

CONCORD STAKEHOLDER MEETING NOTES

FEBRUARY 5-7, 2018

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TOP ISSUES

Listed below are the most frequent comments provided during the stakeholder meetings. The following pages group the stakeholder comments received by topic.

Maintain the Character of Concord

- » Keep and enhance the traditional New England character
- » Match zoning to existing patterns of development
- » Stop demolition for parking near Downtown
- » Improve transitions between commercial/industrial and neighborhoods
- » Preserve the open space outside the Urban Growth Boundary
- » Reduce the need for variances

Establish and Implement a Vision for Key Locations

- » Opportunity Corridor
- » South End
- » Steeplegate Mall
- » Penacook
- » Exit 17 Industrial
- » Medical/Hospital Area

Focus Density in Select Locations

- » Look to the Comprehensive Plan for guidance
- » Consider parking space reductions in areas abutting Downtown

Improve the Walkability and Bikeability of Concord

- » Improvements at development site level
- » Focus on multi-modal public streets

Create Illustrated, User-Friendly Regulations

- » Clarify what can be developed
- » Eliminate conflicting language and improve definitions
- » Reduce the need for variances for projects that meet the community's standards

GENERAL TOPICS

- Want to create a destination with other things to do/variety.
- Like the idea that something can be turned around. At the ground level of a building, having residential that can be turned into retail when ready.
- Want to add value to the area, are waiting until the right retail, restaurants and nightlife come along.
- There needs to be a comparison side-by-side of existing regulation outcomes and proposed for people to understand the zoning ordinance.
- Many older families own large urban lots.
- Concord is different than it used to be, want to revisit the code to mix with the existing characteristics of the City.
- Need transformational change, not incremental change.
- Want other materials than brick to be used in Concord. Brick should not be the only allowed construction material.
- Going against the natural pattern of development.
- How can the City prevent suburbanization from occurring further?
- Every neighborhood is different.
- The ring of near Downtown neighborhoods is more comfortable with change/growth. The further out you go, the more fixed the opinion is.
- Are the existing patterns worth replicating?
- From block face to block face within the same neighborhood, the characteristics are varying.
- People don't want to work in the City (prefer easier parking of outlying area).
- Challenges for redevelopment - significant change requires conformity - including no parking between building and street.
- "Live Free or Die" (the State motto) often applies to citizen approach to code enforcement.
- Property maintenance code excludes commercial properties.
- Older neighborhoods need a fix to allow for new construction and renovation.
- What does "Gateway" really mean?
- "Think out of the box" "cut the red tape" and "creative solutions".
- Need to focus on bike/pedestrian issues, they are related to quality of life.
- Roundabout design often requires bikes to interact with cars.
- Want to return to a walkable village.
- Lots of folks own property with no debt, set unrealistic expectations for sale, redevelopment.
- Neighborhoods are all different -- tolerance for change not as high west of Spring, for example.
- By and large, downtown Concord was developed from 1850-1920 and is predominantly brick (red with some yellow), stone, and other masonry materials. Concurrently, developers building new structures in Downtown increasingly want to use less expensive materials, such as insulated metal panels, in lieu of masonry. In some cases, buildings have been permitted with cement board siding or vinyl siding (CATCH Mennino Place on Storrs Street). While metal panels might be appropriate in some locations near Downtown, need to be careful relative to their use on Main Street and connected side streets between State and Storrs.

- Good urban design is achieved whenever a developer builds a new structure which speaks to the present while simultaneously is similar in mass & scale of adjacent structures and incorporates exterior materials employed by surrounding historic properties. Not sure how we articulate this in our code, but feel we should take a stab at this.
- Would like to see low barriers to innovation. For example, what would be required for a renter to replace their car with a "garage" or shed for their bicycles. Could code allow a renter to place a bike garage where their car would sit off-street? Imagine a solar-powered structure no larger than a large truck to house the cargo bicycle and family bikes of the renter. This would provide a weather and theft safe location to access their transportation. What would it take in our existing code to do this? Could new code allow such innovation?
- City made a huge mistake in mid-1980's by allowing offices in area around Regional and Chenelle, sucked them out of Downtown whenever they expanded.
- Need to allow Pocket Neighborhoods and other new patterns. Chorlian trying to do a pocket neighborhood – requires lots of variances.

