

Let's Grow Concord

Community Visit Report and Action Plan
October 2022



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

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Vision for Concord's Future

Compiled from vision statements shared during Community Visit Meetings and supported by the majority of participants at the Resource Meeting and an online survey. The statements represent some of the broad hopes that the majority of responding residents have for the long term good of the Concord community.

Community members envision a future Concord where:

- ❖ we are a thriving community with financial stability for the town and its residents.
- ❖ all are welcome, and new and long-time residents come together with creativity, kindness and peace.
- ❖ the community and school are safe for all children.
- ❖ there is quality education for youth.
- ❖ the community is inclusive and accessible for residents from all corners of town.
- ❖ there is vitality while maintaining the feel of a quiet, small-town.
- ❖ there are multiple businesses along Main Street.
- ❖ locals and visitors can enjoy the great natural resources that exist in Concord.
- ❖ people know about and take advantage of the recreational, natural, and scenic opportunities in town.
- ❖ it's a great place to raise a family.
- ❖ the full spectrum of the community – from youth to seniors – is supported with the resources they need.
- ❖ there is intergenerational connection among all ages.

I. Introduction

As you enter Concord, you'll pass the town sign and its warm greeting: "Welcome to Concord, your four seasons paradise." Driving further into the community reinforces the truth of this statement, with views of the White Mountains, beautiful lakes, rolling hills, and its historic village center. Throughout its villages – North Concord, Concord Corner, East Concord, and Miles Pond – there's a sense of the pride and tradition this community holds. There are beautiful homes, historic landmarks, a huge sign outside the Concord School announcing community events and displaying school pride, bustling campgrounds, and endless opportunities for peaceful enjoyment of its scenic vistas. Concord is a town that is abundant with natural beauty, and deeply rooted in its history with residents committed to seeing their town thrive.

In the heart of the town is Concord's Congregational Church, along with the iconic Town Hall building. It is this area where the VCRD staff and Visiting Team had the pleasure of meeting over 80 enthusiastic Concord residents at a beautiful outdoor dinner in July. Community members gathered under a tent to enjoy local music, barbecue, and the company of neighbors. During this Community Visit day, and throughout the entire Let's Grow Concord process, participants echoed a deep pride in their town, along with dedication to ensuring its future success and caring for their neighbors.

Residents showcased Concord's assets, and came together to share their ideas for the future of the town in four forums: Education and Families; Community Connectivity; Recreation and Land Use; and Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Housing. The level of commitment and dedication throughout the Let's Grow Concord process was impressive to VCRD staff as priorities, and then task forces, began to form from these initial ideas.

Many ideas for action were identified through this process, and in the end, Concord residents voted to form task forces around three priorities:

- **Attract Businesses and Industry to Concord**
- **Bring a Store Back to the Community**
- **Clean Up and Improve Miles Pond Beach**

You can find many other potential ideas for action in the "Opportunities" section of this report, along with notes taken at the initial forums. Ultimately, the three priorities chosen by Concord residents represent a mix of interests and challenges, though all three are united in their goal: A more vibrant economy and community for all.

Concord community members and task force chairs have shown real dedication to this process and the work ahead. Work is underway to make the priorities a reality with the participation of nearly 40 community members joining task force groups that will take action on the selected priorities.

There are many people to thank for making this Community Visit effort possible.

We would like to thank the Concord Selectboard, and the Planning and Zoning Commissions who initially invited this process. We also deeply appreciate the work and leadership of the Steering Committee who met to frame forum topics and an outreach strategy for the process: Joshua Abetti, Rhonda Adams, Jen Botzjoorns, Shannon Chapman, Richard Fisher, Kevin Fontecha, Bill Humphrey, Judy Kurtz, Harold Lunnie, Virginia Renfrew, Joel Schwartz, Cynthia Stuart, and Dale Urie.

Thank you also to the many community leaders, groups, and organizations who worked to spread the word about the event and made sure everyone in town was invited and encouraged to participate!

Thanks also to funding support from Northern Border Regional Commission, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont Community Foundation, Community National Bank, and VCRD members and donors who make this process possible.

VCRD calls on state, federal and non-profit leaders to participate in Community Visit processes. We are proud of the partners we get to work with – and especially the Let’s Grow Concord Visiting and Resource Teams (listed in the back of this report) – they are the best of Vermont’s public servants.

Getting things done is all about leadership, and all of Concord should be grateful to those who’ve stepped up to serve as chairs of the task forces: Heather Ranney and Rhonda Adams (Miles Pond), and Josh Abetti (bring a store back).

VCRD especially wants to thank Cynthia Stuart for stepping up to serve as the overall chairperson for the Let’s Grow Concord process. Cynthia has deep roots in Concord, and works tirelessly on behalf of her community in many capacities. Her perspective has been invaluable – Cynthia has volunteered, served on countless boards, led past town projects, and called Concord home for a long time. It has been a pleasure to work with her, and we know the work ahead will be more successful because of her passion, dedication, and drive towards success.

At VCRD, we are fortunate to work in places where pride of place is deep, where local residents work together to achieve their goals, and make their communities the best they can possibly be. It was a great pleasure to work with the residents of Concord who stand up for the town and who are lined up for the common good of this wonderful community. We are eager to follow your progress and support your success!



II. The “Let’s Grow Concord” Community Visit Process

VCRD’s Community Visit program is a way for towns to engage and bring together their residents, set common goals and directions in a neutral and facilitated structure, and access resources that will help them take action on those goals. **Here is a snapshot of the 5-month process in Concord:**



Steering Committee Meeting: June 8, 2022

On June 8, 2022, 13 local residents met to plan for the launch of the Concord Community Visit process. This group came up with a name for the process – Let’s Grow Concord – and helped to plan the kick-off. They decided on forum topics and an invitation process. Through calls, e-mails, and flyers, this team worked hard to promote the kick-off.

The Committee included: Joshua Abetti, Rhonda Adams, Jen Botzjoorns, Shannon Chapman, Richard Fisher, Kevin Fontecha, Bill Humphrey, Judy Kurtz, Harold Lunnie, Virginia Renfrew, Joel Schwartz, Cynthia Stuart, and Dale Urie.

Step 1 ~ Kick-Off Forums and Community Dinner: July 14, 2022

Let’s Grow Concord kicked off with 4 brainstorming forums held at the Concord Community Church and Town Hall. We also offered a Zoom forum for those preferring a virtual option. Over 80 participants shared assets, challenges, and ideas for action in the following forum topics chosen by the steering committee: Education & Families; Economic Development: Infrastructure, Housing,



Preservation; Community Connectivity; and Recreation & Land Use. Seventeen visiting team members participated, learning more about Concord and providing reflections to the community.

Visiting Team members included: Jennifer Carlo, *Executive Director*, NEK Collaborative; Ben Doyle, *President*, Preservation Trust of Vermont; Rebecca Ellis, *State Director*, Office of Congressman Peter Welch; Lindsay Kurrle, *Secretary*, VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development; Annie Maclean, *Community and Economic Recovery Specialist*, Northeastern VT Development Association; Luke O’Brien, *Field Service Director*, VT Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation; Jenna O’Farrell, *Executive Director*, NEK Community Action; Jenney Samuelson, *Secretary*, VT Agency of Human Services; Will Stevens, Office of Senator Bernie Sanders; Sarah Truckle, *Director of Program & Strategic Operations*, VT Agency of Human Services; and Sarah Waring, *State Director*, USDA Rural Development.

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Hannah Carpino, *Community & Policy Manager*; Margaret Gibson, *Operations and Communications*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Projects Associate*; Jenna Koloski, *Community Engagement and Policy Director*; Jessica Savage, *Director of Community Engagement*; and Brian Lowe, *Executive Director*.

Step 2 ~ Community Meeting: August 8, 2022

After the kick-off, VCRD staff distilled the brainstormed ideas into 22 key areas of action. Over 60 community members joined at the Concord School to narrow the list of priorities for community action. After lively dialogue and a dot-voting exercise, 3 action ideas emerged as key priorities: **Attract Businesses and Industry to Concord**; **Bring a Store Back to the Community**; and **Clean Up and Improve Miles Pond Beach**. Participants then signed up for task forces that will convene to move these priorities forward.



Step 3 ~ Resource Meeting and Task Force Launch: September 14, 2022

On September 14, 2022, community members, facilitators, and resource team members came together to develop action plans, identify resources, and form task force groups that will work in the months ahead to implement the priorities. From here forward, all “Let’s Grow Concord” action is focused at the task force level.

Resource Team members included: Ben Copans, *Watershed Planner*, Department of Environmental Conservation; Ben Doyle, *President*, Preservation Trust of Vermont; Bobby Lussier, *Environmental Philanthropy Associate*, Vermont Community Foundation; Emily Maclure, *Craftsbury General Store*; Annie McLean, *Community & Economic Recovery Specialist*, Northeastern VT Development Association; Misty Sinsigalli, *Area Director*, USDA Rural Development; David Snedeker, *Executive Director*, Northeastern VT Development Association; Michael Welch, *Senior Project Manager*, Northern Community Investment Corporation.

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Hannah Carpino, *Community and Policy Manager*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Projects Associate*; and Brian Lowe.



III. Let's Grow Concord Priorities

Determined by Concord residents at the Let's Grow Concord Community Meeting

August 8, 2022

Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, more than 60 Concord community members whittled down a list of 22 action ideas to 3 priorities that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.

Concord residents selected three priorities for future action:

► Attract Businesses and Industry to Concord

A task force could form to create and implement a plan for economic development in the town. The group could work with Regional and State technical assistance providers, local community leaders and the public to build a plan to boost industry and economic development that meets the needs and character of the town and builds the tax base. Work could include the development of an industrial park, attracting a target anchor industry, offering incentives to attract businesses, and/or identifying key town improvements such as improved infrastructure or property clean up. Residents of all ages expressed a need for industry and jobs as well as small businesses such as restaurants, retail, convenience stores and gas.

