

**TOWN OF CONCORD, VERMONT
1992
MUNICIPAL PLAN**

Adopted 12/7/92

CONCORD, VERMONT 1992 MUNICIPAL PLAN

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1. PLAN INTRODUCTION

Vermont's Northeast Kingdom has experienced many social and economic changes over the past twenty years. 1970 marked the start of a dramatic increase in the regions permanent and seasonal population. Investors from southern Vermont and neighboring states, invested in property and businesses in the Northeast Kingdom. Census figures show that the population in many of the Kingdom's rural towns grew by over forty percent over this twenty year period. Many new businesses were established in the Kingdom during this time period. All of New England was affected by this growth cycle.

Census figures show that Concord's population grew from 896 residents in 1970 to 1125 residents by 1980. This rapid population growth was seen as a possible threat to the stability of the town's environmental and financial structure. Concord residents developed and adopted a Land Use/Transportation Plan in 1972, to set policies which would guide the town's future growth. Zoning Regulations were adopted the following year. These regulations established an orderly and environmentally sound system of regulating the town's expansion. The Land Use Plan was revised in 1978, while the town's Zoning By-laws were revised in 1975, 1978 and again in 1987. It should be noted that Concord's population fell from 1125 to 1100 between 1980 and 1990.

The Concord Planning Commission and Selectmen decided to update the town's Land Use Plan, to illustrate the changes that have occurred over the last 20 years. The Commission decided to include a collection of technical data that will be used as a basis for all future revisions to the town's land use regulations. This new land use or Municipal Plan will also include policies concerning the town's social and financial structure. Therefore, this single text will be able to be used for planning programs at all levels of town government. This text will enable all branches of the town's government to work toward common goals.

A quick review of the plan will show the reader that each element of the town's structure is reviewed within its own chapter. In many cases maps and charts are used to illustrate or highlight certain facts within the text. Many chapters offer summery conclusions that provide the reader with a reference point on the impact that the subject can have on a proposed project. A closer investigation of the text will show how each subject that is represented in the plan, relates to the overall structure of the town. The plan allows us to analyze a wide variety of factors that could affect the outcome of a proposed project.

The plan was developed from information contributed by citizens of Concord and by federal, state, and local agencies.

2. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

A. Structure

This municipal plan has been structured to provide easy access to general information and specific data that pertains to Concord's social, environmental and financial structure.

B. Intent

The information presented within this text provides factual data that may be used in dealing with matters that effect the health, safety and general welfare of the residents and taxpayers of the Town of Concord.

C. Policies

All future town policies will be based on, and supported by, the information contained in this plan. All proposed policies and/or policy changes will be designed to enhance the quality of the town's social, economic and environmental standards. The plan will be used by policy makers to determine the impact that a proposed policy change would have on each element of the town's structure.

D. Municipal Programs

Current and future municipal programs, shall be designed to incorporate the long term goals of the municipality, as they are represented in this plan.

E. Zoning Regulations

This municipal plan will serve as the support document for all future zoning regulation changes and/or additions. All zoning regulations will be based on the results of the accumulated data in one or more sections of this document.

3. LAND USE PLAN

A. History

By the late 1800's, five distinct villages had been established within Concord's borders. West Concord, North Concord, Miles Pond, East Concord and Concord Corners. While the town was supported by numerous farm operations in 1880, it was Concord's industrial development that accounted for that years record population, which census figures placed at 1,612 residents. Logging operations in Concord and surrounding communities supplied Concord's industries with huge quantities of saw logs, which were milled into dimensional lumber for use in building construction and other wood product production. The railroad had created a means to ship Concord's wood and dairy products to the state's larger

industrial towns. The town's rivers and streams supplied most of the power that was needed for the town's industries. Many businesses were established during this period to provide the services and goods that were in demand by the industries and by the people that lived and worked in Concord's villages. By 1910, census figures show the population had fallen to 1,080.

By 1937, the largest business in Concord was the New England Creamery. The town's forty dairy farms supported the creamery operation. By this time most of the town's industries and service businesses had closed. The advent of the automobile and gas engine powered farm equipment had a dramatic impact on Concord. Farmers were able to reduce their manpower requirements by using tractors and other engine driven equipment. Croplands, set aside for draft animals, could now be used to support larger dairy herds. Many of Concord's small farms had been absorbed by larger, mechanized, farm operations. The majority of Concord's industrial work force had moved to the new industrial/ commercial centers developing around the state's large population areas.

In 1970, census figures placed Concord's population at 896 residents. By 1980, census figures show the population had increased to 1,125 but 1990 figures show a population of only 1,100. Census figures show that over 75% of Concord's residents now work in neighboring communities. The town no longer has an industrial base and only 358 of the town's 28,100 acres are currently being farmed. The town supports and maintains a small commercial base, including several home occupation businesses. Concord's 1990 Real Estate Valuations Report show that 196 of the town's 601 residences are seasonal or vacation homes. The growth in vacation homes has served to increase the retail and tax base of the town, without putting an undue strain on the town's service requirements. It could be said that the recreational community has replaced the economic security, once provided by the agricultural community. Logging within the town's 4,065 wooded acres, still represents an important part in the town's economic structure. It must also be noted that land owned by electric utilities represents approximately one third of the town's grand list.

