

II. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Overview

Concord is located in Middlesex County and is bordered by Maynard and Acton to the west, Carlisle to the north, Bedford and Lincoln to the east and southeast, and Sudbury to the south. Concord is 15 miles south of Lowell, 18 miles north of Boston, 34 miles northeast of Worcester. The Fitchburg line of the commuter rail runs through Concord, with two stations – Concord and West Concord. State roadways include Routes 2, 2A, 62, 117, 119 and 126.

The town is governed by a five-member Board of Selectmen and a Town Manager. The town operates under the open town meeting format. The Town Manager, appointed by the Selectmen, carries out the day-to-day governing functions of the town.

Named in 1635, Concord is an old historic town on the western axis of suburban Boston. Concord is home to a number of regional, state and national assets: Minuteman National Historic Park, Walden Pond, and the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. The Concord, Assabet and Sudbury Rivers all converge in Concord. The Northeastern Correctional Center is located in Concord. Concord is also home to a number of historic resources, including nine well-preserved colonial houses with many of them on or near Concord Green and witnesses of the famous Battle of Concord.

Skyrocketing land prices in the real estate boom of the 1980's resulted from Concord's proximity to Boston and the 128 technical/industrial corridor, coupled with a vigorous regional economy. Considerable concern is felt by Concord residents about the pressures on the town from its significant tourist industry and suburban development.

There are slightly fewer than 13,000 jobs in Concord. A part of Hanscom Air Field is located in eastern Concord. Emerson Hospital is located in Concord. According to the hospital's website, the facility has 177 beds and provides service to 25 communities.

According to the 2000 Census, almost 17,000 people live in Concord with just over 6,100 housing units. Positional, due to a prison is located in town, a large percentage (8%) of the population lives in group quarters. A large percentage of Concord's housing units (29%) were built before 1940.

Table 1
Concord Characteristics from 2000 Census

Population = 16,933 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.8 % are under age 5• 16.5 % are over age 65• 3.3 % speak English less than “very well” (over age 5)• 2.05% of households have no vehicle• 10.9 % have a disability (over age 5)• 8.3 % live in group quarters
Number of Housing Units = 6,153 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 19.3 % are renter-occupied housing units• 29.6 % of housing units were built before 1940
Employment = 12,723

Source: 2000 Census.

The Town of Concord maintains a website at www.concordnet.org.

The Town of Concord has several unique characteristics to keep in mind while planning for natural hazards:

- A defining characteristic of the town is that three major rivers, the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord, converge in the town and are associated with a large amount of floodplain.
- Another defining characteristic of the town are the tree-lined streets. Although these trees are vulnerable to high winds and ice storms, they are a tradeoff the town is willing to have.
- The town is home to over 50 registered farms with animals such as horses that need to be considered in evacuation plans.
- The town has very proactive municipal officials that frequently share information and coordinate on a regular basis.
- Concord is home to historic structures and sites that are irreplaceable and bring economic value to the town.
- Concord contains several major roadways that provide emergency routes for evacuation and for routes to medical facilities, such as Emerson Hospital.
- Concord has numerous bridge crossings and dams that could be at risk in the event of flooding.
- Concord would be a good candidate for flood-related grants due to the potential impact to property, transportation emergency routes, economic/historic resources, and the ability to solve the flooding problems through structural measures such as culvert upgrades, dam and bridge upgrades or flood proofing. The cost-benefit analysis would likely be in the town’s favor.
- Much of the critical infrastructure in the town is located in clusters, often near areas of floodplain. These facilities are therefore at higher risk during natural hazards.

Existing Land Use

The most recent land use statistics available from the state are from 1999 aerial photography. Table 2 breaks the town into 21 land use category. The table shows the acreage of each land use category and the percentage of land area in Concord in each category. Open Land includes areas with abandoned agriculture, power lines or areas devoid of vegetation. Urban Open Land includes undeveloped land and protected green space.

Table 2
Existing Land Use, Concord, 1999

Land Use	Acres	% of Town
Cropland	1,674	10.1
Pasture	216	1.3
Forest	6,431	39.0
Non-forested Wetlands	1,003	6.1
Mining	5.6	0.03
Open Land	284	1.7
Participatory Recreation	281	1.7
Spectator Recreation	0	0
Water Recreation	9	0.1
Multi-family Residential	60	0.4
High Density Residential (less than ¼ acre lots)	384	2.3
Medium Density Residential (¼ – ½ acre lots)	1,458	8.8
Low Density Residential (Larger than ½ acre lots)	2,938	17.8
Salt Water Wetlands	0	0
Commercial	156	0.9
Industrial	233	1.4
Urban Open	326	2.0
Transportation	262	1.6
Waste Disposal	51	0.3
Water	712	4.3
Woody Perennials	27	0.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>16,510</i>	

For more information on land use categories, see www.mass.gov/mgis/lus.htm.

Potential Future Land Use

In 2000, MAPC, under contract to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, prepared a buildout analysis for every community in the Boston region. A buildout analysis is a tool to help communities understand the potential impacts of future growth that might occur given the amount of developable land remaining and how that land is zoned.

The buildout is based on available land within each zoning district and it estimates the number of additional housing units and commercial development that could be accommodated. Generally, the projections account only for as-of-right development. The results of the 2000 Census were not released when MAPC performed the analyses.

Table 3: Buildout Impacts in Concord, MAPC Analysis

Developable Land Area (acres)	2,796
Additional Residents	3,574
Additional K-12 Students	618
Additional Residential Units	1,407
Additional Commercial/Industrial (sq. ft.)	576,734
Additional Roadway at Buildout (miles)	28

While these statistics give an idea of how Concord could grow, MAPC consulted with town staff to provide a more realistic picture of future development based on the town's recent comprehensive planning efforts and current trends and projects. The potential future development and redevelopment areas are shown on Map 2, "Potential Development" and are described below. The letters refer to those on Map 2.

Alexan Concord 40B – 350 units (A)

This future development, proposed under MGL Chapter 40B, is located at 48 and 54 Old Powdermill Road in the southwest corner of Concord, and directly borders the communities of Acton, Sudbury and Maynard. The existing site consists of three manufacturing buildings, with the majority of the site cleared and graded level. The proposed project includes 350 rental housing units.

Forest Ridge Road Residential Development – 200 units (B)

This proposed residential development, located adjacent to the 40B described above near Forest Ridge Road, will consist of approximately 200 units.

Commerford Road Residential Development – 40 - 60 units (C)

This proposed development near Commerford Road will consist of approximately 40-60 residential units.

Strawberry Hill Road Residential Development – 20 units (D)

This proposed development is located near Strawberry Hill Road and will consist of approximately 20 residential units.

Emerson Hospital Expansion (E)

Emerson Hospital is undergoing an expansion across the road from its current campus.

New England Deaconess – 30 units (F)

The New England Deaconess assisted living facility is undergoing an expansion of 30 residential units to its current campus.

Village Centers Development

In addition to the specific developments listed above, the town Village Centers will likely be experiencing new and redevelopment in the near future, in accordance with the recent 2007 Village Centers study.