► Bring a Store Back to the Community

The closure of Bernie's Market has left a significant gap in the Concord community. Residents miss both the convenience of local groceries and gas as well as a place to gather and run into neighbors. A community group could form to support the redevelopment of the Bernie's location or work to attract or develop a new community-based store. The group could help to build community support and fundraising for either effort and work with regional, state, and federal partners to bring back a critical community centerpoint for the town.

► Clean Up and Improve Miles Pond Beach

A task force could form to clean up Miles Pond Beach and improve the facilities and amenities in order to make the beach more enjoyable, accessible, and available for community programming and events.

Other Key Opportunities identified by the community:

Along with the three chosen priorities, the key opportunities listed below reflect other potential ideas for action that community members shared on Community Visit Day. Though these opportunities weren't chosen as priority projects through this process, community members may find the list useful as they look to expand on current projects or take on new ones.

Expand Community Events

A series of annual events for Concord could help to bring the community together more often. Events could include social gatherings and meals such as community BBQs, parades, concerts, community fairs, morning coffees, and food truck events or could be recreational opportunities such as horseshoes, bingo, ATV/Snowmobile gatherings, running and biking races, and more. The group could also work to build an outreach and invitation plan to invite people of all ages to take part in the fun.

Improve Community Communications

A task force could form to expand communications for community members. These resources could include an online hub, bulletin boards, mailings, signage, Town website improvements, increased Front Porch Forum participation, and a print and online newspaper or newsletter to keep residents informed and share events and resources.

Revitalize and Maintain Historic Municipal Buildings

A group could form, in partnership with the Town, to identify and address facilities improvement needs for Concord's historic municipal buildings. The group could explore the establishment of an historic district in the village and could create a long-term capital plan for facility improvements and funding over time.

Improve and Expand the Pavilion at Miles Pond

An improved Pavilion site at Miles Pond could become a central community hub for gatherings, concerts, and events. A group could work to improve and repair existing facilities and offer additional amenities such as restrooms and a snack bar.

Advance Outdoor Recreation and Trails

An Outdoor Recreation task force could form to celebrate current outdoor recreation assets and advance a variety of new recreation opportunities. The group could build and share hiking and mountain biking trails and improve lake access. Signage and mapping could help to showcase recreation opportunities and events and could connect locals and visitors with these resources and to each other. This group could also consider designating a Town forest for the community for trail development in the future. Other ideas to consider are a pump track for biking and a location to rent outdoor gear and equipment.

Expand Motorized Recreation

A task force could form to work with local ATV and snowmobile groups to improve access for motorized recreation opportunities and consider expanded trail options and designated tracks for riding. The group could plan events and gatherings that would connect locals and invite visitors, such as food truck nights or concerts, and consider ways to better connect them to essential needs such as gas, restrooms, and food. Additionally, mapping and signage could help to better highlight existing trails and amenities in the region.

Build School and Community Connection

A School and Community Partnership could better integrate school events and communications with the broader Concord community. A volunteer coordinator or group could help to develop a school newspaper and events calendar that would be shared with the community. This would help to both invite the public to engage with school events and news, but also to invite families in the school community to engage more deeply with Concord events, news, and celebrations.

Promote Community Health and Wellness

A group could form to focus on events, communication, activities, and resources that help to improve health and wellness in Concord. Work could include planning events and community activities that promote healthy eating and physical fitness as well as developing strategies to make information and resources about physical and mental health supports available to the community

Improve School Facilities

Many residents expressed a need for maintenance and improvement of the school building, gym, and recreational fields. A group of community and school leaders and volunteers could come together to build a plan and identify funding sources to improve facilities at the Concord School. In particular, improvements are needed on the gym roof in order to open the gym in the winter.

Develop a Rail Trail Through Concord

A group could come together to build and implement a plan to develop a Rail Trail on the rail bed that runs through Concord and connects to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. The group could work with the full community to develop a clear vision for the use of the trail and with regional, state, and federal partners to identify and utilize funding sources to complete the plan in a way that works for the community.

Expand Community Arts, Music, and Theater

A Community Arts Task Force could form to increase community access to the arts by planning a series of music events, starting a community band, pulling together local theater performances, and offering arts programming and classes. A summer music series could help to bring locals together in the summer as well as attract regional visitors. Events and programming could be multigenerational and serve as a way to connect and unite the Concord community. Additionally, Concord youth are interested in local programming and summer camp opportunities.

Boost Municipal Volunteerism and Capacity

Many residents expressed a need for more engagement and volunteerism with the municipality. A group could focus on ways to invite new leadership and help to connect municipal decision-making and news with the broader community. Additionally, the group could work with the municipality to explore alternative governance models for their commissions and board. One idea could include separating the Planning Commission and Zoning Board into separate entities.

Advance Digital Literacy and Connection

As improved internet continues to roll out in the region in the coming years, a group could form to ensure that everyone in the community is able to access this resource. Work could include developing a computer area in the library for internet access and offering lessons and tech support for senior community members or others that need assistance. Prior to full broadband roll out, the group could work toward interim solutions such as Wi-Fi hotspots at key locations in town including the Village and Miles Pond, and act as the community liaison to the longer-term Broadband roll out.

Improve Bike and Walk Safety and Access

Many Concord residents expressed a desire to improve the ability to walk and bike Concord roads, but shared concerns about the safety of those activities with a major state highway running through town. A Concord Walk and Bike group could form to promote walking and biking opportunities, through signage and mapping, and focus on improving safety with added bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks at key locations. Events, mapping, and improved amenities would make walking and biking more accessible to residents and visitors alike.

Expand Access to Local Food and Farms

A group could form to better connect the community to opportunities to access and grow local produce. Work could include the development of community gardens available to the public for growing as well as creating programming and educational opportunities for all ages. The group could start a Concord Farmers Market to help community members better connect to local food and identify and share opportunities for agritourism in Concord.

Develop Community Gathering Space

A new community center or hub could be developed that would provide a space for events, connection, gathering, programming, and sharing of information and resources. Alternatively, the community could identify existing spaces that could serve the purpose of a community gathering space and plan events, gatherings, and programs that better utilize those spaces for connecting residents.

Expand and Improve Community Recreation Facilities

Concord residents of all ages expressed a need for improved and expanded recreational facilities in town. A task force could form to identify the needs and build a plan and funding to improve existing facilities or develop new recreational options. Some ideas include a local pool, water slides, improved recreational field, a pump track, an ice skating rink, a parkour course, and improved playground facilities especially for older kids and teens.

Two Additional Ideas for Consideration were Added at the Community Meeting on August 8:

Develop a Strategic Plan for the Town of Concord [added at Aug 8 Community Meeting

Restore and Protect the Dam at Shadow Lake

IV. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, September 14, 2022

Concord Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. On Resource Day committee members worked closely with a facilitator and a visiting resource team to develop step-by-step action plans and a list of human and financial resources to help achieve their goals. This final phase of the program marks the time when residents truly take ownership of the work, and begin the exciting process of turning ideas into action.

► Attract Businesses and Industry to Concord

A task force could form to create and implement a plan for economic development in the town. The group could work with Regional and State technical assistance providers, local community leaders and the public to build a plan to boost industry and economic development that meets the needs and character of the town and builds the tax base. Work could include the development of an industrial park, attracting a target anchor industry, offering incentives to attract businesses, and/or identifying key town improvements such as improved infrastructure or property clean up. Residents of all ages expressed a need for industry and jobs as well as small businesses such as restaurants, retail, convenience stores and gas.

Community Chair: TBD

Facilitator: **Alyssa Johnson**, VCRD

Resource Team Members: **Dave Snedeker**, *Executive Director*, Northeastern Vermont Development Assoc (NVDA); **Misty Sinsigalli**, *Area Director*, USDA Rural Development; and **Mike Welch**, *Senior Project Manager*, Northern Community Investment Corp (NCIC)

Community Participants: Kate Badger, Scott Beck, Amanda Capps, Julie Gist, Jim Gochie, Aliah Hale, and Task Force Signups Malie Hale, Jared Henningsen, Judy Kurtz, Tom O'Donnell, and Todd Picken

Current Initiatives and Assets

- Existing businesses in Concord include:
 - Two restaurants
 - Wood working businesses
 - Lyndon manufacturing facility in North Concord
 - Small engine repair businesses
 - Small home-based business of a variety of types
 - Logging operations
 - Health Center
- There are growing hybrid work options available as a result of the pandemic.
- Concord has mixed broadband availability. There are improvements happening with the buildout through NEK Broadband, which is beginning in Concord.
- There is no water or wastewater infrastructure.
- There are a number of large landowners in town.
- The downtown has existing residential development.
- There is a town owned parcel on the Connecticut River.
- There has been challenges in accessing three-phase power.

Action Steps

1. Conduct research on the status of existing and proposed infrastructure in Concord. Specifically, look into the status of:
 - a. Broadband
 - Contact Dale Urie, the Town's representative to NEK Broadband, to understand what is contained in the existing rollout plan in place.
 - b. Three-phase power
 - c. Water and wastewater
 - It was noted that there is existing wastewater infrastructure approximately 5 miles away in St. Johnsbury (downhill!).
 - Additional research will likely require professional support. See the Resource section below for additional information. There are funding resources available, which require sign off and agreement from the Town/Select board.
 - d. Streetscape amenities, especially for the Main Street area.
 - Danville was noted as a community that has robust streetscape.
2. Research community interests and sentiment about business and industry. Consider a component of the research specifically focused on remote work. Figure out what the community wants and what success or "good" would look like.
 - a. The Bring a Store Back task force will likely be undertaking similar work specific to the what people would like to see in a store.
 - b. Outcomes from the Community Visit process, including the vision statements, may be useful in this work.
3. Conduct research on potential sites for business and industrial development.