Concord maintains its own K through 12 school system. This system also provides educational services to neighboring communities on a tuition basis. In recent years, the cost of education has represented approximately 70% of the town's total annual expenses.

The neighboring communities of St. Johnsbury and Lyndonville, recognized in the Regional Plan as "Principal Growth Centers", are continuing to have moderate growth in their commercial/industrial base. Many Concord residents work in these "centers". The majority of the goods and services that are required by Concord's residents are offered by retailers and service companies in these two neighboring communities.

B. Current Land Use

(1) Farm Land

The only major change in land use, as reported in the town's "Grand List Reports" dated 1980/1985/1990, was the reduction in crop and pastureland acreage. The chart below shows these reductions:

ACTIVE FARM LAND ACREAGE*

	1980	1985	1990
Cropland Acreage	500	228	146
Pasture Acreage	<u>4,052</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>212</u>
Totals	4,052	351	358

* Figures taken from Concord Grand List Reports

(2) Woodlands

Approximately 25,769, of the town's 28,100 total acreage, is classified woodlands. Approximately one third of these woodlands are owned and managed by an individually owned, logging operation. Large tracts of these woodlands are being harvested each year. The town's woodlands, including the cut-over tracts, supply a variety of resources for feeding and sheltering the area's wildlife. Concord's woodlands along the Connecticut River have been designated as a winter deer range by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. The non-resident landowner questionnaire shows the town's beautiful countryside was the second highest reason for non-resident land ownership in Concord. Currently, the town's zoning regulations discourage development within the town's interior woodlands.

(3) Residential and Commercial Development

The majority of the town is sparsely populated. The Village of Concord, North Concord, Miles Pond and East Concord represent the only areas supporting medium to high density development. Many of the town's seasonal homes and camps are located in properties around Miles Pond and Shadow Lake. The 1990 Concord Grand List Real Estate Evaluation Report list 405 year round residences and 196 seasonal homes. The report also lists 19 commercial establishments. Development, over the last ten years, has been minimal and the town's year-round population has decreased slightly.

(4) Recreation

A public beach and boat ramp facility is maintained at Miles Pond and the Fish and Game Department maintain a boat ramp at Shadow Lake. Lake and river shorelines are

visited by numerous fishermen during the spring and summer season and the woodlands offer hunters a wide range of fall and winter recreational opportunities. Miles of old abandoned roads that serviced Concord before the Moore Dam was built, provide the visitor with a look into the Concord of yesterday. Some of these old pathways provide today's snowmobile enthusiasts with hours of winter exploration.

C. Future Land Use

(1) Commercial Growth

While St. Johnsbury and Lyndonville continue to increase their retail and service related business inventories, Concord's historical trends indicate that no appreciable increase in commercial growth should be anticipated, unless the town actively solicits new growth. It is assumed, for the purposes of this plan, that property along State Route 2 would be most likely to attract any new commercial growth that did come to the town. While the lack of municipal services does severely limit the types of businesses that could be lured to Concord, the town's historically low tax rate should provide an attractive enticement to small service businesses. The industrial park, located in St. Johnsbury, will continue to offer a highly competitive industrial lease package, and therefore, surrounding towns will find it hard to compete for new industrial development. Act 250 currently serves to limit industrial growth outside of the "Principal Growth Centers". A program, inviting wood related, value added, industries to relocate to Concord, could provide economic security for the town's loggers and create growth in the town's commercial tax base.

(2) Residential Growth

Between 1980 and 1990 many of the towns around St. Johnsbury and Lyndonville have experienced dramatic growth in their population. This growth was due, in part, to the industrial and commercial growth within the two "Principal Growth Centers". During this same time period Concord's population decreased at a moderate rate. While there were a few new homes built in Concord over this time period, the majority of movement in residential development was produced by new mobile homes and the seasonal home construction. Research indicates that a portion of Concord's population decline can be contributed to: the lack of a long-term school facilities program and the availability of "school of choice" programs being offered by neighboring communities. Changes, resulting from school system studies that are currently reaching a conclusion, may result in a small increase in Concord's residential growth. Concord's future growth potential and economic stability, may hinge on it's ability to: revitalize its commercial sector and re-evaluate the town's educational system.

(3) Vacation and Seasonal Home Growth

Vacation home growth should be expected to continue at a moderate rate. This growth may not be limited to the lakeshore areas of Miles Pond and Shadow Lake. Development on large secluded lots should be anticipated along town roads in the southern half of the town. This growth will be severely limited in the early nineties as a result of the national recession of 1991/92. However, as the economy improves, seasonal and vacation home development may be the leading contributor to Concord's grand list. Seasonal homes and camps require very few town services and therefore, they provide substantial tax relief to the year-round residents. The seasonal homeowners and their renters also represent a significant addition to the town's retail customer base.

(4) Agricultural Growth

While the state of Vermont continues to hold the distinction of being New England's dairy state, its dairy farm population continues to decline at an alarming rate. Limited growth in specialty agricultural producers may lead to a slight increase in the town's agricultural sector. However, this increase would have little impact on the community. Topography and soils types have joined to create a less than desirable condition for meaningful agricultural growth within Concord's borders.

