flood vulnerability, and brownfield development requires robust planning and regulatory coordination.
- Concord has two transit stops, but our historic layout and suburban character limit intra-town connectivity. We could connect some of our existing parks and open space, but there are conflicting opinions on how to balance preservation of our historic and suburban character with increased connectivity.
- Few of Concord's areas of high employment density have multi-modal connections, which poses challenges to increased economic development.
- Historic conservation and re-use is a clear strength in Concord, but we must coordinate historic preservation and sustainability goals while we align modern needs, uses and tourism opportunities with specific locations.
- Concord consistently enforces Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements, but the cost of achieving complete access in an old, historic town is high, and challenges remain with increasing demand inherent in an aging population.
- Concord has taken proactive steps to towards sustainability. Many opportunities remain, but we need financing strategies for projects with sustainability features.

Do you agree or disagree? What will it mean to your children or grandchild in 2030? The Committee wants to hear from you. Citizens may share ideas any time and respond to the suggestions of others at the Envision Concord website – www.EnvisionConcord.org. All are welcome to attend our public meetings that are usually held about every other Friday morning as well as other upcoming public forums this fall. Dates and times are posted on the Town website.