Guiding Principles

During the discussion, the group established guiding principles they felt were important to highlight. The group agreed that work undertaken by the task force would in alignment with the following principles:

- ▶ Maintaining the small town feel of the community; and,
- ▶ Maintaining long term financial stability, including understanding the long term operating and maintenance costs needed for any potential new infrastructure.

There was additional discussion of guiding principles related to opportunity for youth and professionals to return to the community.

Additional Potential Action Step Ideas

- Conduct community education regarding the potential benefits of economic development.
- Encourage solar farms and/or hydroelectric energy generation.
- Create a town newsletter and/or partner with the Caledonia Record to see about the potential Concord-specific section.
- Continue to refine and share guiding principles (see above).
- Research trends of companies with regards to remote work.
- Look into the potential for a brew pub in the community.
- Work to improve sub-standard housing.
- Contact Rural Edge and Northern Forest Center for the potential to partner on housing projects (both affordable and market rate). The Northern Forest Center is presenting in St. Johnsbury on October 3rd.
- Research the potential for an industrial area (which would require infrastructure). There is a need for spaces larger than 10,000 square feet in the region.
- Consider ways to support existing businesses in the community who may want or be able to scale- Caledonia Spirits and Jasper Hill Farm started as small businesses in the Kingdom!

Resources

- The State of Vermont has a variety of water and wastewater planning grants available. Contact Lynnette Claudon at lynette.claudon@vermont.gov or 802-490-6226. Learn more at <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/planning-advance> and <https://anr.vermont.gov/special-topics/arpa-vermont/village-water-wastewater-initiative>.
 - There is also a general guidance document that outlines some of the available funding resources available at: https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/village_ww/WastewaterWorkbook.pdf
- USDA Rural Development also offers a variety of wastewater planning grants. Contact Misty Sinsigalli at misty.sinsigalli@usda.gov or 802-622-4119 (cell) and learn more at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program/vt>.
- Dave Snedeker and/or Mike Welch and the staff at NVDA and NCIC can potentially assist with applications for grants. Contact Dave at dsnedeker@nvda.net or (802) 748-8303 and Mike at mwelch@ncic.org or (802) 748-5101 ext. 2025.
- Municipal Planning Grants may be available to assist with planning efforts. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>
- There is an existing broadband plan for the region. Learn more by contacting Dale Urie at dale.urie@stjilabs.com, and visiting <https://nekbroadband.org/>
- Vermont Community Development Program has funding that could support planning and potentially implementation. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>
- Joel Schwartz is the town's grant writer and may be able to assist with applications. Contact him at jasinvt@gmail.com.
- UVM Center for Rural Studies, UVM Extension, or Northern Vermont University may be able to assist with conducting surveys.
- Contact consultants who are involved in infrastructure planning to get estimates and descriptions of a scope of work. This type of information can be used to show readiness for grant applications, and to ensure that the budgets are for the correct amount. Contacts listed above can provide information about prospective consultants.
- USDA Rural Business Development Grants can be used for a variety of purposes to support community and economic development. Learn more at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants/vt>
- NCIC offers a variety of grant and loan programs to support businesses. Learn more at ncic.org/ and contact Aimee Quimby at aquimby@ncic.org or (802) 748-5101 ext. 2019.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Step Recommendations

Ask for a meeting with representatives from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to learn about planning grants, infrastructure grants, and technical support for attracting business and site location experts. This can be coordinated through the agency Secretary (see contact information in the Visiting Team section).

Review an overview of resources available at this link: <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/town-future>.

Explore local, state and Federal grant opportunities for planning.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

NCIC has funding through VHCB's REDI Program to assist communities with grant-writing. Contact Mike Welch at NCIC mwelch@ncic.org.

Northeastern Vermont Development Agency (NVDA) can be a potential partner for planning and implementation, including assisting in grant applications. Contact Annie McLean at amclean@nvda.net or (530) 721-0241 and visit <https://www.nvda.net/> to learn more.

NCIC has Technical Assistance Grants for small businesses if there is a business interested in start-up. This program can assist with soft costs (not equipment, property, etc). Contact is Aimee Quimby at NCIC, aquimby@ncic.org.

Vermont Small Business Development Center offers robust services including business advising, training and workshops, and additional resources. They can assist with business plan development and business support. Visit <https://www.vtsbdc.org/> and contact Ross Hart at rhart@vtsbdc.org.

Potential Funding Sources

Municipal Planning Grants are available for a Downtown Master Plan or other implementation plan to help support town capital improvement plans and other future planning goals. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.

NCIC has loan funds available to assist businesses with start-up or expansion. Contact is Aaron Krone at NCIC, akrone@ncic.org.

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) is an excellent grant resource depending on the type of project. Visit www.nbrc.gov. State contact is Kristie Farnham kristie.farnham@vermont.gov.

The State of Vermont has a variety of water and wastewater planning grants. Learn more at <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/planning-advance> and <https://anr.vermont.gov/special-topics/arpa-vermont/village-water-wastewater-initiative> and contact Lynnette Claudon at lynnette.claudon@vermont.gov or 802-490-6226.

USDA Rural Development also offers a variety of wastewater planning grants. Contact Misty Sinsigalli at misty.sinsigalli@usda.gov or 802-622-4119 (cell) and learn more at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program/vt>.

Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services has a Regional Economic Development grant program that or capital costs associated with major maintenance, renovation, or planning related to the development of facilities reasonably expected to create or retain job opportunities in Vermont communities. Contact Judy Bruneau at judy.bruneau@vermont.gov or (802) 828-3519. Visit <https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants>.

USDA Rural Business Development Grants can be used for a variety of purposes to support community and economic development. Learn more at: <https://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants/vt>.

USDA Rural Development has a variety of resources that could be available for planning and project implementation. Rural Business Opportunity Grants can help economic planning, cluster planning and with groundwork to spur economic development. Rural Business Enterprise Grants can support the progress of particular enterprises and might be especially useful if an incubator project is developed. Visit <https://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants/vt> for grant information, and find contacts here: <https://rd.usda.gov/contactpage/vermont-contacts> or 802-828-6000.

If the process involves the development of Community Facilities, the USDA Community Facilities program provides support for a variety of programming. VCRD can provide additional support for developing and submitting an application. Learn more at <https://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/vt> and contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 978-760-1238.

AARP Community Challenge Grant can fund permanent physical improvements, demonstration projects, and new or innovative programming or services. Visit <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2022/2022-challenge.html>. Contact Kelly Stoddard Poor at 802-951-1313 or at kstoddardpoor@aarp.org.

[There are state and Federal tax credits for designated downtowns and village centers:](https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/tax-credits)
<https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/tax-credits>.

VNRC Small Grants for Smart Growth “provides seed money for catalyzing, community-based initiatives that are grounded in or help to support smart growth.” Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, and awards range from \$500 to \$1,500 per project. Learn more at <https://vnrc.org/small-grants-for-smart-growth/> and contact Kati Gallagher at kgallagher@vnrc.org.

Community Development Block Grants from the Vermont Community Development Program could be used for planning or implementation work. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>.

► Bring a Store Back to the Community

The closure of Bernie's Market has left a significant gap in the Concord community. Residents miss both the convenience of local groceries and gas as well as a place to gather and run into neighbors. A community group could form to support the redevelopment of the Bernie's location or work to attract or develop a new community-based store. The group could help to build community support and fundraising for either effort and work with regional, state, and federal partners to bring back a critical community centerpoint for the town.

Community Chair: **Joshua Abetti**

Facilitator: **Brian Lowe**, VCRD

Resource Team Members: **Ben Doyle**, *President*, Preservation Trust of Vermont; **Emily McClure**, *Co-Owner*, The Genny; and **Annie McLean**, *Program Manager*, Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)

Community Participants: Joshua Abetti, Rhonda Adams, Steve Bean, Scott Beck, Jen Botzjorns, and Task Force Signups Scott Campbell, Barb Corey, Kevin Fontecha, David Hambly, David Kurtz, Normandie Lee, Virginia Renfrew, David Ricketts, Joel Schwartz, Brian Smith, Stephanie Smith, Elaine Stasny, Danielle Sukkaew, Dale Urie, Terri Williams, and Jaye Young

Current Initiatives & Assets

- There is a great deal of community interest in bringing back a store like Bernie's.
- The Selectboard is engaged in a discovery process to determine:
 - the state of the old fuel tanks below ground on the site of the old Bernie's store;
 - ownership of the fuel tanks and the old store building as different parties are involved;
 - the potential sale price of the property and potential deed restrictions; and
 - the risk and potential costs posed by the underground tanks.
- Some local residents may be interested in being involved either in a purchase of the property or in operating a new store.
- The old store was profitable; COVID was a significant reason for the closure.
- Gas sales were an important part of the old business model.
- Concord has a history of successful businesses along Route 2 – it is a major traffic corridor for locals and those passing through.

Action Steps

1. Conduct a community survey informally – ask people at town meetings, online, and at the dump or diner: What would the community need at a new store? And, would people use the new store?
2. Connect with the Selectboard to learn what the discovery process is revealing.
3. Conduct a market analysis to better inform what a community store could look like. Information to gather could include what people need, what potential business components (like outdoor recreation opportunities) might be incorporated, and who and how many people come through Concord.
4. Learn the history of old retail stores in Concord. There have been some successful businesses over time; what worked and what didn't?
5. Explore who in town might be interested in running a community store. This could help inform the type of ownership structure that might work best in Concord – private ownership, a coop model, multiple local owners with one operator, a community supported enterprise model, etc.