(5) Recreational Growth

As the region continues to increase in population, Concord should expect additional growth pressures placed on recreational areas in and around Shadow Lake, Miles Pond and the limited accesses to the Connecticut River shoreline. The increased use of these areas may require the expansion of the existing facilities/services and the development of one or two new facilities. Currently the town of Concord does very little toward promoting tourism and recreational activities. A community recreation program, supported by both the commercial sector and tax dollars, could produce a year-round recreational agenda that could be enjoyed by the local residents and stimulate involvement by the seasonal population and the area's tourists. Co-sponsored annual events such as fishing tournaments, snowmobile rallies, and Fourth of July events can have a very positive influence on a town's "community spirit". Increased recreational activity would have a positive impact on the town's commercial sector and could prompt growth within the seasonal home market. Growth in both of these areas can be beneficial to the financial and social climate of the community.

D. Land Use Regulations

(1) Current Land Use Regulations

Concord's zoning by-laws were adopted on November 15, 1973 and amended in 1975, 1978 and 1987. These by-laws establish five districts: Rural Lands, Low Density, Medium Density, High Density and Lakeshore. The high and medium density zones create development corridors along each side of the town's road system. The lakeshore district adopts a 1000 foot development corridor around the edge of Miles Pond and Shadow Lake. The town's remaining interior lands are zoned rural or low Density. High density development is restricted to the village area's of Concord, North Concord and East Concord. These area's are generally serviced by paved roads. Lot sizes and set backs are set for each zone. Floodway Limits are also incorporated into the town's zoning by-laws. Site plan review is incorporated into the planning regulations to ensure a site and its soils can support the proposed development. Under Concord's by-laws no structure or site may be used or occupied until a Certificate of occupancy is issued by the administrated officer. These by-laws tend to restrict residential and commercial development to areas within the community which are serviced by town roads and utilities. The current by-laws do not address nor restrict development within wetlands, along stream beds or in areas where the topography tends to create potential erosion and water pollution- conditions. By-law revisions should be developed to address these areas.

E. Topography

(1) Elevation

Northern Concord landscape is dominated by the Miles Mountain range which sports the town's highest elevations (2,432 feet). This undeveloped area is composed of steep forested slopes. Central Concord's Goudreault Hill (2,012 feet) has gentler slopes which guide the area's rain and snow runoff into natural watershed collection areas including Miles Pond. Shadow Lake is a collection area for the Shaw Mountain (1,800 feet) watershed. East Concord's elevations average between 800 and 1,100 feet. These lands are made up of rolling hills and some fairly level zones. West Concord's lowlands are separated by the Moose River (elev. 800 feet). The higher elevations in western Concord, averaging 1,100 feet in elevation, are predominantly rolling hills that melt into the town's only meadow lands. The town's highlands have provide Concord's residents and wildlife with a number of water supplies. At the same time, multiple elevation changes within the town's lowlands tend to restrict the area's development and agricultural potential.

(2) Elevation Considerations

Most of the town's roads are located at elevations of between 1,000 to 1,200 feet. At these levels erosion hazards are kept to a minimum and slopes are generally gentle in nature. The town's development districts, or corridors, are designed to make the best use of these moderately sloped areas. The town's steep slopes and rolling terrains have limited Concord's residential and agricultural expansion.

F. Soils Study

(1) Soils Map

The soils map in this plan represents information gathered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. The soil associations identified on the map represent general soil compositions that may appear within the designated areas. Soil testing would be required to determine the actual soils composition in a specified lot or subdivision.

(2) Soil Associations

Paru-Marlow association soil is the dominant soil in Concord and it tends to be deep and moderately well drained. These soils are loamy and low in lime. Concord's northern highlands are made up of a Lyman-Marow-Paru association. These soils are shallow, but this soil does tend to retain moisture. Water that is not absorbed by the soil drains away along hardpan which is generally 20 to 40 inches below the soil's surface. Cabot-Peru association soils cover the highlands in the eastern portion of Concord. These fairly deep, gently sloping, soils are poor to moderately well drained and loamy in nature. The soils are also low in lime. The town's extremely wet areas are a composite of Muck and Peat-Peacham soils which are very poorly drained organic soils. These soils are usually deep, level and low in lime.

(3) Soil Limitations

The plan's Soils Map Reference Guide indicates the limitations inherent with the soil's uses. The guide points out the relationship between topography and its effect on a soils ability to support a given use. Each soil association has positive and negative characteristics which must be considered during the planning stage of any proposed project. The major consideration within medium and high density residential areas is the soil's ability to filter and disperse septic system affluent. To avoid pollution, the affluent must be filtered and purified prior to its entering a surface or sub-surface water system. Soil stability is

also a factor to consider when planning for roadways and structure foundations. A highly absorbent soil association will become saturated during heavy rainfalls while a stony based, deep soil, will provide adequate drainage. There is an important relationship between the area's topography and its soil associations. Highly absorbent soils, located on steep slopes, can retain and meter its water source to surrounding plant life. These same soils can also produce an unfavorable condition around a building site or roadway. Minimum acreage requirements in zoning regulations are based, in part, on the soil's ability to support a given use, growth and density.