PLACES IN CONCORD

In General

- There are 2 separate tax rates between south Concord and Penacook due to different school districts.
- Want Concord to be more of a full-service City.
- There are issues in the older and mixed-use sections of the City. Also, the old south end, west end and out towards the prison.
- Want to preserve the Gateway.
- In the South End railyard, there are public/private partnerships. The neighbors don't like this.
- What type of lots will end up along the corridor from downtown to Penacook?
- McKee Square - small village.
- Rail is disconnected north of downtown.
- South End, Storr Street and Rail Line areas – what will those become?
- Need to determine the future use of the South End Railyard.

Downtown

- One band out from downtown stinks.
- People want to be downtown, want to know how the zoning ordinance will enable that?
- Need to define the "vision" for downtown.
- Want to move towards livability (bike + pedestrian) and walkability of the downtown and neighborhoods.
- Extend downtown to south?
- New downtown zoning done in 2001.
- Should limit opportunities to develop elsewhere until Downtown has rebounded.

Penacook

- Penacook is a sparse rural district. Need to look at parking in the area. Don't want garages. People want industrial. But industrial doesn't make sense there. The neighborhoods aren't connected anymore. There is tortured access and other issues.
- 30% of the City is tax exempt, want to keep kids in the Penacook area.
- Penacook is a different school district and has different required taxes.
- Don't use the Penacook Vision Plan to extract necessary code changes. You will get the wrong answers.
- People want something more unique for Penacook. Wanted Penacook to be included before (in the overall Concord plan/vision), but want it to have its own draw now.
- There is a medical building in Penacook that is much closer to the street, but has access in the back. You must walk around the building to enter. Fix this from being able to happen.
- Penacook downtown uses CBP from central Concord – needs its own district.
- Parking in garages not likely in Penacook.
- Same with former industrial uses near Penacook such as RivCo.
- Code for Penacook like it is today (existing patterns).
- Final Penacook Vision Plan does not match community desires. Charrette work ended up in a “consensus” plan.
- The small Village core of Penacook needs its own zoning district. Currently it is CBP, which works but doesn't (i.e. 80' building height permitted, which is inappropriate).
- The former RivCo site at 77 Merrimack Street in Penacook should be rezoned to permit a variety of residential uses, perhaps with some supporting recreational amenities.
- Have duplicate street names in Concord and Penacook

Steeplegate Mall

- How to make the Steeplegate Mall flexible? Want all good development and walkable distances.
- Steeplegate Mall area has nearby parcels deed-restricted to not allow retail, even though the zoning allows it.
- Need a mall redevelopment district for Steeplegate.

Medical

- How to help/allow/encourage the medical center to grow in a proper manner?
- There needs to be an expansion of the medical district. There is an existing residential area in the middle that is being encroached upon. The medical district needs somewhere to expand and expand naturally.
- The hospital is a dominant economic driver, yet Concord Orthopedics was not allowed to expand.
- The health center is the top impactor of economic income. It needs to expand.
- Need to find a way to expand the hospital (should it move to the mall site?)
- Recent controversy over expansion of medical area.

ZONING DISTRICTS

In General

- There are too many zoning districts and "types" of districts.
- The base districts have been around for lots of years.
- There is a need for transition from one district to another.
- Right-size the districts to what is on the ground.
- Create a base district that implements the watershed overlay?
- Protect neighborhoods from the "creep" of industrial/commercial.
- The current zoning sometimes cuts through lots.
- Sewer availability changes lot size in zoning districts.
- Regulate lot cover? Improve multifamily parking lots.
- Solar panel in yard is considered lot coverage.
- Each lot is unique.
- Allow ground-floor residential [Downtown]?
- In the old portions of the City (mixed use areas, south end, towards the prison), original patterns were laid out long ago. Zoning is a mismatch in these areas.
- Check into rezoning notification requirements.
- Worried about nonresidential uses extending into residential neighborhoods.
- Need to create more objective zoning (less discretion, more guidance).
- Consider a Conservation District so that map is easier to understand? Same with Parks, Civic?
- PUD is currently a "use" and does not show up on the map. PUD has open space requirements.
- Worried about the creep of industrial and business properties into neighborhoods.
- Make conversion of SF to MF easier?
- There is friction in areas where residential abuts commercial (dumpster location, fencing repair).
- Need neighborhood protection against encroachment.
- Want to see growth in the UGB while successfully keeping the neighborhoods untouched. We need to fill the holes.
- Add "prevailing setback" tool, porches as encroachment (see Shoreline Protection Area as example).
- Need transitions to neighboring uses, buffers.
- Need shock absorbers so certain anomalies won't be trapped.
- Zoning map should follow lot lines.
- Several new office buildings have been constructed on South Main Street over the past decade. In all cases, the developers elected to not build to the lot line for various reasons. Such reasons included the desire for more windows for Class A tenants in order to command higher rent prices, added costs for fire protection, as well as added costs for shoring during excavation of foundations to protect adjacent structures. Historically, downtown development has been "lot line to lot line". The City needs to consider this going forward.
- Single story buildings are not appropriate for Downtown Concord (generally State Street to I-93). Would like to see an ordinance which requires building heights of at least 2 stories.