6. Explore potential partnerships with other organizations. The Preservation Trust might be willing to cover some of the capital costs and remediation costs if there is a local person willing to be the operator.
7. Talk with people in communities such as Albany, Craftsbury, or Calais that have brought back general stores. The process in Albany included taking fuel tanks out of the ground. The operator there, Emily McClure, was part of the Resource Team and is happy to talk to folks in Concord if someone is thinking about running a store. (See Resource section for contact information)
8. If the discovery process reveals the cost of purchasing the property or the potential remediation costs are too high, explore other potential locations This would involve questions of ownership, zoning, parking, speed limit, and more. This work may overlap with the separate task force focused on attracting business and industry to Concord, as that group is interested in researching potential sites for business development.
9. The group could consider hosting a pop-up store at the current property or a different property to test the level of interest in using the space for retail. If you run a 3-day market as a low-cost test, how many people stop?
10. Take a bus tour to other communities that have brought back a community store. Preservation Trust would be willing to partner to organize this so folks could see other sites and get a sense of how they work, and what they'd like to see in Concord.

Resources

- Emily McClure, who operates the Albany and Craftsbury general stores, is happy to talk with folks in Concord about how bringing the store back in those towns worked out. She can be reached at emily@gennyvt.com.
- NVDA does traffic studies, and could provide information about traffic counts through Concord. Contact Annie McLean at amclean@nvda.net or (530) 721-0241.
- NVDA could also potentially assist with access to funding related to brownfields. Contact Annie McLean at amclean@nvda.net or (530) 721-0241.
- Preservation Trust is interested in learning more about residents' goals in Concord. They could provide support for a bus tour to other communities or working with folks in town to see what models and support might be available. Contact Jenna Lapachinski at jenna@ptvermont.org or 802-552-0659.
- Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC) has expertise in related projects and could be a partner for grant writing, technical expertise, and/or funding. Contact Mike Welch at mwelch@ncic.org or 802-748-5101 ext. 2025.
- Existing non-profits in the community, like the Concord Historical Society, could be important partners with an existing nonprofit legal status that could potentially help the task force.
- VCRD is a continuing partner for resource connections, and has some very modest funding resources. Contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 978-760-1238.
- USDA Rural Development may be able to advise on brownfield or wastewater funding. Contact Misty Sinsigalli at misty.sinsigalli@usda.gov or 802-622-4119 (cell).
- The Vermont Community Foundation offers funding resources, including some that are specific to the Northeast Kingdom:
 - The Spark Connecting Communities grant program provides grants of \$500-\$3,000 for “grassroots work that builds social capital.” Learn more at vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/.
 - The Northeast Kingdom Fund funds grants up to \$5,000 for small, community-based projects. Learn more at vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/northeast-kingdom-fund/.
- The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) program can provide grant writing support for projects and other resources. Learn more at vhcb.org/redi and contact Mariah Noth at Mariah@vhcb.org or 802-828-1098.

- USDA Rural Business Development Grants can be used for a variety of purposes to support community and economic development. Learn more at: rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants/vt.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Step Recommendations

Ask for a meeting with representatives from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to learn about available resources as well as to learn about other VT communities who have used a community based approach to saving their general store.

Connect with the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to learn about Better Places grants. Better Places is a non-competitive, community matching grant program empowering Vermonters to create inclusive and vibrant public places serving Vermont's designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas. The program provides one-on-one project coaching, local fundraising support, and two to one (2:1) matching grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000 to make your community-led placemaking ideas happen.

Reach out to communities that have brought back general stores to learn more about their process.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

NCIC has Technical Assistance Grants for small businesses. If there is a business interested in start-up. This program can assist with soft costs (not equipment, property, etc). Contact is Aimee Quimby at NCIC at aquimby@ncic.org.

Northeastern Vermont Development Agency (NVDA) can be a key resource for planning and implementation, including connecting with and assisting in grant applications. Contact Doug Morton, Senior Transportation Planner at (802) 748-1221 and dmorton@nvda.net and visit <https://www.nvda.net/> to learn more.

NCIC has funding through VHCB's REDI Program to assist communities with grant-writing. Contact Mike Welch at NCIC at mwelch@ncic.org.

Emily McClure, who operates the Albany and Craftsbury general stores, is happy to talk with folks in Concord about how bringing the store back in those towns worked out. She can be reached at emily@gennyvt.com.

Potential Funding Sources

Crowd funding matching grants.

Infrastructure improvement grants.

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development has a directory of funding resources for Village Centers: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/State-Designation-Programs/CPR-Funding-Directory.pdf.

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) is an excellent grant resource depending on the type of project. Visit www.nbrc.gov. State contact is Kristie Farnham kristie.farnham@vermont.gov.

The Vermont Community Development Program could potentially be used to support planning or implementation work. Learn more at accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp.

The Preservation Trust of Vermont has several grants that might be interesting to explore, including the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant. Contact Ben Doyle and learn more at ptvermont.org/help/grants/.

Vermont Arts Council Cultural Facilities: vermontartscouncil.org/grants/organizations/cultural-facilities.

If the process involves the development of Community Facilities, the USDA Community Facilities program provides support for a variety of programming. VCRD can provide additional support for developing and submitting an application. Learn more at rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/vt and contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 978-760-1238.

There is Historic Preservation <https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/historic-preservation-grants>.

There are state and Federal tax credits available for properties located within village centers. Learn more at: accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/tax-credits.

The Spark Connecting Communities grant program provides grants of \$500-\$3,000 for “grassroots work that builds social capital.” Learn more at vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/.

The Northeast Kingdom Fund funds grants up to \$5,000 for small, community-based projects. Learn more at vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/northeast-kingdom-fund/.



► Clean Up and Improve Miles Pond Beach

A task force could form to clean up Miles Pond Beach and improve the facilities and amenities in order to make the beach more enjoyable, accessible, and available for community programming and events.

Community Co-Chairs: **Heather Ranney & Rhonda Adams**

Facilitator: **Hannah Carpino**, VCRD

Resource Team Members: **Ben Copans**, *Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation*; and **Bobby Lussier**, *Vermont Community Foundation*

Community Participants: Jill Abetti, Joshua Abetti, Rhonda Adams, Pam Fallon, Mary Gochie, Theresa Hovey, and Task Force Signups Heather Ranney, Virginia Renfrew, Cynthia Stuart, and Jaye Young

Current Status and Initiatives

- In 2021, the selectboard inquired about improving the beach. The Agency of Natural Resources told them that the vegetation should grow back.
- Vegetation has grown considerably on the beach in recent years, used to be a lot more sand.
- Issues with beach/water visibility, parents can only see kids swimming from specific areas.
- The state owns Miles Pond and dam, and leases it to the town of Concord.
- Under the lease, Concord is responsible for beach maintenance, but needs state permission for any larger projects (Lakes and Ponds Program, Shoreline Protection Act).
- Concord got state permission to renovate Miles Pond pavilion, which is underway now.
- Before shoreline regulations were tightened, the town was able to keep the area as a beach- more sand, more space. In the years since, state regulations have changed, rules around dumping sand are much stricter.
- Current state rule is that sand must be contained to 20 feet from water's edge.

Action Steps

1. Collaborate with the selectboard, and potentially act in an advisory capacity, on Miles Pond projects, such as the current pavilion renovation, or potential future beach projects spearheaded by this task force.
2. Find a contact at the state to work with consistently. This task force could coordinate a site visit with this person, and use them as a resource when researching state regulations.
3. Identify which projects this task force and the town of Concord could take on without state permitting.
4. Research potential funding opportunities, both within the town/state, but also through foundations, programs, and private donors. The town is currently deciding on how to use its ARPA funds, but this task force could also look into grants from the Vermont Community Foundation or other sources, such as the SPARK grants.
5. Research opportunities for connecting the Miles Pond pavilion to Wifi.

Additional Potential Action Steps

- Smaller projects the task force could tackle: beautification efforts, adding standing grills, replacing the picnic tables.
- Add a changing area and bathrooms in pavilion redesign.
- Host events, such as a farmer's market.
- Add gardens around beach area.
- Figure out how to improve beach/sand without going against state regulations

- Goose deterrent.
- Revisit the dog policy, and potentially adding a dog waste sign/receptacle.
- Organize clean-up efforts.
- Designate a specific swimming area in the water to separate swimmers from boats (boat launch is directly adjacent).
- Community boat loan system- the town could purchase kayaks for residents to borrow while they visit the beach.
- Electricity and running water at new pavilion.
- Install surveillance cameras at the pavilion to deter vandalism.
- Install a firepit at the beach or new pavilion.
- Create a historic display about the history of Miles Pond.
- Improve water access- handicap accessibility is minimal, walkways could improve beach experience .
- Create educational displays/outreach around water quality protection, responsible shoreline management.
- Bring in a landscape architect for a design consultation.

Resources

- Working with the Concord Selectboard as they figure out ARPA funding distribution and renovate the pavilion would be a great opportunity.
- Ben Copans offered to be a point person for the group, and provided a list of contacts at the state level (see below). To set up a site visit, or for additional information, contact Ben at Ben.Copans@vermont.gov.
 - Alison Marchione of the Lakes and Pond Program at the Department for Environmental Conservation would be great to bring in for a site visit. She can also help clarify state regulations for this group moving forward. Contact Alison at Alison.Marchione@vermont.gov.
 - Questions about state permitting can be directed to Misha Cetner. Contact Misha at misha.cetner@vermont.gov.
 - Questions about state licensing can be directed to Ben Green. Contact Ben at Benjamin.Green@vermont.gov.
- Kate Neubauer is the Program Officer for Community and the Environment at the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF), and can be a contact for the task force. She can be reached at kneubauer@vermontcf.org.
- The [Spark Connecting Community](#) grants at VCF are focused on hyperlocal projects that foster social connections among and collaboration within communities. The next round of Spark grant applications will be open in early 2023.
- The Northeast Kingdom Fund at VCF makes annual grant awards from \$500 - \$5,000 to projects in Essex, Orleans, or Caledonia counties. The next grant round will be available in 2023.
- VCRD is a continuing partner for resource connections, and has some very modest funding resources. Contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 978-760-1238.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Step Recommendations

Connect with the Dept. of Housing and Community Development to learn about Better Places grants. Better Places is a non-competitive, community matching grant program empowering Vermonters to create inclusive and vibrant public places serving Vermont's designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas. The program provides one-on-one project coaching, local fundraising support, and two to one (2:1) matching grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000 to make your community-led placemaking ideas happen.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

To set up a site visit, or for additional information, contact Ben Copans at Ben.Copans@vermont.gov.