G. Wetlands

(1) Wetlands Protection

The town's wetlands, as they are designated by the U.S. Department of the Interior, are identified on the National Wetlands Inventory Map that has been produced by this department. These wetlands are a natural and important segment of the area's ecological system. The wetland areas contain poorly drained soils which absorb and retain water. The soils and the area's plant life combine to filter and meter out water to the surrounding areas. Wildlife often seek these normally wet areas and use them as a habitat during dry summer months. The ecological balance of a vast area can depend on the wetland's ability to distribute its stored rainwater. Disturbing soils and plant life in these wetlands can result in the permanent loss of these water retention areas. Concord's residents should consider ways to reduce the danger of damaging these fragile soils and waters. Consideration should be given to developing buffer zones that would prevent pollution of and damage to these natural resource zones.

H. Surface Water Areas

History tells us that the water from the Moose River was used to power a host of manufacturing operations. For some time, all village activity were focused around this little river. Today, recreation activity in and around the town's two lakes has removed the rivers prominence. Most of the town's seasonal homes are built around these two bodies of water. The Connecticut River also offers recreational opportunities for locals and vacationers alike. All of these systems are part of the watershed system that supplies surface and subsurface waters to Concord and neighboring towns and cities. While the recreational value of these waters are well known, their true value lies in their ability to collect, filter, store and deliver water to thousands of regional residents.

I. Conclusion

We are given reminders, on a daily basis, by newspaper articles and TV specials, that man's destruction and pollution of the world's natural resources is taking a dramatic toll on all of the world's residents. Most of this damage can be contributed to regional neglect of natural resources. Land planning encompasses a wide variety of subject matter, as seen in this land use chapter. Each community must prioritize its concerns, as it enters into land planning. In land planning, a town must strive to insure that today's natural, renewable resources continue to be renewable. We must protect the ecological systems that have provided generation after generation of Concord's residents with the resources that are required to sustain life. Proper land planning focuses on enriching the social and economic value of our lands while ensuring that our natural renewable resources continue to exist to serve future generations.

4. TRANSPORTATION

A. Roadway Summarys

MILEAGE SUMMARY

Class 2 Town Highways:		
No. 1	2.620	
No. 2	.860	
No. 3	1.600	
No. 4	3.560	
Total		8.640
Class 3 Town Highways:		
Total Class 3		46.230
Total Class 4		13.120
State Highways:		
Non-Interstate	10.765	
Total		<u>10.765</u>
Total Highways in Concord		78.755

Concord's State Route 2 provides the main highway in and out of town. Town Route 4, the Oregon road, provides a secondary link to New Hampshire. These two paved roads receive the heaviest road use. The remainder of the town's road system is gravel surfaced. These roads provide an adequate and energy efficient transportation system. The town roads are maintained by the town road maintenance crew. Winter maintenance requires approximately 35% of the town's annual highway budget. Resurfacing programs have enabled the town to reduce annual road repair service expenses.

Due to the town's lack of growth and the average low development density on the secondary roads, there are no plans to extend the current road system. Upgrading programs should continue over the next 10 year period.

The current zoning corridors along the town's existing roadways reduce the need for additional road construction by providing for development along on both sides of the town's roadways. New road construction classification will be determined by the approved density of the area and the type of development that is approved for the zone.

B. Other Transportation

I-93 and I-91 intersections are located in the neighboring town of St., Johnsbury. These major interstate highways provide easy access to the town of Concord. Interstate bus service is available in the neighboring town's of Lyndon and St. Johnsbury. The majority of the north country's goods and supplies are trucked into the area on the interstate highways. Several trucking companies are in operation in the local area, including the St. Johnsbury Trucking Company, one of the east coasts largest haulers. Commercial railroad services are available in Concord but no passenger service is currently being offered. Limited air services are available at the airport located in the nearby town of Lyndon.

POPULATION PROFILE

A. Introduction

The status of growth in Concord's population over the next ten years, will have a direct impact on municipal planning over that time period. The need for utility and facility expansion would be based on the town's growth trends. The plan's Population Graph shows the history of Concord's growth. This section of the plan will deal with growth trends of the town and its surrounding communities.

B. Concord's Population

Census figures show that in 1960 Concord had a population of 956 residents. By 1970 the population had decreased to 896. The New England population boom of the 70's drove Concord's population up to 1,125 residents by 1980. Unlike many of the region's small towns, Concord's population growth leveled out after 1980 and actually fell to 1,100 by 1990. Village retail services have remained fairly consistent in number over the last ten years.

Census figures show that over 75% of Concord's work force now work outside of the community. Therefore, potential population growth would be determined, generally, by the commercial activity and growth in Concord's neighboring communities. Manufacturing at the state and local level has been on a decline in recent years. 1980 census figures indicate the manufacturing base had provided employment for 26% of Concord's work force. In 1990 this number had dropped to under 20%. While a few individual manufacturers have continued to prosper, several other companies have scaled

down or closed. Growth in the retail community over the last 10 years has provided a new resource for the employment market. Commercial activity in the towns of Gilman, St. Johnsbury and Lyndon, and Littleton, N. H. will continue to have a major impact on Concord's population level.

