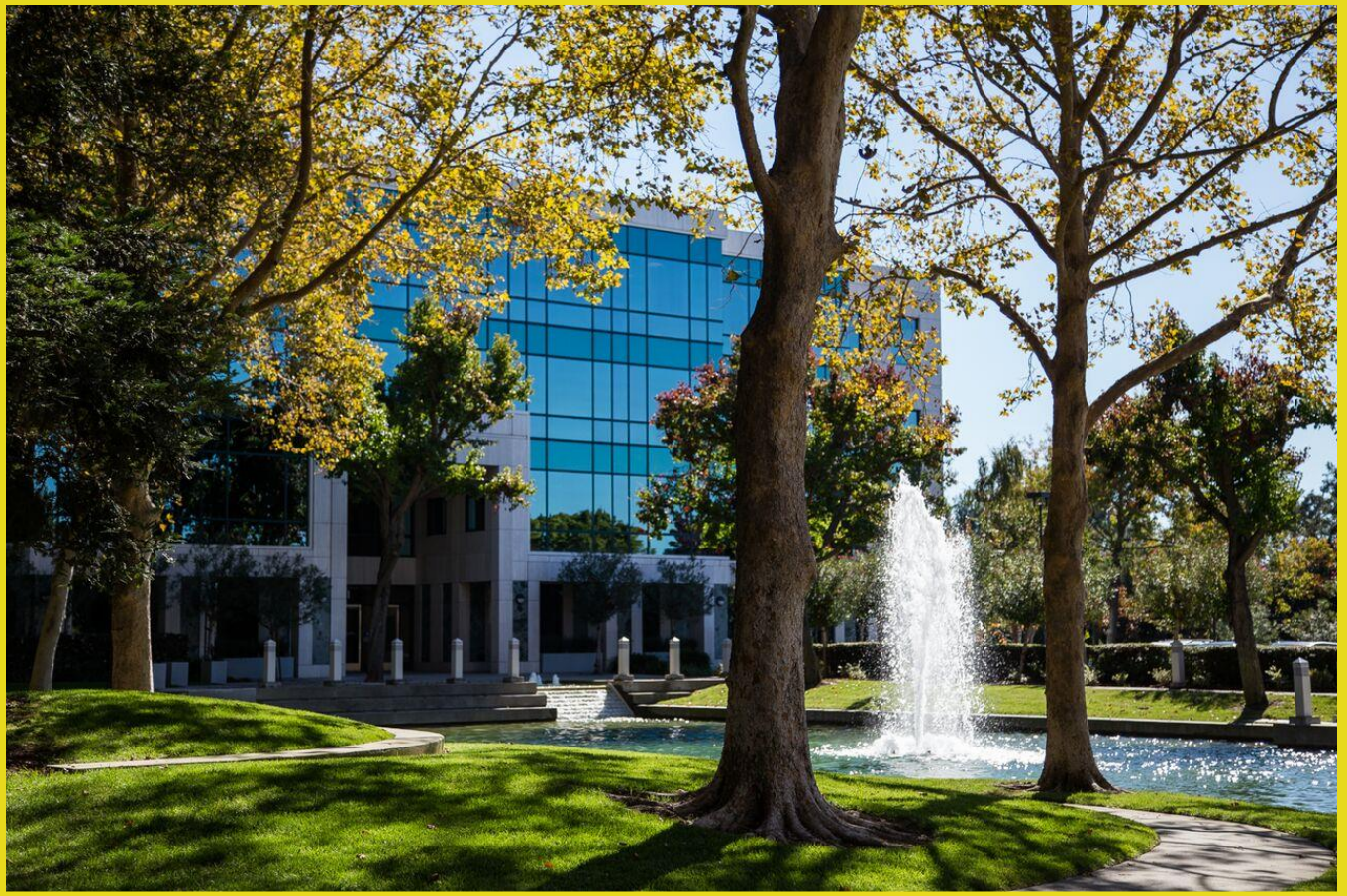


CITY OF CONCORD

Economic Vitality Strategy

2020 Update



Community & Economic Development Department
1950 Parkside Dr., MS/01B
Concord, CA 94519



MISSION:

The City of Concord is an integral part of the business community. The City fosters a premier business location by creating and implementing innovative and flexible strategies that foster business growth and profitability.

VISION:

Concord is a financially stable City that strives to preserve and enhance its strong business climate and the community's high quality of life.

VALUES:

The City of Concord is committed to promoting partnerships among all interests and solving problems creatively. The City anticipates its customers' needs, communicates clearly and consistently, and delivers prompt service.