Alison Marchione of the Lakes and Pond Program at the Department for Environmental Conservation would be great to bring in for a site visit. She can also help clarify state regulations for this group moving forward. Contact Alison at Alison.Marchione@vermont.gov.

Questions about state permitting can be directed to Misha Cetner. Contact Misha at misha.cetner@vermont.gov.

Questions about state licensing can be directed to Ben Green. Contact Ben at Benjamin.Green@vermont.gov.

Kate Neubauer is the Program Officer for Community and the Environment at the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF), and can be a contact for the task force. She can be reached at kneubauer@vermontcf.org.

Potential Funding Sources

The Spark Connecting Communities grant program provides grants of \$500-\$3,000 for "grassroots work that builds social capital." The next round of Spark grant applications will be open in early 2023. Learn more at vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/.

The Northeast Kingdom Fund funds grants up to \$5,000 for small, community-based projects. The next grant round will be available in 2023. Learn more at vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/northeast-kingdom-fund/.

The Windham Foundation's mission is to enhance the vitality of Vermont's rural communities, and one of their funding areas is "environmental enhancement". Grants range from \$2,500 - \$10,000. Grants are accepted on a rolling basis. Though the foundation requires applicants to have 501(c)3 status, the task force could seek out partnerships to apply. Learn more at <https://www.windham-foundation.org/grant-application-process>.

The Davis Conservation Foundation funds projects related to environmental protection, outdoor recreation, and community involvement. Grant application deadlines are October 1st and April 1st. Learn more at <https://www.davisfoundations.org/dcf/faq#OBJECT>.

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife's Watershed Grant program funds projects involving protection, enhancement, and recreation on any state river, stream, lake, or pond. Awards are made up to \$10,000. Citizens and community groups are eligible for this funding. For more information, visit <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/get-involved/apply-for-a-grant/watershed-grant>.

VCRD is a continuing partner for resource connections, and has some very modest funding resources. Contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 978-760-1238.

Dealer.com primarily provides grants to science, technology and engineering centered groups, but also funds environmental and sustainability-focused projects. Grant applications open on November 1st. Learn more at <https://www.dealer.com/company/corporate-responsibility/>.

The Clif Family Foundation reviews grant applications three times a year—the deadlines are February 1st, June 1st, and October 1st. Their focus areas include enhancing community health, and safeguarding environmental resources. Learn more at <https://clifffamilyfoundation.org/grants-program>.

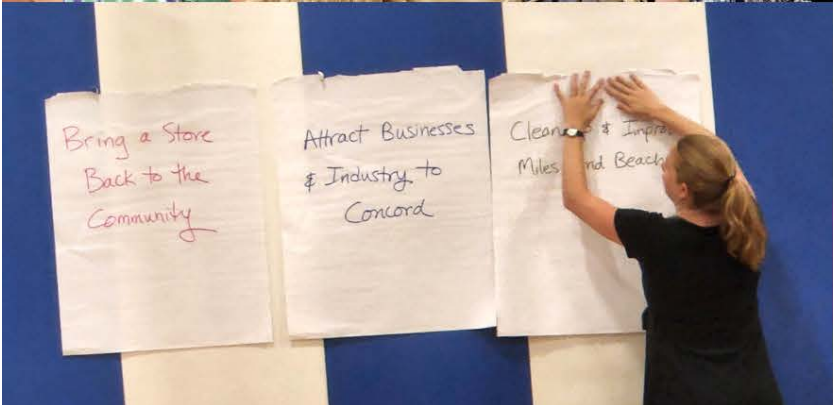
The Weyerhaeuser Foundation funds community projects in Vermont’s Essex, Caledonia and Orleans counties. Their focus areas include “civic growth”, as well as “environmental stewardship projects”, such as parks and restoration efforts. Their grants deadline is September 30th, but use this recommendation in the future. <https://www.weyerhaeuser.com/company/values/citizenship/giving-fund/>.

The William G. Pomeroy Foundation funds historical or educational efforts, particularly historical signage. In light of the task force identifying a desire to install a historical exhibit at Miles Pond, this grant provides a niche opportunity for funding. Learn more at <https://www.wgpfoundation.org/apply-for-history-grant/>.

Zero Gravity Brewery offers funding to environmental and community development efforts in Vermont. Requests are accepted on a rolling basis. Learn more at <https://www.zerogravitybeer.com/community-sustainability>.

The Hoehl Family Foundation funds community projects in Vermont, and accepts grant applications until December 15th. The minimum for requests is \$5,000. The foundation requires that applicants have 501(c)3 status, so the task force would need to find a partner. Learn more at <http://www.hoehlfamilyfoundation.org/about>.





V. Let's Grow Concord Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held in-person and virtually with over 80 Concord community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on July 14, 2022, and through a paper and online survey.

Although the prioritization work of the Let's Grow Concord Community Visit Program requires a town to decide what is most important as it moves forward with Task Forces, nothing is lost in the process from the long list of concerns and ideas expressed in early community focus sessions. Many interesting and diverse thoughts are represented here, and are presented as a reminder of issues explored, and a possible foundation for future projects.

Education & Families

Visiting Team: Brian Lowe (facilitator), Alyssa Johnson (scribe), Jen Carlo, Jenna O'Farrell, Casey Winterson, Jenney Samuelson, Sarah Truckle, Will Stevens

What are the Assets in this Area?

- 4 kids and homeschool all of them – Library! Kids utilize it a lot. Great space to get books, hang out, request books for a unit study.
- Spaces in Concord where we create memories – have fun and swim, can invite friends.
- Kayaking on Shadow Lake.
- Going out to eat at Moosewood and Alpine.
- School! Not every town has a school Pre-K-8.
- Full day Pre-K.
- Health Center is a huge asset for families. Close by, good physicians, good staff, very friendly and efficient, know what they are doing.
- Two Parks – one in North Concord, with a playground.
- Not a punishing community – low crime rate, not a lot of punishing factors to live in a decent community. Roots here are strong and extremely deep. Not a lot of history of violence. Good history of family and friends taking good care of each other.
- Strong tradition of culture. Students are proud to come from Concord. Pride in culture important for education and families.
- Ruralness- ability to go hunting and fishing, wide open spaces.
- ATV trails, and can run ATVs on town roads.
- Fishing.
- Universal high school choice.
- 30% of folks who work in the school live in the town.
- Church- asset for families and education. Have generational families, families with young kids, families and older couples where folks have grown up. Also provide religious education and a community gathering place.
- Strong athletic programs. A lot of students play soccer and basketball. A lot of people watch the games.
- First Normal School in the country.
- Belief in the importance of a good, quality education is baked into the culture.
- If someone is in crisis, neighbors are here to help you.
- The most frequent comment from visitors from all over the county is how beautiful it is here - Shadow Lake, roads, etc.
- Welcoming community. Folks are very involved in their communities.
- Peaceful.
- Great place to move and just to be.
- Museum in the Town Hall highlights historical figures in Concord.

What are the Challenges?

- Concord has so much acreage and is very spread out which is a challenge for transportation and getting kids to activities.
- School buildings. Facility is old, everything from septic to roof. Challenges with physical plant.
- Gym – “the floor in wonderful, as long as it isn't raining.”
- Space for soccer/baseball/softball is owned by the town, but a limited space.
- Limited ability to prepare students for an increasingly multicultural world.
- Playground doesn't have a lot of field space – it is mostly parking lot.
- Poor access to internet, even with the best providers could give.
- A lot of students didn't have access to internet, and with hybrid schooling, were not able to be present.
- Childcare, specifically a lack of multiple different places for childcare for families under 3 years in age. Some school employees can't find care nearby.
- Economic challenges.
- Opioid challenges.
- Lack of housing options. In some cases, losing applicants who want to move up here but can't find housing.
- Gilman School closing, as well as the combination with Lunenburg, resulted in overpopulating in the middle school, challenging to integrate within the schools
- This type of meeting isn't happening in Gilman – homeschool children because there wasn't a school nearby and close.
- Transportation, including back and forth and school.
- Economic deflation.
- “I'm the young person – I've never been the young person”