- Storrs Street is generally 2 stories below Main street. Someday the strip mall on Storrs Street (Market Basket Plaza) will redevelop. What building heights would be appropriate there when the strip mall redevelops? Perhaps we should craft height requirements which would encourage a “stepped” skyline going up the slope between I-93 and Main Street?
- Walker Street - multi-family lost in fire sat vacant for several years. Replaced with a suburbanized "hog nose" single-family [garage in front of main house].
- Concord's ordinances are generally good.
- No opportunities for large offices downtown (300,000 SF or more).

Density/FAR

- Want an FAR system for densities for neighbors.
- Desire density near the center of the City.
- I believe that the City currently limits [residential] FAR in the Central Business Performance District (CBP). CBP covers downtown Concord, as well as sections of Penacook Village, and permits an 80' building height, 100% lot coverage, zero setbacks, and exempts the developer from providing parking. With such provisions, I'm not sure why we need FAR.
- Consider using FAR for residential in outlying areas instead of lot coverage.
- Need to eliminate the 2.5 FAR upper-story residential cap [Downtown].

Uses

- People aren't happy about outdoor kennels/doggy day care, churches and recovery centers (small scale – 12 bed).
- Sometimes there are use issues: outdoor kennels, places of worship, recovery centers (maybe regulated by State?), alternative energy structures.
- Need to rationalize the allowed conditional use lists.
- How should the code deal with new uses? Sports complexes, solar farms, etc.
- Want the ability for something like Quality Cash (small neighborhood commercial) to come back.
- Mixed use – difficult to track changes in use.
- Want the mixed areas to be really mixed, and the exclusive [single use] areas to be very exclusive.

CBP:

- There is no transition from the central business district. You can build anything you want in CBP.
- Want upper-story residential FAR limit removed from CBP.
- CBP has no parking requirement.
- CBP is good zoning, transition off of Main Street is tough (CVP).
- How should corner stores be zoned?

CVP

- CVP has the same parking requirements as the rest of the community.
- Should we reduce the parking requirement in the Civic area?

CG

- At south end of Concord, east of Everett Turnpike, there is an island of General Commercial that is used by the Town of Bow, but doesn't really relate to Concord.
- Want flexibility for commercial spaces.
- There is a parking spot surplus required for commercial.
- A significant amount of commercial [office] wants to be outside the UGB and have views of the fields. Want to preserve the rural character.
- Need improved development standards in General Commercial district.

CU

- Urban commercial has different setbacks at Concord Street.

GWP

- Gateway Performance District has a suburban pattern.
- GWP District requires high “performance” (architecture and design).

IN

- Industrial is a holding zone for development.
- Need to keep industrial land such as RivCo 20-acre parcel? Most likely use is residential.
- Exit 17 offers opportunity for commercial development (on existing industrial land).
- There are former industrial uses right next to residential areas.
- Industrial areas do not allow retail.
- Should Industrial District be considered a holding zone for future development?

IS

- Institutional is also designated for multi-family housing.
- There is a surplus of institutional development zoned land.

OCP

- The Opportunity Corridor is not owned by developers.
- OCP allows commercial in houses.
- OCP District was for a different time, needs to be revisited.

OFFP

- Delete OFFP District – no more office parks being developed.

RS

- There are RM islands located within RS zoning.
- RS requires 25,000 square feet (lot size).
- Need new SF district with larger lot sizes.
- May need multiple SF districts.
- Small lot residential may be needed for areas where lots, setbacks don't meet standards.

RM

- Medium-sized office is not permitted in RM.
- Most uses in RM are institutional.
- RM has two development patterns (sewered and on septic).
- Lots of RM zoning in outlying areas. Not sure this makes sense if not sewered.
- MF requires a buffer near downtown.

