

Mayor Laura Hoffmeister's 2017 State-of-the-City Presentation



Last year, I focused on the three R's: Rethinking the budget, Repositioning the city — encouraging developers and business to locate here; and Reinventing the city with the vision of the Concord Naval Weapons Station base reuse and future East Bay Regional Park.

Those set the foundation for this year, with a focus on the three P's: Planning for the future, realizing Possibilities, and fulfilling our Potential.

Planning for the future

Unemployment is 4 percent — a decrease of 8 percent since 2010 — but created housing supply and traffic issues. Concord is planning for increasing housing supply and making road improvements.

Currently 73 percent of those employed are working full time. The median family income is \$78,218, and 43 percent of Concord households now make \$73,000-\$200,000.

Economists indicate a correction to the growth economy may be coming. We will plan for it, maintain reserves and watch for signs of contraction.

We also plan a review of options to address the 2025 expiration of the voter-approved one-percent sales tax. Sales tax is 35 percent of Concord's revenues (property tax is only 24 percent), so it's important to continue planning on expanding the diversity of local businesses and economy to minimize any economic impacts.

Schools are implementing computer-based testing, smart white boards and computer coding classes. More education options are public school magnet and academy programs, public charters, private schools, private colleges, Cal State East Bay Concord new partnerships with local community colleges and schools, and planning for a higher education campus as part of the base reuse project.

Concord is planning for future technologies, smarter cars and autonomous vehicles, like those being tested at the CNWS GoMentum station, and businesses using expanded 3-D printing, robotics and artificial intelligence.

The city will continue to plan for adjustments from the state for pension and health care changes. We have been able to reduce city pension costs and control health care increases, and are evaluating options to manage cost and decrease unfunded liability.

Plans will also be developed for unfunded infrastructure repair and replacement needs: roads, \$90 million; sewer, \$190 million; parks, \$19 million; and city buildings, \$5 million.

Realizing Possibilities

Changes in technology allow the city to continue to provide services and programs more effectively, with less staff. Concord has 409 full-time employees, down from 510 in 2006.

The Concord Connect mobile phone app allows submittal and tracking of nonemergency service requests. In the nine months since launch, there have been 1,270 reports with 97 percent resolved.

Crime overall continues a downward trend, however, there are challenges from the passage of Proposition 47 which reduced many felony crimes to misdemeanors.

Possibilities to improve public safety and assist police investigations include using security recording equipment at parking garages and other key locations. A voluntary registry would allow residents and businesses to self-identify their security recording equipment with the police department so if an incident occurs nearby, the police know who to contact for possible recordings for leads and follow-up investigation.

Labor agreements completed in 2016 resulted in \$3 million in savings. Employees pay their full share of retirement, and changes were made to control health care costs.

Under the fiscal sustainability ordinance, the reserve (rainy day) fund has increased and is stabilizing. The city has set forth \$22 million in Measure Q funds for street repairs; \$7.5 million has already been used to repair streets, with \$1.7 million in progress, and allows possible regional, state and federal grant funds for more road improvements. New pothole equipment means more repairs in a shorter period of time.

Concord is adding more retail and restaurants, and is working to realize downtown multifamily projects which encourage use of BART. One is under construction, one has just been approved and two are in process, and will help decrease the housing supply shortage.

The Concord BART Plaza redesign begins this month to better connect BART with the downtown.

Fulfilling our Potential

The planning and building departments have increased activity — the highest in four years — and are expected to have even greater planning and permit activity in 2017.

Veranda, a 30-acre lifestyle retail center plans to open in late 2017, and four former redevelopment agency parcels are in process of being sold to the private sector for potential future development.

Concord's Research and Development business vacancy is only 3.6 percent, with potential new projects in North Concord where 19 acres is available for development. Class A office space expansion as demand increases is potentially available at Metroplex.

The Citizens Advisory Committee has begun meeting and working on determining the Specific Plan for base reuse with community input over the next two years for phase one with Lennar Development.

The master plan for Concord Hills Regional Park, the largest East Bay Regional Park District in Central County at 2,450 acres, is in process.

Visit Concord tourism continues to increase hotel conferences and room stays. Jet Suite X service at Buchanan Airport to Burbank and Las Vegas is increasing in popularity.

New pickleball courts, Big C renovations and West Coast Racquetball tournament can increase visitors and hotel stays, and complement other recreational activities and tournaments in Concord.

Concord is the largest city in Contra Costa County, and the fourth-wealthiest in the state. California is now the fifth-largest economy in the world.

Reasonable housing costs, a range of housing types, new downtown multihousing options, BART accessible, varied recreation activities, casual dining, shops, downtown summer concerts and Concord Pavilion shows are attracting young professionals into the city.

Concord Vibe is a new marketing outreach to them and the hope is they will share it with others. However, seniors are the largest-growing demographic in Concord and the nation, so keeping a variety of demographics in the city is desirable.

The goal is for young professionals to invest, establish themselves and raise their families in Concord, which in turn helps increase business and city revenues to provide needed services.

This is the progress on the city's perseverance on planning, and for creating possibilities to bring potential and prosperity. I hope you have caught the Concord Vibe.