- Food access.
- Access to activity.
- Aging and declining population.
- Kids who can't get to Library, food other assets
- Providing food and healthy access to students would be an asset to shift from negative to positive
- Used to have two stores, now have none. Nowhere for people to buy milk or bread.
- Also lost the weigh station. It used to be a place for people gathering, kids with bucks and now nothing.
- Homework expectation, work completion expectation at Lyndon Institute and St. Johnsbury. When students get there, they are shocked about the amount of work needed to be completed out of school. Challenging transition for students. One of the most difficult hurdles to get over.
- STORES. Kids in town also worked at the stores. Cobb – owner taught many skills. Were able to work there because you knew everyone would keep an eye on you. They were gathering spaces, and kept a lot of people safe.
- Limited youth employment options. Some work Mooselook, but need more local options for youth jobs.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Need a new store.
- Make pies! Like for playground fundraisers and dinner dances. Won't solve all the issues, but "any excuse to get together and eat is going to get you there."
- People like to get together – have big open spaces, want to use them.
- Barney is working to get Bernie's market open again. Not receptive until most recently. Financial thing right now, but believes the community will step up.
- School and community join together to help with whatever is needed. Used to be the community was very involved in the school, but fell apart. Work to have the school as more of a gathering place. Put the needs out there more – people want to help. Maybe something on social media to tell the community what you need.
- For community members who may not have a child, important to emphasize the importance of helping kids.
- Create a school newspaper or newsletter or other communication from the school. Could include a student journalist or something like that.
- School as the center for a hub.
- Multigenerational events – spelling bee, cribbage tournament, "non-electronic fun" – energy from older folks – community has to come out for those things, have.
- Bring back the fall barbecue and meet and greet that the local school board put it on right before school started.
- Get funding to modernize the school. Get older folks to understand they have a stake in this.
- (From advocate and health coach in St. J – healthy food and activity): Partnering with the wellness community in other towns to do events at the school, in the town. Fresh fruits and veggies on the table. American Heart Association and others have great info about importance of eating together. Let's run and encourage folks to eat healthy food. Connect the Vermont Food Bank to this area or Veggie Van go from the hospital.
- Need to have a Director of Community and School and/or Chamber of Commerce and/or Board of Directors – some sort of coordinating person and entity.
- Communication is huge. Food insecurity – accessible thing at the health center. People at Lunenburg have a food shelf and people are not taking advantage of that. Vermonters have a lot of pride – think they are taking that from someone else. There is enough in EBT for everyone in Vermont. As a kid, we had the book mobile, now need a food mobile, and people may be a more interested in receiving.
- Host an activity – maybe a kickball tournament, and invite Gilman families if working together in the school, and other adult partners. Have vendors with booths and information. Everyone that comes could get a basket of food/fruit so no one misses out.
- Community garden or community farm – blends community building and food security issues. Could find someone to provide land, and then have an opportunity to volunteer and do work together; Grow food together and make it available. Also a learning opportunity for students, and/or a job opportunity. Glover has a very large vegetable garden – has a partnership with Farm to School, who sends a coordinator.
- Schools are here and open to letting people in.
- Memorial Day parade this year was joked was the world's shortest parade. It would be great to see that grow, and have the children make a float for the parade. Could it be a pet parade?!
- These used to be week long camp over with counselors for the transition from 8th grade to high school. Helped kids get to know each other before the school year started. Something like the tournament or other activity to fill that need.
- Town Forest – have the possibility for, but don't have it. Could have walking trails. People right now are out at Miles Park at the pavilion.
- Potential for mountain bike trails in Concord. "Knowing what is in Burke – we might not want that here".
- Having a place to ride bikes.
- Miles Pond Beach area needs improvement – "It's horrible". Could use a play structure, a real beach, constant staffing. Grew up going there but don't take people there now. Great logging trails the length of the property. Found all sorts of plants and animals – kiosk to help figure things out. Great resource when it's good. Shears to cut down brush on the beach, Managed with teen employment. Access to boats? Place to get dressed? Maintenance would only be 3 months of the year.
- Try to get idea list for town for ARPA money. Pavillion is an idea for the list. Tables are run down, have to bring in a bunch of stuff in order to do events.
- Chicken ?? – little festival in this area. A lot of fun and the town showed up for it for the fire department in August, but heavily reliant on volunteers.
- Have recreational signage about swimming or other assets so that other people know about them.

- Need spaces for families to come together – rail trail could be a possibility. Have a railroad through the Moose River Valley. Could be a place to walk, bike, xc ski as family. Right now there is no safe biking for young families.
- Unless you have a place to learn to ride a bike on your property, not a lot of options. A trail could go from the Village to Miles Pond, Gilman. Could mean lots of business for Bernie's!
- Revitalize the conversation for the rail trail from St. Johnsbury to Concord.
- There is a need for more organizations and civic groups in Concord, like the masons. The few we have we should touch on- they are an investment in this community.
- Have a community band/orchestra, or other community musical opportunities.
- School communication: Sign on Route 2, newsletter by email or posted to read at their leisure. Signs are also great. Recycle center is a big gathering place. Would be great to have a schedule all in one place. (The school has a Facebook, plan to do a weekly newsletter).
- Information board/kiosk at the dump.
- Make the Library more active and integrated. Increase connection between the school and the library. Don't seem to be able to connect on some of the programming. Consider partnering with them for some afterschool programs.
- Town Hall acting performance: It used to be someone from town or the library put together a production with younger kids. School could be involved. Kids could be involved. People with sewing skills did costumes. Town Hall building as an asset.
- Asset: all middle schoolers get a laptop.
- There are people who have moved into the community, and it would be great to bring everyone together.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Many assets: strong sense of community, caring, bringing people together, strong natural resources. Hear a desire to rekindle a sense of community through events, communication, or a store, to draw people back in and back together. Sense that the school is a real center in the community building, and need to figure out how to most effectively leverage the school for that. There seems to be a desire to use natural resources as a gathering place, and leverage the resources in the community. Amazing to hear how much folk living, working, and playing here. There are opportunities for collaboration across community boundaries.
- Sense of connection. Greatest asset was neighbors helping neighbors, and the sense of connection to place and each other. Challenges with severed or broken or paused connections between the school, store, each other. Biggest thing that stood about what to be done was reconnection. Rail rail was an interesting connection on multiple levels, including to Gilman.
- Struck by the sense of importance of community cultural piece. Didn't hear a lot of discussion about economics. Heard about community capital, social capital – things that Takes time and person capital to that you all seem to have to develop. There was a desire to “Nurture support and cultivate citizens that contribute to engaged communities.”.
- Excited by Bernie's and opportunities to explore store as a community hub. Roots are deep, people take care of each other. Struck by the commitment to a community hub and that “baked into culture is belief in quality education.”.
- Strong threads of creativity and commitment throughout the conversations.

Economic Development: Infrastructure, Housing, Preservation

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Hannah Carpino (scribe), Jessica Savage, Ben Doyle, Rebecca Ellis, Lindsey Kurrle, Annie Maclean, Luke O'Brien, Sarah Waring

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Mooselook Restaurant has brought lots of business and people through the town.
- Cellphone service has really improved for some.
- Concord has two vibrant lake/pond communities.
- There are two campgrounds that attract people from out of town.
- Real estate sales- lots of people coming from larger cities/other states, will hopefully expand tax base.
- Generous land owners who provide access to trail networks- VAST, ATVs, hiking.
- Beautiful scenery.
- Message board outside of the school provides information on town events.
- Installing fiber optic internet access along Rt 2, which has connected Miles Pong to internet.
- The Historical Society has an annual event, which draws a lot of community.
- Memorial Day Parade.
- The town has a Fall Festival the last weekend in September, church and historical society coordinate to offer chicken pie supper, 50+ year long tradition.
- Health Center has recently been renovated, very committed to community.
- Holiday Bazaar at school, great event for meeting people.
- Young people and families getting involved in town events.
- Sid's Pantry is a local food shelf based in the health center.
- Gravel bikers who come to Concord for trail access.

What are the Challenges?

- There is no village water or sewer.
- Two or three houses on the main street have burned in recent years or become dilapidated.
- Housing stock is increasingly disappearing or falling into disrepair.
- Municipal building and town clerk's office need a lot of work. Town Vault is about to be full.
- The school is old, and there are major safety and access issues.
- Lack of assets to draw people in, lack of revenue for the town. Littleton, NH has big box stores and draws a lot of Concord residents.
- Lost Bernie's Market in town which was a major community center, huge loss for Concord.
- Concord's location on Rt 2 can be difficult- lots of traffic, no gas station.
- Despite two lakes and major campgrounds, there is no convenience store.
- Concord does not have a long-range capital plan.
 - old buildings are not being maintained.
 - new municipal buildings are badly needed.
 - No funding for maintenance or new projects.
 - No land for new buildings.
- Closure of Bernie's - the tanks are too old and nonfunctional, cost prohibitive to buy and repair. Entrepreneur talked with owners but couldn't come up with a deal.
- Internet access is not good, even less than a mile from the road.
- No universal broadband across community.
- Not enough people on some roads to get Spectrum to install internet infrastructure.
- Population has declined.
- Major historical assets have left (railway, foundry, hemp farming).
- Concord doesn't have food or anywhere to stop for bikers who come to recreate.
- Rt 2 is not safe for bikers.
- "I miss the old dump" - new dump doesn't have an exchange program like the old dump. Old dump served as community center, area for connection.
- Lack of law enforcement.
 - Sheriff's office and state police both serve Concord in lieu of town police force.
 - State police have a ~ 30 min response time to Concord.
 - Very little follow-up on issues, causing concern among residents.
- Loss of logging industry and railroad have left town with a "backbone industry." Would employ folks and increase tax revenue.
- Railroad stretch (21 miles) has been sold from Pan-American railroad to CSS.
- Tax rate is one of the highest in the Northeast Kingdom, paired with lack of town services.
- Shopping ends up happening in NH or St. Johnsbury.
- Drugs and criminal activity spilling from adjacent communities into Concord.
- Nonprofits don't pay property taxes, but receive lots of grant money from state/federal government.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Offering a tax break to invite new businesses.
- Allocating land to an industrial park, incentivizing businesses to move in (tax break).
 - Creates jobs.
 - Keeping people in Concord during the day, rather than leaving town to work.
- Create a historic district for center of town and find funding to maintain historic buildings.
- Getting a solid rail trail to connect to Lamoille Rail Trail.
 - Working with Twin State Railways, trying to get state to buy Concord section.
 - Sale is complete, and Lamoille Rail Trail is set to be completed in next six months.
 - Would connect New York State all the way to NH/VT border.
- Figuring out some anchor economy to increase tax base.
- Feasibility study on economic development.
 - Using community capacity and skill to review Concord assets/economy and create capital plan.
- Creation of vibrant community center to promote events and serve as gathering place.
- Improving broadband access.
 - All NEK towns are part of Communications District.
 - Roughly 6-year timeline.
- Could Bernie's exist in a different less expensive/difficult location?
- Concord could utilize existing pavilion in Miles Pond to expand, increase community access. Preliminary plans for a new structure. Bathrooms, more community events.
- Concord could try to attract a business compatible with the area's assets. i.e., Wood pellet plant, which could connect to logging industry. This was attempted in Gilman.
- Collaborate with other towns, connect with places that have attempted similar projects.
- Making Rt 2 a safer area to bike would require expanding shoulder. Expanding Rail trail would pull bikers off roads onto trail network.
- A potential event series for food trucks, bike community, ATV/snowmobile community.
- Concord residents could get more involved with planning and zoning, selectboard meetings.
 - Meetings should be more widely advertised, more outreach.
 - Fear of negative publicity, strong need for more publicity on town efforts.
- Concord has combined planning and zoning board- could separating these two efforts allow for more targeted work? New ideas, new people involved.