Concord's school system will be addressed in several other sections of this plan but the system also has an impact on the town's population level. Many of the area's small towns have reduced or eliminated their in-town school facility programs. Several neighboring towns tuition out their students to private and regional schools, under a system commonly referred to as the "choice program". Under this system, parents may choose the school their child will attend. In 1991 Concord maintained two facilities, offering K-12 classes to 197 resident and 42 non-resident students.

6. UTILITIES AND FACILITIES

A. Electric

Electric power is provided to the town by Central Vermont Public Service. The majority of the electric service is provided along the town's road system. Three phase power is available at all three of the town's village areas. With few exceptions, power is provided via overhead transmission lines. The electric rates currently being charged to Concord's residential and commercial users, are high in comparison to rates offered to neighboring communities by the Village of Lyndonville Electric Company. Central Vermont Public Service officials have assured the town that their company has adequate reserve capabilities to provide additional power to the community as the town's growth demands.

B. Phone and Cable TV

New England Telephone supplies the town with its telephone services. This service is provided by overhead lines. Fiber optic service is available along State Route 2. A newly proposed five year rate structure calls for a fiber optic upgrade for all trunk systems within the state.

Cable TV services are available through a St. Johnsbury based company. These services are not yet available to all sections of town. Accessibility is determined by the number of subscribers requesting service in a prescribed area.

C. Solid Waste Collection

Currently, town residents bring their waste materials to a state certified transfer station located just outside of Concord Village. The waste material is placed in a newly purchased compactor. The compacted waste is picked up and transported, by private contractor, to Bethlehem New Hampshire for disposal. Recently the Concord Selectmen instituted a "user feel" system to pay for all waste related disposal expenses. A limited recycling program is currently

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being carried out at the transfer station location. The Regional Planning Commission is currently studying ways to help small towns to increase their recycling capabilities and with their handling of hazardous waste disposal.

D. Municipal Water and Sewage

Concord's offers no municipal water or sewage services. The town's zoning regulations currently allow high density development in the village areas and a small area around Miles Pond. However, development in these areas is restricted, under Vermont's Act 250, to development that can provide adequate sewage disposal. These high density zones were established to allow the continued use of pre-existing homes and businesses that are established in these areas. The town's current zoning by-laws recognize the limitations of the soils and natural water supplies in these areas. The by-laws indicate that at some point in the future, municipal water or sewage services may be required in one or more of these zones. If a water and/or sewage facility were to be developed in the town, the financial burden to the community would be large. With no industrial or commercial development to offset the expenses, property taxes could be driven up substantially. This plan suggests that the current zoning by-laws should be reviewed and careful consideration should be given to limiting development in the current high density zones to construction that can be supported without requiring public water and sewage service development.

E. Current Facilities

The town of Concord supports two school buildings and a gymnasium, a town office/library building, a town hall which is the home of the town museum, a fire station, town garage, a state certified waste transfer station, 6 cemeteries, a recreation area and 2, state owned boat launch sites located on Shadow Lake and Miles Pond and a Community Park, donated by the Bona Family, that includes a ball park and an ice skating rink. The town owns several other undeveloped plots of land within the community.

The town's two school buildings have been identified as structures that require both structural and internal upgrading. Studies have produced questions concerning the feasibility of continuing to maintain two town school facilities. Public meetings have been held to discuss several options including converting the Concord school into a K-12 facility and closing the East Concord School. Consideration has also been given to sending the town's high school students to neighboring private and regional high schools on a tuition basis. Several financial packages have been developed by Concord's school board members, in conjunction with the superintendent's office. The town's residents will be asked to vote in September 1992, on converting the current high school into a K-8 facility.

7. PRESERVATION POLICY

A. Water Supplies

The current zoning by-laws are designed to protect the town's surface and subsurface water systems. The ground water protection standards, as they are described within Act 250, provide the basis for the town's pollution prevention policies. The by-laws do not provide an independent sewage treatment program for land development in Concord. Additional safeguards may be needed for single home development within high density zones. These safeguards should also be considered for use when sewage system replacements are proposed in the village areas.

The town's by-laws currently include surface water protection policies that cover all land and water surfaces, as they are established under the federal floodplain program.

B. Open Lands

The town's development corridors, as established under the zoning by-laws, were designed to limit development within the town's interior woodlands. This open land policy promotes the future preservation of Concord's rural character. The policy also ensures the continuation of the town's cost efficient policies concerning road, maintenance and construction.

C. Historic Features

The site of the country's first normal school, which was established at Concord Corners in 1823, is identified by a marker and tablet that was erected in 1923. The Town Hall was built in 1906 and is considered to be an important historic landmark. The Hall is currently the home of the town museum. Several historically significant homes and commercial structures are owned and preserved by Concord's private sector. The town recognizes the importance of these historic landmarks but does not choose to legislate the preservation of privately owned landmarks. The town has no current plans to purchase addition real estate for historic preservation.

D. Natural and Scenic Areas

Miles Pond and Shadow Lake are both important natural and scenic resources which are being used, protected and preserved by the town of Concord. These areas provide excellent recreational opportunities for residents and the town's tourists. The picnic area and boat ramp facility on Miles Pond, was established to enhance the scope of the pond's recreational capabilities. Consideration should be given to opening negotiations with the power company to develop a public right-of-way to the Connecticut River shoreline. Roadside parks may also warrant review.

