

COALITION FOR A SUSTAINABLE CONCORD



COMMUNITY PLATFORM FOR DOWNTOWN CONCORD

The City of Concord is preparing a specific plan for downtown, centered on the Concord BART station. This provides a unique opportunity to create a vision for the heart of the city that meets the community's needs—with walkable neighborhoods, access to nature, affordable homes, quality jobs, and environmentally sustainable development—through an inclusive, community-driven process that ensures benefits are shared by the public throughout the city and region.

This process also offers a chance to build upon the city's groundbreaking work developing a broadly-supported vision for the reuse of the Concord Naval Weapons Station. Ensuring that the weapons station is well-integrated with the plan for downtown Concord is essential for the success of both areas.

The following platform, crafted by the Community Coalition for a Sustainable Concord, will ensure the Downtown Specific Plan fulfills the vision and values of the community and strengthens the economy, quality of life, and environment for the benefit of all Concord residents.

VIBRANT. WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

With features like Todos Santos Plaza, local shopping destinations, and the BART station, Concord's downtown is well-positioned to become an even more attractive, thriving center of the community.

The plan should promote a mix of new homes, shops, and jobs that build upon downtown's reputation as a hub for social interaction. To catalyze revitalization of the area, the plan should "lead with homes"—encouraging new residential construction to increase the downtown customer base, extend activities into the evenings, and bring "eyes on the street" to foster community and deter crime.

Enhancing the walkability of downtown will be essential to its success. Adding wide sidewalks and bike lanes, accompanied by traffic calming measures and more frequent bus service will encourage workers and residents to explore downtown on foot, greatly reducing traffic congestion. This will also enhance opportunities for those without cars, including students and seniors, allowing them to play a more active role in their neighborhood.

Development standards that focus on creating great places for people and minimizing land dedicated to parking will enliven the street and help fill holes in the urban fabric. Particularly important corridors include the area from BART to Todos Santos Plaza and connections to the Monument Community.

OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTIONS

The plan should ensure strong connections and access to the region's trails, parks, and open spaces, including the new regional park planned for the Concord Naval Weapons Station, Iron Horse Trail, and Contra Costa Canal Trail. It should also create more areas for respite and relaxation downtown, including pocket parks and streetscape improvements—such as street trees, rainwater retention features, and other natural elements. Opportunities for daylighting nearby creeks that are currently buried in underground culverts should be explored as well.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND HOMELESS SOLUTIONS

To respond to the critical housing needs of residents in Concord and central Contra Costa County, the city should implement and expand existing affordable housing and inclusionary policies to serve a wide range of households. Affordable homes will bring more residents and economic investment downtown and strengthen the community fabric, contributing to a walkable, transit-oriented community of people who live, work, and shop in downtown Concord.

At least 25% of housing developed in the plan area should be affordable to lower income families (e.g. a family of four earning less than \$50,000 annually). Additionally, at least 25% of housing developed in the plan area should be affordable to moderate income families (e.g. a family of four earning less than \$100,000).

The plan needs to maximize the use of publicly owned land to create affordable homes, including dedication of at least two of the four city-owned parcels and other opportunity sites, including BART properties, as they become available. This should provide a mix of rental and ownership opportunities, well-integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods. In order to meet the full range of community needs, affordable homes should be dedicated to an appropriate mix of adults, youth, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and families that are homeless and at-risk, and integrated into larger affordable housing communities.

Affordable homes should be primarily developed by nonprofit housing development organizations because of their firm commitment to creating and maintaining high-quality, permanently affordable homes with attractive neighborhood-oriented architecture, green design, and community services.



QUALITY JOBS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

The plan should create a mix of good jobs that pay family-supporting wages with benefits. According to the Center for Community and Economic Development, in 2011 the minimum self-sufficiency hourly wages in Contra Costa County were \$13.39 for a single adult, \$20.92 for a single parent with one child, and \$11.81 for a family with two working parents and one child.

To encourage sustainable and equitable development, the plan should employ active policy measures to support the local skilled construction workforce, which is already concentrated in Concord and central-eastern Contra Costa County. In particular, the plan should incentivize the payment of area standard wages and benefits, use of contractors participating in proven, successful state-certified apprenticeship programs, and veteran re-entry programs like Helmets to Hardhats through density bonuses, expedited approvals, and reduced fees.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT, GREEN BUILDING, AND
GREEN JOBS

Development in downtown should establish minimum thresholds for the latest in green design, clean technology, energy efficiency, the use of recycled and reused materials, water conservation, renewable energy, and waste reduction. Savings from reduced infrastructure costs and efficient resource usage should benefit Concord by supporting community amenities and affordable homes.

State and Federal funding programs, which encourage green businesses, green building, and job training, should be pursued. Partnerships with local community colleges, workforce training facilities, and green businesses should be facilitated.

STRONG COMMUNITY-DRIVEN AND
INCLUSIVE PROCESS

It is critical that all decisions are made through a community-driven planning process that is transparent, inclusive, multi-lingual, and representative of the community's diversity. All public meetings and information should be publicized and translated into appropriate languages.

Additionally, the City of Concord should engage constituents that have not traditionally participated in the planning sessions, such as immigrants, people of color, low-income residents, and youth.

The COMMUNITY COALITION FOR A SUSTAINABLE CONCORD is a collection of dozens of affordable and nonprofit housing, inter-faith, environmental, and labor organizations, including thousands of members in Concord. The member organizations include:

Carpenters Local Union 152

CNWS Neighborhood Alliance

Contra Costa Building and Construction
Trades Council

Contra Costa Central Labor Council

East Bay Housing Organizations

Eden Housing

Greenbelt Alliance

Habitat for Humanity, East Bay

Lutheran Public Services

Public Advocates, Inc.

Resources for Community Development

Save Mount Diablo

Sierra Club

TransForm