RN

- RN has two development patterns (including mobile homes).

RO

- Want to preserve conservation spaces.
- RO requires 2 acres (lot size).
- RO – check for strange uses.
- Split for sewered area is *de facto* UGB (currently mapped as R-O zoning).
- R-O requires open space for conventional development as well as cluster, consider options?
- R-O cluster has taken away older development rights.
- R-O conservation easements should not be required for open space.
- Smallest lot size allowed for septic is 40,000 square feet. Requires reserve drain field area. Cluster allows for 30,000 square feet for septic.
- Septic tanks are regulated by the state. Minimum lot size is at least 30,000 square feet. Local standards are allowed to be more restrictive.
- No lots should include open space – must be on a common lot.
- Desire for smaller lots outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

Cluster in R-O

- Like cluster concept, but it doesn't work well. It fragments "preserved" open space conservation land.
- Instead of cleaning up and going back to the original model (for clustering), want to throw it out and start over.
- Cluster ordinance a problem, has changed, but still not producing functional open space. Ask Conservation Commission for their opinion?
- Cluster ordinance not working well, fragmented open space.

UT

- Hard to understand the intent for Urban Transition District (versus CU District). Is there a character difference?

Historic

- With regard to tearing down a historic building, what do you put in its place?
- Existing housing is being replaced by parking required for nearby commercial development.

- There are no teeth to preserve the historic buildings. There are also no historic districts [actually have one].
- Preserving old houses by turning 1-family into 2-family house.
- Putting solar arrays on historic property roofs is not allowed.
- Tearing down historic buildings is easy. “No tools to save it in place.”
- Want something else other than parking to be infill. The existing historic house needs some love, but by pulling it down, it changed the character of the street. When done to residential properties just a block from Main Street, it pulls that use. It becomes inconsistent with the surrounding buildings.
- The value of historic districts is better understood today than 15 years ago.
- Potential historic warehousing - soil contamination.
- Buildings prior to 1945 can be converted to multi-family based on lot size.
- Small historic district at N end of Main Street.
- Opportunity for Gas Building as an individual landmark?
- Unhappy about losing old buildings for parking lots.
- Gateways into the community are most interesting for their historic qualities.
- It is too easy to tear down historic buildings.
- Keep historic patterns of building placement, north versus south-facing windows, etc.
- Need a better understanding of historic neighborhoods.
- Want a “quaint historic feel” or at least elegant.
- No local landmark process?

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

In General

- Like the idea of relaxing the standards.
- Are going for a character difference versus a use difference.
- Want regulations to do a better job matching what's on the ground.
- Most developers are just trying to do something that matches what is on the ground today, but often zoning does not allow it.
- Nothing is allowed to impede the view of the State Capital gold tower.
- Keep Capital View restrictions.
- Want to preserve the housing stock. Need a balance of new people to move in, but not large enough to let them build big development residential buildings.
- Having parking and landscaping in the zoning ordinance is an issue. Design and size should be set in the zoning ordinance and determined by the Zoning Board. Want to take parking and landscaping out of zoning.
- It is very difficult to understand the code. There are overlapping regulations both in the Zoning Ordinance, Site Plan Regulations and Subdivision Regulations.
- The threshold in the zoning ordinance is so hard to get.
- Sports complex and solar farm have been added to zoning ordinance.

- The lay of the land is old, pre-ordinance. The zoning is different than what is happening on the ground.
- The 2001 zoning just followed what was already there.
- There is an issue of orphaned residential buildings. What should be done about “orphaned buildings” – remnants left as change occurs in a neighborhood.
- Want residential standards to keep the neighborhood/old building character while all residential changes are made.
- What areas of the regulations need to be challenged/updated?
- How to move to a more objective form of zoning?
- Give the people the choice of being able to walk somewhere or be dropped off. Zoning to allow the flexibility to do so.
- Think that regulations for signage are a good idea.
- Like the idea of “prevailing” setbacks where they are no closer than the closest, and no further than the furthest.
- Performance standards that have removal of trees from the edge of boundaries create a noise issue. Look at uses that are abutting neighborhoods.
- Bad windows and doors, bay doors.
- Need to enhance the ability to develop in the City (urban areas).
- “Replacement in kind” should be allowed. See allowed encroachment for shed – extend this to additions?
- Need snow management options.
- Many communities have better suburban development than Concord (site planning, facades).
- Example – Penacook medical building with no door facing the street.
- Need to eliminate contradictory language, be certain there are good definitions.
- Better corridor development standards are needed.
- Current regulations don’t differentiate between small and large development (same process and level of effort for both).
- There are a lot of existing over-height fences in front yards.