8. EDUCATION

A. Current Status

The Concord school system has a student population of approximately 240 children. The system provides K-12 services for both Concord students and children from neighboring communities. Grades 1-3 attend the school facility located in East Concord and the remainder of the grades attend school in the facility located in the Village of Concord.

Both of the school facilities currently require major upgrading to meet the safety and operational requirements set by the town and state governments. Several alternative renovation programs are currently under considered. One of these programs calls for the eliminating the East Concord School facility. Under this proposal, Concord's high school facility would be converted to a K-8 facility and the town's high school students would be tuitioned to St. Johnsbury and Lyndonville. Proposed construction and operating budgets to support this program, will be presented to Concord's residents, for their consideration and approval.

B. Historic Review

Student enrollment has been consistent in recent years. The chart below shows the total student population over a 30 year period.

YEAR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
1960	296
1970	316
1980	308
1985	245
1990	245

While student population figures remained fairly consistent, education costs have increased at an alarming rate. State and federal requirements and programs, enacted during the 80's, have had a dramatic impact on the annual school costs around the state. The chart below shows the increases in Concord's education budgets since school year 85-86.

SCHOOL YEAR	SCHOOL BUDGET	# OF STUDENTS
1985/86	\$ 612,639	260
1986/87	\$ 659,925	254
1987/88	\$ 735,126	228
1988/89	\$ 965,232	253
1989/90	\$ 1,020,527	234
1990/91	\$ 1,196,973	245
1991/92	\$ 1,220,692	239

The chart below illustrates the impact these increases had on the town's tax assessments and on the state aid to education program.

SCHOOL YEAR	TOWN EDUCATION TAX	STATE AID RECEIVED
1985/86	\$ 220,884	\$ 255,389
1986/87	\$ 275,853	\$ 261,115
1987/88	\$ 281,105	\$ 310,011
1988/89	\$ 363,360	\$ 336,878
1989/90	\$ 433,594	\$ 369,384
1990/91	\$ 513,394	\$ 388,102
1991/92	\$ 562,588	\$ 396,726

PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE SUMMARY

Between the school years of 1985/86 and 1991/92:

Student population decreased by	8 %
School budgets increased by	99 %
State aid increased by	55 %
Town school taxes increased by	154 %
Cost per student increased	116 %

Education expenses represent approximately 70% of the town's property tax assessment. The Concord School Receipts Graph illustrates the financial trends that have been established since 1959.

C. Planning for the Future

Many social/economic and scholastic considerations must be addressed when consideration is given to Concord's long term educational needs. Can Concord increase the quality and scope of it's education programs? What demands will be placed on the school facilities? How much money will be available to pay school expenses and how will tax rolls be affected? Can the school system's structure be changed to increase the quality of education and the value for each tax dollar spent?

This chapter begins by outlining the school system's financial status and trends. The plan's population study indicates the town's population will remain under 1,150 over the next ten years. The land use portions of this plan indicate that commercial and residential development will be minimal over the same time period. This lack of growth will also limit growth in Concord's tax base over this time period. If these forecasts are correct, the burden of the escalating school costs will continue to force property tax appropriations up.

The long term viewpoint must be addressed during each stage of research into system redevelopment. The graph in the beginning of this chapter shows that state aid to education funding increases have not kept pace with the

town's annual increases in education expenses. The state's current financial status suggests further cuts in state aid should be anticipated for the next three to four years.

The decisions made in 1992/93 will affect students and residents for many generations to come.

9. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

A. Housing

Housing construction in Concord has been minimal since 1980. This is reflected in Concord's decreasing population. Concord lands are not level in nature and therefore the topography does not offer a high number of easily developed building lots. Concord is considered a bedroom community for several neighboring commercial districts, with over 75% of its work force working outside Concord's limits. While residential growth continues in Concord's neighboring communities, Concord's growth seems to be at a standstill, due in part to the lack of easily developed lots and due in part by the lack of a clear understanding of how the school issues will be handled. The impact of the recent recession will continue to limit residential growth for some time to come. Concord's development trends over the past twenty years indicate little development should occur in Concord over the next ten years.

B. Recreational Development

Lot accessibility, school programs and local employment do not effect recreational development. Unimproved lots are available in the vicinity of Shadow Lake and Miles Pond. These seasonal locations have historically drawn a consistent clientele. Although the recent recession should serve to reduce recreational development for the near future, a long term view suggests that the next ten years should bring limited growth to the community and its stagnate tax base. Recreation should continue to make a significant impact on the town's economy. It is hoped that Concord's future plans will include an increase in town supported recreation activities and events. It must be remembered that seasonal homes require very few town services and they contribute a substantial amount to the property tax base. Recreational development may represent the town's major source of economic growth over the next ten years.

C. Commercial Development

State Route 2 offers the town's best locations for commercial development. Establishing a search committee, representing the town at regional and state levels, that would actively search for businesses that would like to relocate to the north country. The town should consider offering a tax incentive program that would help in offsetting the town's lack of municipal services. Concord needs

growth in its commercial tax base to minimize the impact of rising school costs and to provide its residents with new employment opportunities. This plan calls for beginning a concentrated effort, dedicated to establishing a job market for a portion of Concord's citizenry. N.V.D.A. and other state agencies have programs to aid small communities in these areas and Concord can join efforts currently underway in neighboring communities. As in the case of recreational homes, commercial development draws very few dollars from the town's budget and therefore each commercial tax dollar has a powerful affect in reducing residential taxes.