- Concord could expand transportation between town and schools. Currently, Concord students who choose St J academy must be driven, bus only goes to Lyndon.
- Family life and tradition are very important to Concord as a community.
- Need for long term planning before major municipal projects are raised.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Trail access, scenic beauty, gravel biking- all opportunities to bring people into Concord, but nothing to keep them in town (food, gathering places, etc).
- What would Twin State Rail trail attract to Concord?
- Limited capacity of planning/zoning, selectboard can make taking these projects seem daunting.
- Strong desire and dedication to bringing community together over these issues.
- Central place for gathering (community center, pavilion, stores) could strengthen sense of community connection, combat isolation.
- Need to grow industry and revenue base for town.
- Town services: wastewater, fiber, broadband, law enforcement.
- Desire for more time together- the school as an asset, the pavilion.
- Rail trail has the potential to be a real economic asset.
- Incredible natural and recreational assets.
- Two competing economic development philosophies expressed:
 - Attracting a backbone industry to grow tax base, let everything follow –OR–
 - Double down on building on pre-existing access.
- Considering the region as a resource- Lunenburg, Lancaster, and onward.
- Serving both local community and tourists through amenities like a gas station, a store, etc.
- Increasing collaboration with other towns on recreation assets.
- The two economic development philosophies don't have to be mutually exclusive.
- Very community-based town, strong emphasis on investing in people.

Community Connectivity

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Brian Lowe (scribe), Alyssa Johnson, Jen Carlo, Jenna O'Farrell, Casey Winterson, Jenney Samuelson, Sarah Truckle, Will Stevens

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Town website – lots of information about town activities and community events/issues of interest.
- Syd's pantry is active each month and moved from school to health center responds to needs of community.
- Mooselook restaurant brings people together.
- Two campgrounds have trails, a pool, and community access.
- Mile's Pond beach and recreation area + pavilion are good gathering spaces.
- The Transfer & Recycle – everyone goes, and it is a place to see people and learn about events.
- The Concord Community Church...full of children and families.
- ATV and Snowmobile club are active.
- Church, school, word of mouth are the three main communication challenges in community.
- Library has limited hours, but those hours work for many families with young kids.

What are the Challenges?

- Need a central community meeting space / community center gathering space that can work in all seasons.
- No pharmacy in the county of Essex, which is a challenge for the older population.
- A Concord focused Front Porch Forum would be helpful.
- Concord has a community Facebook page but people are not using it.
- Bernie's convenience store was a place of great connection and is greatly missed.
- COVID cut off communications through schools to the community.
- Cell phone service is spotty throughout the town and there is no public Wifi.
- Broadband access is very limited and during pandemic, remote options were not available for many families and students.
- Older population that does not have or can't afford internet. It leaves people behind.
- Mental health services – therapists and specialists are booked way out and there are not telehealth options when you don't have broadband access.
- Schools do act as a service hub, with a school based clinician but no other specialists in the community.
- Supports for elderly in community are lacking.
- Lack of sewage system limits business interest in Concord.
- In the winter especially, there are few options in Concord for youth recreation.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- A plan for teaching people how to use the internet, and in particular older people.
- Community Newsletter, maybe through the school (by post or email).

- Community computer area in the Library (or somewhere) for connection or potentially also for telehealth.
- Bring back the community second hand exchange at the dump or somewhere else.
- A monthly or weekly musical event 1x/week during summer is a way to create a community space.
- Farmer's market in the pavilion area would draw a wide spectrum of people across generations.
- More events in general – whether music or art or food or otherwise.
- Horseshoe tournament (had been stopped by insurance challenges).
- Cornhole tournaments.
- Wifi hotspot at Mile's Pond, wifi spot at town office for the public, wifi in the church steeple – could really help make connections and also help the Farmer's Market style event for vendors.
- Bingo.
- Skating rink.
- Offer community dance classes for all ages such as square dance, waltz, swing, etc. These could be held at community spaces like the church and/or Town Hall.
- Revive a second hand shed at the dump. Some kind of community exchange place whether at dump or a different location.
- Saturday morning coffee.
- Arts connections in community.
- The town hall and church ground floor space are great places to hold dance classes or morning coffees or arts event.
- School is putting together a school calendar and it could be shared widely (beyond school community, integrated with community events).
- The group suggested possible communication channels, including Front Porch Forum, Concord Website, Miles Pond Website, mailing out a magazine like in Cabot.
- A central communication hub or person or group that could connect silos between Miles Pond, Shadow Lake, School, different town areas.
- Working with UVM's new department focused on helping citizen journalists.
- Community bulletin board – with chalk and you just let people know what's going on.
- Explore a coop or other model that could help bring back Bernie's.
- Explore feasibility of wastewater system in downtown.
- Set up a GoFundMe to raise money for Bernie's.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Community with real sense of hope and some valuable assets and public spaces to build around in the Town Hall, Miles Pond, School, and Church.
- Creative ideas, but also very practical ideas that are achievable.
- Community Pride can help create momentum for new ideas – it is a choice of whether or not to take action, and Concord is choosing to take action.
- Start small and build on success as you seek to re-establish connections lost during COVID.
- Build events around the assets you have – local talent, local food – and celebrate the good things happening in Concord to bring people together.

Recreation & Land Use

Visiting Team: Jessica Savage (facilitator), Hannah Carpino (scribe), Ben Doyle, Rebecca Ellis, Lindsey Kurrle, Annie Maclean, Luke O'Brien, Sarah Waring

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Railroad tracks that run through town could be repurposed.
- Opportunities for expanding recreation.
- Agricultural resources: hunting, farming, forestry, maple sugaring, timber, hay.
- Four wheelers are allowed to utilize the roads.
- 6000 acres of timberland have recently gone under conservation, but there is still open access to trails.
- Two bodies of water in town limits: Miles Pond and Shadow Lake.
- Nice proximity to Burke, the White Mountains, other outdoor opportunities.
- Folsom Common was just renovated a few years ago and can now be used as a community meeting space, has a playground.
- Lots of parking in center of town.
- Pavilion at Miles Pond Beach for events, open for anyone to use.
- Public boat access at Shadow Lake and Miles Pond.
- Public beach at Miles Pond.
- River access. Water levels are currently too low for recreation – used to be kayaking.
- ATV trails, VAST trails.
- Active soccer, basketball, and baseball/softball leagues.
- Proximity to Victory Bog.
- There is a mountain.
- Good cross-country skiing, backcountry/skinning.
- Wildflower picking.
- NEK Gravel.
- VASA has 88 miles of trail, 200 members.
- Connecticut River.

What are the Challenges?