Parking

- Downtown parking is a barrier to existing/new large-scale development. This makes it very limiting for future large-scale projects.
- Parking can be deeded with units.
- City wants to go to a leasing system for parking. These leases would be under market value.
- Parking is conducive to lots of asphalt. It’s not useful, not ecological and not pretty. Parking regulations came from national parking regulations. They could be more flexible.
- Are okay with an incremental decrease for parking. Considering maximums for parking.
- Variance: If they have the adequate space for the required number of spaces, then BZA doesn’t require them to pave all of it.
- There is a snow issue. Parking is to be set on the parcel instead of the road for clearing.
- There is too much asphalt.

- You cannot sealcoat a driveway without a variance [check this].
- Separating neighborhood from downtown by removing buildings for parking lots.
- CPB has no parking requirement.
- CVP has the same parking requirements as the rest of the community. Should we reduce the parking in Civic office areas? No graduated change regarding parking.
- Two parking spaces required per residential unit - driveway counts.
- 3 units requires a parking lot.
- When the City leases parking spaces, it is often under market value, and long leases lock these rates in.
- Is there a City Parking Plan?
- Parking standards are too high. Consider adding parking maximums, because some users respond to financing folks and over-provide parking.
- Current code allows parking reduction through conditional use permit (but requires space to remain in reserve on the site).
- Parking requirements are an issue.
- Abbot-Downing School and Wine+ Park parking lot have pervious paving.
- Example of parking lot teardown = American Legion post.
- Need park-once strategy.
- Loss of housing due to parking is terrible.
- Limit paving in front yard, impervious cover.
- Current 50-foot right-of-way in residential areas forces parking into the front yard.
- Need residential satellite parking (maybe also for downtown with autonomous vehicles?).
- Where existing uses survive on street parking, then new uses should not need on-site parking.
- Inappropriate to pull down houses for parking.
- Example: Blake Street - two trees on left were preserved (will they survive is undetermined) and the red house on the left side beyond the tree was removed to expand the parking lot of the insurance company on the left.
- Example: Pillsbury Street - The white single-family housing removed to expand parking for the Pillsbury business properties.
- Example: Pearl Street - multi-family removed for parking lot 2017-2018.
- Downtown parking count produced by one of the City Planners prior to Heather. Shows considerable existing stock of parking.

Landscaping

- Highway view - many sites without landscaping facing the highway.
- No current landscape requirements for foundation or site.
- If no major improvement, then no parking landscaping either.
- Landscaping often negotiated during site plan review.
- Need planting of trees for shade on sidewalks, need sidewalk to be located out of splash zone for cars on street.

- Concord has a policy favoring shade trees but the power lines preclude the ability of shade trees to thrive.
- See City Street Tree Policy
- Tree planting required of developers often are unable to thrive.
- Trees on parking lots can be decades old and no larger than when they were planted. How can new code provide for growth of shade trees?
- Trees that had survived were removed on the downtown TIGER project and not replaced. Example at Pleasant between Main and State. The trees are now gone.
- Recapture Roadway for Plantings - Green Street just North of Pleasant: Reintroduction of planting strips would allow for shade and snow storage.
- Recapture Roadway for Plantings - Opportunity to reduce trucking costs of moving snow are considerable. Cost reductions could provide for both planting and maintenance while reducing the required pavement.
- Spring Street could be a bicycle boulevard reducing cut-through traffic as well as reintroduction of planting strip for shade and snow storage.

Environmental

- The UGB is the boundary for sewer.
- State DES will allow community systems for septic.
- There is a perception of how much land is off limits.
- People want riverfront development to stay away from the river. Shoreline protection.
- You can't infiltrate here. At 6' you hit a granite ledge.
- Protection for water resources and watersheds by means of increasing the buffers/distance between edges.
- The role, connection and access to the river is important and unseen. It is hard to explain why it is important (to visit, to walk along, to connect, etc.). There is no good access. It is dangerous.
- Fundamental planning concept, protect rural areas (through use of UGB).
- Take a look at the watershed overlay.
- Create a base district that implements the watershed overlay?
- Need buffer requirements for river, transitions.
- Preserve views to fields, trees.
- Current issue surrounding solar farm on agricultural land.
- Maintain the watershed protection policy in place today.
- River access is limited by all the rules, need to ensure future access.
- R-O conservation easements should not be required for open space.