It takes the income from 100 years of taxes from an average home to pay for providing one child with a K-12 education. Every dollar of commercial, recreational home and land tax income reduces this financial imbalance.

10. LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING

A. Future Development

We have described the residential growth projection in previous sections of this plan. This section is devoted to dealing with the town's commitment to providing adequate provisions for the development of low and moderate income housing. The town's zoning by-laws provide a wide selection of minimum lot sizes. The smaller, more affordable, lots are provided in areas of town where utilities, paved roads and commercial services are available. This was planned to provide the low and moderate income resident with the most energy efficient and convenient locations. Concord's by-laws support the policies and goals that are set forth by the Regional Plan. Low and moderate income housing is approved as a primary use in all of the zones in Concord's by-laws.

The town is unable to finance municipal water and sewage services in support of low cost development, but if these services are considered in the future, low and moderate income housing will be considered as a high priority user.

Future development of this category of residence should be focused along State Route 2 and along the Oregon road. These two roadways provide the maximum services available within the town of Concord.

11. TOWN SERVICES

A. Current Services

The town of Concord provides road maintenance services on a year round basis. These services include summer maintenance and resurfacing and winter snow removal. This work is accomplished by three full time employees, using town owned heavy equipment including a road grader, bucket loader, three trucks and assorted smaller equipment.

The town's volunteer fire department and fast squad serve the community under the umbrella of the area's mutual aid organization. Training, at all levels of emergency service, has a high priority within these organizations. A paging system has been established and all town firefighters have a pager. The department maintains four fire trucks, two tankers and two pumpers. In 1991 the department responded to 25 emergencies. These calls ranged from structural fires (3), grass fires (5) and car fires (2) to auto accidents(5). Future planning for this department should include a capital reserve program to provide for vehicle replacement. This fund should be separate from the town's equipment replacement fund. Consideration should also be given to a fund to cover building expansion expenses.

The town does not maintain a police department. The town elects a Town Constable each year. The constable is backed up by the Vermont State Police and the Sheriff's Department.

The town maintains a library which operates on a volunteer basis on Wednesday and Saturday of each week. The library is housed in one end of the town office building. The library is managed by the Library Board of Trustees.

The Concord Health Center is the community's only health care facility. It provides general and emergency services. Emergency Ambulance services are provided by a number of out of town agencies including the Caledonia-Essex Area Ambulance service.

The town is serviced by two Post Offices, one located in Concord Village and the other is located in North Concord. The Post Office also provides rural carrier service.

12. TOWN GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL PLANNING

A. Procedure Review

The town is governed by the Concord Selectmen with the support of the Concord Planning and Zoning Commission, the School Board, the Essex-Caledonia supervisory union, and a host of town officials headed up by the Concord Town Clerk.

The selectmen manage the physical and financial needs of the town. Selectmen collect and distribute tax revenues which finance both school and municipal services. The Concord Expenditures/Tax Graph illustrates the town's financial trends between 1959 and 1990. The school expenditures represent approximately two thirds of the tax moneys expended each year by the selectmen. The graph shows that town expenditures have doubled on the average of every ten years since 1959.

Accounting records and programs are now being recorded in the town's computer system. This should aid the selectmen and the accountants in responding to the ever-changing complexities of municipal fiscal management. Computerization is considered to be the first step in modernizing the town's management programs. Under this plan, Concord's fiscal policies will be reviewed and updated as required. Bid procedures should be revised to meet the growing demands of

CONCORD SCHOOL EXPENDITURES FACT SHEET**Produced for the Municipal Plan Study**

School Year:	85/86	86/87	87/88	88/89	89/90
Total Expenditures:	\$660,557	\$781,981	\$732,561	\$1,018,860	\$1,035,099
Rate of Increase:		+16%	-6%	+29%	+5%
Budget Overruns:	\$ 47,1918	\$122,056	\$ 47,604	\$ 53,628	\$ 57,238
Student Population:	249	252	239	253	243

CONCORD TOWN EXPENDITURES FACTS SHEET

Town Year:	1986	1987*	87/88	88/89	89/90
Total Town Expenditures:	\$483,530	\$420,685	\$513,098	\$622,422	\$753,353
Minus School Appropriation:	<u>275,853</u>	<u>261,115</u>	<u>281,105</u>	<u>363,360</u>	<u>433,594</u>
Remaining Town Exp.	\$207,677	\$159,570	\$231,993	\$259,062	\$319,759

* 1987 implemented a six month budget to change fiscal year.

the town budget. Monthly year-to-date reviews should become common practice in administering all municipal budgets. Consideration should also be given to developing a capital reserve program. This budget management program should be used by town and school officials. The plan's goal in this area is to combine the administrative procedures and accounting/reporting procedures into a more cohesive network of checks and balances. Over-expenditures on budget line items would be drastically reduced under this program.