- Beach needs help and clean-up.
- Potential expansion of beach.
- Shadow Lake has no beach access. People sit close to road or close to boat access.
- No swimming instruction.
- Route 2 is extremely busy and can be dangerous for bikers/walkers.
- Town fields and gym could use maintenance.
- School gym has structural issues, bad roof.
- No safe area for kids to ride bikes.
- No weigh station during hunting season (used to be one at Bernie's).
- Not enough signage for recreation.
- Lack of amenities like bathroom facilities/gas stations.
- Issues with EPA around shoreline protection, proximity to rails.
- Not enough signage or awareness of the recreational opportunities.
- Town road goes around the school, causes issues with traffic control.
- No municipal water, if leach field (?) failed there would be no room to install something else.
- Some homes are built in the flood plain, and Hurricane Irene caused a lot of property damage.
- VASA trails need some upkeep.
- Lack of marked hiking and snowshoeing trails despite areas that could clearly support this kind of network.
- Lack of a store since Bernie's closed- nowhere for people to go even if they come to Concord for recreation.
- Disrespect between ATV riders/road use/sharing the road.
- Speeding on dirt roads.
- No law enforcement in Concord.
- Hunting laws seem loose.
- Very little game warden enforcement.
- Vermont is an open-land state.
- Bike safety, crossing the road.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Concord could rally behind rail trail project and consider it a public entity. Room for changes later on.
- Planning/zoning and selectboard could earmark percentage of ARPA funds towards the development of the rail trail.
- Creation of a map of Concord that shows trail networks, opportunities along with matching signage.
- Concord could fix up beach at Miles Pond- wouldn't require a ton of funding, just need manpower for clearing the land and cleaning.
- Programming at beach, swim lessons and lifeguarding.
- Snowmobile trails could be developed.
- Explore issues of liability, environmental sensitivity, when considering potential for rail trail expansion.
- Athletic competition series to draw people.
- Agritourism through Christmas tree farms, sugarhouses, etc. Not much of a market for traditional farming anymore.
- Concord could do a market study on forest products.
- create a town land use plan to explore balance of preserved land, potential to develop, etc.
- Timber is a very visible, well-known industry in Concord. Kirby Mountain Mulch is booming, and so is the Mooselook. Connect timber industry to corridor of travel on Rt 2.
- Improving parking and facilities for ATV. Old foundry is used, but no official signage for it.
- Concord could use better signage as an opportunity to draw attention to recreation resources- trail markers, maps.
- Concord could develop land along the river and take advantage of the Connecticut River recreation.
- Concord could expand upon NEK Gravel website as a resource.
- Concord Woods is underutilized- owned by UVM? Concord could develop access to this forest.
- Concord has substantial copper resources, there used to be a copper mine.
- Concord could develop bike lanes.
- Concord could try to get painted crosswalks at important areas (town clerk/library and municipal office).
- Concord could work with Lunenburg (?) to develop bike events in areas where there is an already existing wide shoulder.
- Concord could commission digital artists to create renderings of potential rail trail.
- Concord could take some land and develop a wind farm or solar farm.
- Concord could work with the state to improve access to either Miles Pond or Shadow Lake.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Missing a community hub.
- Real desire for community events centered around recreation.
- "Low hanging fruit": beach cleanup, water access, wayfinding and signage.
- Reaching out to power companies, rail companies using higher up state connections.
- Taking advantage of the geography of the town- the Moose River passing through.
- Multimodal recreation opportunities - ATV, snowmobile, walk, bike, horseback riding.
- Focusing on communication with visitors - signage, respect for sharing space, maps.
- Easy access recreation: town forests, easy walking trails, public park settings.
- The already-existing sidewalks are an asset! Should be enhanced, tied in with crosswalk installation.
- Considering important areas to protect/set aside.
- A lot of opportunities with underutilized and underpromoted resources, and developing organization and capacity building to support accessing them. A lot of enthusiasm.
- Lack of public knowledge or advertising about existing opportunities.
- Outdoor recreation assets as tools for community and economic development.

- Land that the town owns, river access.
- An asset map of what the community has, or a feasibility study on rail trail.
- Creating a recreation map for community members or visitors.
- Reopening Barnie's seems to be a strong desire for community members.
- Connecting dam owners with town members, land owners.
- Short, medium and long-term opportunities.
- Longer term planning in terms of land use.
- More easily accessible opportunities could be developing community events.
- Community aspect is important to leverage at the Pond.
- Concord is missing a hub, the Pond offers easy access and beautiful scenery.
- Rail trail could be an incredible opportunity, particularly geographically, as it spans whole community and can connect to other communities.

Additional Action Ideas

Here are the ideas residents contributed through a paper and online form

- Biweekly get together for like a community fun afternoon. I've lived in the area for 5 years and don't know anyone really
- Something a forgot to mention at the meeting. Yes, on the surface and in some areas, Concord is very picturesque - however upon closer inspection - especially in the outlying areas you will see that many, many areas are junk and garbage strewn. Our town has a junk ordinance and a health officer- unfortunately nothing is done by either that person or by the select board when a resident is in violation. For example, in East Concord there are several derelict properties that are never addressed. Also when a group of us did approach the select board concerning a property with massive amounts of garbage, the response was "oh we know which house you're referring to" so they knew and did nothing. The select board responded to the complaint by having the towns' lawyer send a letter. That has had very little effect. The only areas the select board seems to have an interest in is either the properties that are near or border THEIR personal properties. As far as I'm concerned, our select board is an impotent entity that takes no initiative on their own - especially on issues that may render them unpopular. Enforcing our existing ordinances and seriously and aggressively pursuing solutions to the Junk/garbage issues would improve the health and appearance of this town. Just paying attention to areas OTHER than the center of town would go a long way in making those of us who reside in the "outskirts" feel more valued and part of the town at large. Many of us do not have time to attend regular meeting due to our work or family commitments - so yes, we do tend to go just when we have a complaint. Clean up the town and perhaps more people will be interested in coming here. Thank You!!!
- Clean ups of property to attract businesses and out of towners.
- Concord could make connecting bike path to other towns for biking, running, walking, cross country skiing.
- I do not want the bike trail (railroad) to go between our homes on Miles Pond and the Pond. I think the trail could go along Rt. 2 onto Beach Drive to get to the Pavilion. Having it go between homes is a safety concern the residents of those homes.
- I am a member of Concord Community and have been for several years. I love my Community and volunteer in a number of ways. There are ALL ages and stages within our community and we need to be sure we leave out NO ONE – this is important. It would be nice to have a Community center, someplace local where we could have Community happening, gardens, etc. Whatever is done for/with our community, I will be ON BOARD and look forward to it.
- We need to have businesses come to Concord especially a gas station and store.

Ideas from Concord Students

As shared in a group conversation with Concord School students on August 3, 2022.

What's working, what do you like about living in Concord?

- I like that it's a small town and we have a lot of room to use 4-wheelers and it's not too noisy for all then neighbors.
- The lakes and ponds – Miles and Shadow.
- I like how it's woodsy and I get to run my dogs.
- We are close to Granby so we can go fishing there – rivers.
- The school is pretty good. Last year was rough for behavior stuff but it's generally pretty good.
- Nice that the kids have school choice for high school.
- I have family next door so we can go visit on our own because it's close by.
- We have good Wi-Fi (except when it goes out).
- Biking trails.
- Snowmachine trails.
- There are a lot of hiking trails that you can hike on.
- If you hike up Kirby Mountain there is a big clearing and you can see a really good view.
- Field Days at the Concord School.
- Memorial Day parade.
- School Halloween parade.
- We can go to the fair in Lunenburg.
- The Mooselook diner is good.
- My mom works at Alpine Campground across the street from the diner.
- At Alpine Campground there is a playground and indoor pool.
- Nice playground right in the village. It is really new and nice.

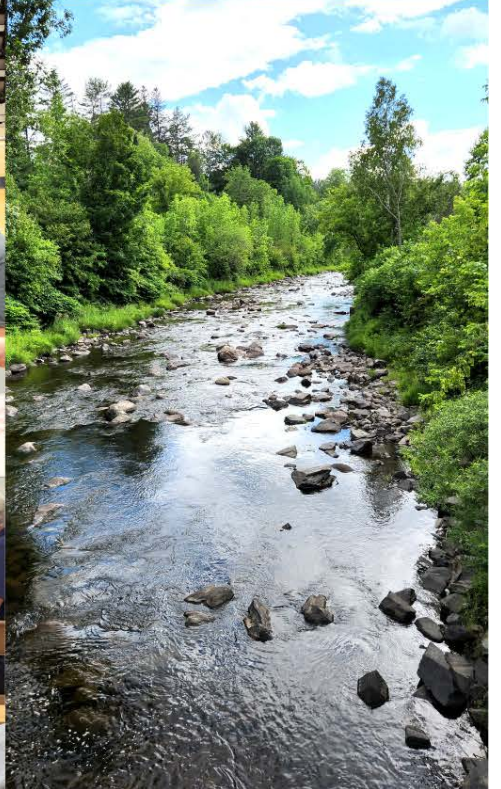
What are the Challenges of living in Concord?

- There is nothing to do in town.
- There are no attractions to bring people to Concord. You can drive around and see the sunset but that's about it.
- A lot of people have been wanting to bring Bernie's back. There is no place to get gas or basic groceries. We have to go to Littleton or St Johnsbury.
- There are no grocery stores.
- There are barely any sidewalks in town. Some in the main village, but not in other parts of town. This is a challenge for kids walking to school.
- There were some issues of behavior in the school after the consolidation with Gilman.
- Population is a challenge. No one is moving in and everyone is leaving. My class hasn't had a new kid in 5-10 years. My class was 13 and it used to be 16.
- There are a lot of old buildings that are starting to fall down.
- There are homes in town that are not rebuilding or cleaning up.
- Not a lot of new housing – nothing on the market.
- No where to go to go out to eat. The existing places are expensive.
- The majority of Concord doesn't have phone service.
- Even at the school, it's terrible service. (it is supposed to be doubled this year).
- The gym roof at the school needs repair. It closes in the winter when there is snow on the roof.
- The school is understaffed. The 5th grade teacher is leaving.
- Housing is limited and no one wants to move to Concord. You can't find anything to buy.

What are your ideas to make Concord a better place to learn, live, and play?

- We should have a pool in Concord. More swimming options.
- We need more restaurants in Concord.
- There should be mountain biking trails with a place to rent a bike.
- We need more activities to do – things that are easy to get to.
- In the summer, it would be fun to have camp in town. Used to have church camp.
- More stores and restaurants.
- We could have a racetrack for people to use and not have to go to NH. A go-cart or race car track.
- We should hold fundraisers for money to restore buildings in town. There are at least 12 buildings that are caved in with stuff outside.
- Another playground.
- Pump track for biking.
- Someone needs to buy Bernie's. The Mooselook owner is trying to.
- More Four-wheeling trails.
- A place to get gas for snowmobiling and four-wheeling.
- We need more things for the park on Victory Road in North Concord. All of the swings and slides were taken down. Now it's only basketball court and baseball field.
- We need more sidewalks in town. In particular near the recreational fields.
- Playgrounds need more for teens and older kids to do and tree forts.
- parkour areas.
- Places to go shopping like a mall with a food court. That would attract people to the town. Kind of like the mall in St Johnsbury.
- We need a Get Air trampoline park or a foam pit.
- There should be a water park or water slides.
- Ice skating rink.
- Turn the school into a mall.





VI. Let's Grow Concord Community Visit Participants

Jill Abetti
Joshua Abetti
Glenn Adams
Rhonda Adams
Ginny Appleton
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Kate Badger
Danielle Balch
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and many more...



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