Housing

- What models are feasible for workforce housing? How to do the groundwork for that?
- Converting a single-family to multi-family will make the home value go down [according to assessment].
- Vacancy is at 1% in MF and has been that way for over a decade, regardless of the economy.

- What makes Concord unique is that you can live in a nice house very close to downtown.
- Majority of the variances come from housing.
- Already has the historical qualities of a New England town. Keep them.
- What if there was a housing program that went out and maintained housing rules/overall look?
- Want more renewal of housing stock.
- A house with additions will fit regulations, but it will dwarf what's around it.
- Don't rule out any housing typologies. Want us to provide different housing options for those who need it. Just need to be put in their correct place where they fit the best.
- Think that you cannot put a different kind of housing type in a neighborhood of an existing type. It would wreck the privacy of the existing houses. The existing orientation keeps privacy.
- Homeowners are less willing to have different uses in their neighborhoods versus renters.
- Very few built new. Conversion = use existing 1-family lot size. New = 1.5 times lot area.
- Housing code does not require painting.
- Lots of condominium rehab of old houses. Sells well.
- Church tear down for cottage houses.
- Housing Code only applies to rental properties.
- To make housing affordable, you can't keep to the code. There is an over-abundance of affordable housing.
- Need more workforce housing for young professionals, alternative housing types.
- Don't want substandard housing or landlord licenses. It's not much of an issue. Believe that it would raise the cost of inspection and the cost of rent.
- Map the mobile home parks as a separate zoning district?
- Prevent single-family design issues such as garage in front of house.
- How can we allow tiny houses?
- Bulk of new houses often out of scale with surrounding area.
- Preserve the existing mix of housing typologies.
- Add tiny houses and backyard ADU's.

Streets

- Hall Street is a main road that transitions from the highway, to mixed commercial, to single family/multi-family/commercial, to abandoned warehouses. Zoned as Urban Transition.
- S. Main Street has conservation land (South End Marsh) next to abandoned warehouses. Most of the warehouse area is brownfield.
- There is an issue in the safety of the depth of Main Street.
- Broadway is primarily mixed residential.
- Pillsbury Street, Allison Street, West Street and Downing Street are transitional roads. Located between S. Main Street and South Street.
- Multi-family housing on Allison Street is very close together.
- S. State Street is Urban Transitional.
- Hutchinson Avenue has very wide alleys.

- S. Spring Street is officially designated as a major existing N/S bike route.
- Exit 17 is for shopping and strip malls. Leaves a grey area west of 93.
- Want Exit 14 to bring the downtown to the river.
- Manchester Street is the bloodline for the southeast neighborhoods ("auto-mile"). It is not a good commercial street leading to downtown.
- Don't take the main road (Loudon Rd.) through The Heights.
- Don't necessarily want the extension of Storr Street. to become a second main street. Think that more residential should be allowed on ground floor.
- Retail is getting tough to build, becoming smaller and smaller. Multi-family could be placed there.
- Broadway and South Street are pedestrian friendly, but not really bicycle friendly and neither slow traffic down. The roads and sidewalk are conducive to traffic.
- For N. Storr Street, they don't know if they should make connections. Connect Storr Street to Stickney Avenue (point where they both meet at Loudon Road).
- It is an issue that Low Avenue and Bicentennial Square (1 Odd Fellows Avenue) run into a legislative parking garages.
- There is most opportunity for residential along Loudon Road.
- Like catering towards pedestrian and bicycles.
- Need buffers for splash zone for cyclists.
- Look at bike safety going through roundabouts. People coming north on bikes going south towards parks (for the E. Concord roundabout).
- Stickney Hill Road has a preservation easement. Keep that as undeveloped as possible.
- Poplar Avenue has old railroad yards.
- Location of building for Residence Inn site versus Comfort Inn site on Hall Street.
- Highway isolated, the General Commercial.
- Loudon Road is currently chopped up by zoning. Needs good suburban standards.
- Streets like Broadway and South Street are pedestrian-friendly, but need traffic calming.
- Langley Parkway – if extended, then disconnect it, allow residential only along it.
- Utilities on street - impact on sidewalk/planting strip.
- Examples of power poles on both sides of street - Center Street
- How to handle utility poles while providing planting strips for shade trees versus ornamental trees?
- Improve walkable streets and health of trees by thinning road, moving curb, and providing storm water processing by trees etc. I believe Portland, OR has implemented swales and other infrastructure to address this. Reduces maintenance with reduced pavement in the street, May improve storm water processing, provides snow storage winter and shade possibility and improved separation to sidewalk.
- Re-purpose roadway for cycling with 2-way bike lane (on south side) with counter flow to one-way traffic between South State and Broadway.
- Note Broadway is wide and under-utilized in the South end. Dedicated to cars. Provides poor pedestrian environment and was noted in our meeting that kids are not encouraged to cross this to get to the South End school complex.
- Concord Street - One-way with poor pedestrian environment summer and winter