13. PLANNING FOR THE TOWN'S FUTURE

A. General Overview

Historical statistics indicate that over the next five years: the population will tend to remain the same or rise slightly; residential and commercial development will be at a minimum; seasonal home development will provide the only positive impact to the grand list; a school system re-structuring will take place; funding for state programs and state aid to education will be reduced; the amount raised by town taxes will increase by over 100 %; and school taxes will increase by a minimum of 72 %.

B. Planning Impact

New residential growth would increase the grand list but statistics show that the town costs related to most residential growth are greater than the amount of property taxes collected on an annual basis. Therefore, the projected lack of growth in residential development will not be a negative influence on the town's fiscal budget. However, these same statistics indicate town expenses will continue to increase at the rate of 20% per year.

This plan suggests that an increase in light commercial development could result in a reduction in residential tax appropriations. Enticing commercial businesses into a rural area is difficult and requires the development of a comprehensive program that will outline each step in the planned procedure. Concord should join other communities that are already active in an economic development program.

A re-dedication to tight fiscal control of all expenditures by town and school officials, can also result in reducing the impact of projected tax increases. Manpower requirements and management procedures should be reviewed semi-annually. An increased emphasis should be placed on reviewing all state funding programs and on researching the availability of state and federal grant programs. At the town level, budget line item evaluations and stringent bid practices could also serve to reduce the town's tax burden.

Community and co-community sponsored events and activities should be revived. Social events increase community pride and awareness. Social awareness increases public involvement in supporting municipal programs. Seasonal events will also have a favorable impact on the town's tourist industry. Careful planning can result in an annual program that will bolster civic awareness and provide a social program that can be supported by all age groups.

Results from the planning questionnaire indicated that both the resident and non-resident taxpayers are concerned about the condition of some of the town's properties. Junk cars and equipment seemed to be the focus of these concerns. Concord officials should consider establishing a spring and fall cleanup campaign. This program could simply designate two weekends per year, when special waste related services could be made available to Concord's residents. Local scrap metal contractors could make their services available during these weekends. Programs of this nature, that have been introduced in neighboring communities, have had incredible results.

Additional public involvement in recreational and environmental issues should be fostered. This program would increase public support and awareness in environmental issues and create a means of gaining participation from the town's commercial sector. Support for such a program could result in finding new and unique methods of opening new areas up for recreational use while improving the communities awareness of environmental issues and concerns.

This planning process would not be complete without addressing the town's zoning by-laws. These regulations must now be reviewed to determine their long term impact on the town's social, economic and environmental goals. It is important to access the original goal's of the regulations to ensure that the by-law actions are meeting the goals.

It is clear in reviewing this chapter, that Concord would benefit by taking a more active roll in local, regional and state affairs. During recent months, several town's in this area shared information and ideas in coping with the solid waste disposal problems, that were prompted by the closing of our local landfill operation. Most of the region's small towns are facing the same fiscal short falls that have been identified in this plan. All of the regional communities are faced with double digit inflation rates in school costs. Several neighboring communities have introduced innovative programs to deal with their problems. Concord should draw on these regional resources and add it's experiences and wisdom to this resource pool.

This plan introduces a way for Concord's citizenry to take control of Concord's future, by easing the burdens and capitalizing on Concord's strengths. We are not just asking for your support in this program, we are asking you to join or lead the community action programs described in this plan. Your involvement WILL make a difference.

14. PLAN OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMS

A. Objectives

This section of the plan outlines programs-and actions that will be used in addressing the goals and objectives of this plan.

B. Primary Programs:

(1) Formation of an Economic Development Committee

Goal: To establish a committee that will establish and activate programs that will support new economic development in Concord's commercial sectors.

(2) Formation of a Public Events Committee

Goal: To establish a program of community events and activities that will increase the community spirit of resident and seasonal homeowner.

(3) Establish a Spring and Fall Cleanup Program

Goal: To form a committee that will draft a program establishing two weekends each year, that will be used to promote the removal of litter from the landscape, by providing special waste and metal collecting services.

(4) Formation of a Recreation/Environmental Committee

Goal: To form a group to explore new recreational opportunities that may be made available to residents and the town's tourists. This group would also develop and endorse environmental policy proposals related to the recreational use of the town's lands and waters.

(5) Zoning By-Law Review

Goal: To review the current bylaws and develop proposed amendments that are supported by the goals and data that is presented in this municipal plan.

(6) Zoning By-Law Revision

Goal: Present the proposed by-law amendments for the public's approval. This procedure would be conducted using the procedure described in Title 24 of Act 117.

(7) Municipal and School Accounting Procedure Review

Goal: To review all accounting, reporting and review procedures that are currently in use by the town and school officials.

(8) Accounting Procedure Revision Program

Goals: Revise and/or develop accounting and expenditure procedures that are in keeping with the goals of the town's management procedures and policies. Develop a guide that outlines the updated procedures and applicable policy standards.

(9) Capital Reserve Program Development

Goal: Develop and write a capital reserve program that will serve as a guideline for developing and managing capital reserve accounts for both the municipality and the school system. This program should be consistent with all Vermont regulations and laws pertaining to reserve accounts.

(10) Semiannual Departmental Review

Goal: To establish a semiannual meeting of all town and school officials, to review each of the department's operation, as it relates to the town's annual operational goals. This meeting should include year-to-date financial reports from each department.