- Beaver Street - Off Concord Street - similarly poor pedestrian environment
- Grove Street - Existing environment positive - more of this type of shade, but still no room for snow
- Pearly Street - Minimal planting strip with few trees - Reclaim Street?
- Downing Street - Wide and limited shade trees or snow storage
- South End has potential with existing widths.
- Kimball Street - how can this be preserved and enhanced?
- Kimball Street - how to prevent tree forking for utilities?
- Humphrey Street - How can we get more trees and preserve widths?

Signs

- Signs to properly notify people what is going on inside of the building.
- How should advertisement for things that are on upper stories of buildings be accomplished?
- Don't want any sign movement or flashing lights.
- Think about signs for upper-story uses.
- Need to rethink options for signs in the Downtown area.
- Good control of signs (avoided digital signs – Supreme Court case).
- Signs on rear facing highway - allow? Prior charrette work on this issue.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

In General

- Downtown developers think that the code is overly complicated.
- The Thursday morning development review meetings were very useful in identifying issues. The main challenge with the meetings and why they might not happen is because typically someone is missing (Ex: Fire Department).
- Subdivisions are too expensive to survey.
- Don't know how to look at all of the PUD's at once/together.
- There are unrealistic wants from the people that come in. It's a small city. Want things can't be built because of the small ROW, lots, etc.
- Need to focus on the use of energy.
- Currently offer concept review.
- Definitions are contradicting and unclear.
- It is unclear what can be developed.
- You should be able to get a variance if the majority of the neighborhood all comes out to support.
- Use variance process is allowed by state law. Use variances are allowed for businesses, an anomaly in the case law.
- Trouble adding on - leads to lots of variances.
- Code is complicated- variances often required.
- A great number of variances are being handed out. In order to finish a project, there is almost an absolute need for a variance.

- Code components scattered (parking lot layout and landscaping should be moved to Planning Board regs).
- Zoning is confusing. The legacy of the long-standing policy by the Zoning Administrator.
- Craig Walker – there is no authority to make discretionary decisions.
- No meaningful staff review and approval of permits (see Manchester triggers).
- Boards need training (none required for Planning Board).
- Thursday morning development review meetings very helpful. These meetings are not mandatory (and often some department is missing).
- Need a good definition of MINOR site plan.
- Expansion often requires review of entire site (and improvements).
- Thresholds for review are too low, triggers for 100% compliance hit too early.
- Variances are easier than rezoning (even use variances).
- Rezoning takes way too long.
- Grandfathered McDonalds as example (especially keeping old, out-of-scale sign).
- There was a previous study on the Development Review Process.
- Move parking and landscaping out of zoning (ZBA review) and into site plan standards (Planning Board review).
- Many issues should be moved from ZBA to Planning Board (by moving location of regulations to site plan standards).
- General public misunderstands the existing development rights.
- There is not much happening on the residential side.
- Understanding the regulations themselves is the issue.
- GWP design review today does not allow staff approval. Consider recommendation from staff?
- If calling for staff review, please discuss potential staffing implications.
- Wish list: remember the population size – some things are just not possible.
- Board offers conceptual review – good developers go through it successfully.
- Clarity about rules missing for typical resident (“how do I complain about noise?”).
- Concord has a reputation as the “hardest town” to develop in.
- Regulations are convoluted. Even professionals read the regulations and still call to request staff interpretation.
- No current requirement for As-Built plans after construction, so nothing to measure changes against.
- Asking forgiveness is cheaper than permission (no meaningful penalties).
- Need staff approval items.
- Consider formalizing Thursday morning meeting process (development review committee).
- Need completeness requirements, staff often forced to accept substandard submittals, just causes problems later in the process (especially inspection).

Architectural Design Review

- The ADR (Architectural Design Review) committee uses preference, not a consensus.

- Architectural Design Review (ADR) is arbitrary, preference-based, never a consensus.
- Scope of Architectural review board is too broad.
- Signs trying to get out of ADR review process – appropriate?

Zoning Board of Appeals

- Zoning has the power to decline applications because they “don’t like it”.
- Zoning Board does not take a totalitarian approach. They can't "consider" things.
- It's not really the hardship, but its impact on the neighborhood.

Planning Board:

- The Planning Board takes a totalitarian approach.
- Existing Planning Board thresholds for site plan review are very low.
- It's risky to engineer a project before the required variances are received. This makes Planning Board process for site plan review follow variances and design, stretching things out (6-8 months).
- Planning Board successfully uses the consent agenda for signs.

Fire:

- Fire regulations change from 2 to 3 units requires sprinklers.
- State Fire Marshall supersedes local officials. Change in state legislation needs to be made. This issue is affecting upper story residential development in the Downtown.

Process Issues:

- People that bring in applications for signs are ignorant of the process. They skip the process, put the sign up, come back and beg for forgiveness. There is not enough of a disincentive or penalty.
- Concord has the reputation of being the hardest place to do anything because the regulations are so convoluted and unclear. Everyone is calling in and asking for interpretations.
- The small person coming in and trying to do something must take a huge risk and might not even be able to do it, versus a large person trying to do it.
- Within the current permitting process, “it’s okay here and not okay here.” Not all documents are in place to sign off and be legal.
- Are considering requiring as-build plans.
- If changes are made to a pre-approved project, certain documents should be required in order to change it.
- There are no meaningful fines/no penalty for it. People just don’t pay the processing cost. People just get penalized and move on because it is cheap.
- There are more issues with application of Fire Code than with zoning (downtown).
- Minor site plans are too often treated like major site plans.
- Need to request correct level of information at each step in order not to burden developers with costs.
- OK to go to the Planning Board through the Conditional Use process – balancing with bigger issues occurs.
- Tough to go to the ZBA, cannot balance based on surrounding context.

- Requires a two-step process (application acceptance one meeting, and the next month consideration of the site plan).
- Even for projects that meet all the requirements, negotiation occurs.
- There is no encouragement for redevelopment. It requires a lawyer to go before the Planning Board.
- “Bait and switch” happens – limited follow-through (Shell sign as example).
- “It’s easier to beg forgiveness than ask permission” is a common thought.
- May need larger penalties, fines are not a disincentive today.
- Developers need to reach out to neighborhoods in advance.
- Small development activity often under-represented in front of Boards.
- Often issues related to condo development like moving internal walls without condo document changes.

Nonconforming Use/Structure

- Want to make things more conforming.
- Zoning currently allows non-detached accessory dwelling units. Don’t want any detached dwelling units. Think that it would end up as rentals.
- Rollins Park has nonconforming neighborhoods along north and south sides.
- The older neighborhoods in allow nonconforming uses and construction that wouldn’t be allowed with the current zoning ordinance. Multifamily has more regulations than single-family for this issue.
- No existing house is completely compliant.
- If something is nonconforming, and they’re bringing aspects that are more conforming, creates confusion.
- State law permits accessory unit for mother-in-law structures.
- Many nonconforming lots today.
- Height often nonconforming?
- Accessory structures must meet setbacks and height for principal structure.
- Can change a nonconforming use to another through the Special Exception process.
- Currently allow a nonconforming structure to be replaced on the same footprint.
- Allow approval of proposals that reduce the extent of a nonconformity (but do not eliminate it).
- Accessory kitchens are allowed in homes.
- ADU - attached only. Not likely to change. Keep as is. ADU is allowed in principal structure by right (lot must meet minimum frontage and size for the district).
- Tackle ADU’s again? Try for approval of detached structures as ADU’s?

OTHER ISSUES

- High speed rail.
- Have a demolition delay ordinance.
- Demolition by Neglect? Consider adding this tool?
- City has gone through discussion of landlord licensing recently and decided not to.
- Portsmouth is an example of a place that reinvented itself.
- Where will the young people come from?
- How to handle the aging population? Infrastructure should allow mode choices.
- Make sure the performance standards are OK.
- Prefer not to see demolition of buildings for parking.
- Find out what developers who don't work in the City think.
- What would it take for a renter to install an electric vehicle charging station on property they do not own. Can code address some of the barriers to this?