For more information:

Call the Economic Development Division
at (925) 671-3355

or visit www.ConcordFirst.com

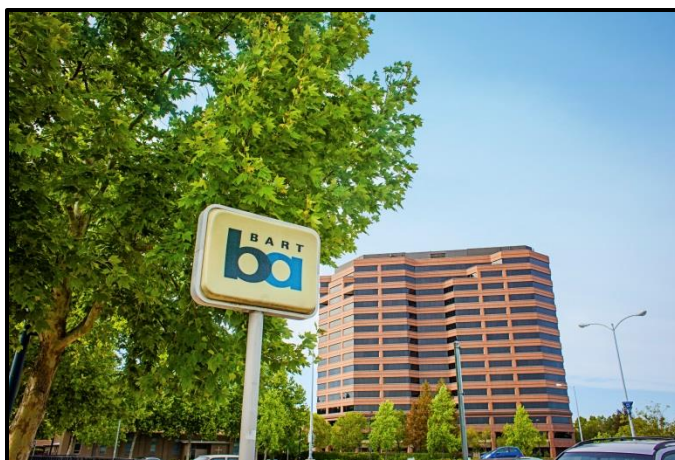
EV Strategy adopted: July 1997

Updated: July 2002

July 2009

April 2017

January 2020



One Concord Center near BART

City of Concord Economic Vitality Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The Economic Vitality Strategy (EVS) sets the vision, goals, and priorities for all City efforts related to economic development. The EVS is updated every five years.

By taking a long-term, comprehensive approach to economic development, the City of Concord seeks to:

- Enhance Concord's quality of life;
- Facilitate a stable, healthy business environment;
- Retain, attract, and expand businesses in strategic industries;
- Expand the City's tax base to ensure long-term fiscal stability;
- Provide efficient, effective government services to Concord businesses;
- Promote high-quality job opportunities;
- Maintain a highly-skilled, competitive workforce;
- Support entrepreneurship and small business opportunities; and
- Revitalize Downtown and other business districts.

This 2020 EVS update was completed with the guidance of the Housing & Economic Development Committee and is based on input from many local business leaders, residents, property owners, and other stakeholders who participated in a prior series of public meetings in 2017. The EVS also incorporates data and analysis from a host of other regional sources.

CONCORD'S POSITION IN THE EAST BAY MARKET

Concord is the largest business center in Contra Costa County and is a destination for innovative and entrepreneurial businesses that require highly-skilled labor. Concord offers the infrastructure and amenities that businesses need for success. Its vibrant business environment has attracted successful firms and created ideal conditions for local businesses to expand. The City's commitment to families and to the business community fosters a high quality of life with attractive residential neighborhoods, excellent public safety and services, convenient

mass transit, abundant recreation and entertainment for all ages. Concord is a community of safe and friendly neighborhoods with an excellent park system, world-class medical center, convenient shopping, diverse dining opportunities and large preserves of scenic open space.

Concord is located in a highly-competitive area where there are many high-quality locations businesses can choose. However, Concord has distinguished itself as a premier business destination due to several key advantages:

- A central, convenient location
- Best value for office/industrial space
- Access to a skilled workforce
- An efficient, responsive, business-friendly government
- Transit-oriented commercial space

This 2020 update of the Economic Vitality Strategy comes at a time when Concord has faced several critical challenges and opportunities. Despite the challenges, Concord has achieved some key successes in economic development since 2017, when the Economic Vitality Strategy was last updated. These successes place Concord in an ideal position to significantly expand and upgrade existing businesses and to attract new business. Some of the City's most notable achievements include:

- Akesis, a 56,000-square foot R&D/oncology hardware manufacturer
- The Veranda, a 30-acre, 375,000-square foot lifestyle retail center
- Multi-office Wells Fargo relocation of 1,800 employees to Swift Plaza
- The Concord VIBE marketing initiative that aims to attract young professionals to Concord to increase the local talent pool as a business attraction strategy

- Attraction of major regional retail tenants to Sunvalley Shopping Center, The Willows, The Veranda and the Park & Shop Center
- Attraction of key shops and restaurants to the downtown
- Increasing events attendance at Todos Santos Plaza to more than 100,000 annual visitors, including the Spring Brews Festival and Oktoberfest
- Attracting and retaining key retailers and restaurants, including: Brasas do Brazil, The Yard House, Dunkin', GEN Korean, iSlice, Yum², Parkside Bar & Grill, Half Price Books and others

Despite these successes, Concord currently faces an array of challenges and opportunities for its economy, including:

- Building Concord's image/identity
- Planning the Concord Community Reuse Project (former Concord Naval Weapons Station)
- Attracting emerging industries (e.g., advanced manufacturing, life sciences)
- Redevelopment of the area surrounding Downtown/Concord BART Station
- Changes in the retail environment
- Large development-ready pads in North Concord, Downtown and elsewhere
- Closing or consolidation of retail, financial services and other employment sectors



The Veranda

KEY INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Over the past 20 years, several industries have driven job growth in Concord (and Contra Costa County in general), such as manufacturing, construction and information technology. These industries will continue to be important sources of jobs, but in some cases they are not expected to continue the rapid growth that was experienced previously. As a result, the City is identifying additional industries that offer the potential for job growth in the future.

Looking forward to the next 5 - 20 years, several new industries are becoming increasingly important to Concord's economy and have the potential to become major drivers in employment. These industries include:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Life Sciences/Biotechnology
- Engineering
- Start-Up Technology Companies
- Health Care
- Financial Services
- Professional and Business Services
- Applied Sciences
- Cannabis



UFCW & Employers Plaza



Swift Plaza

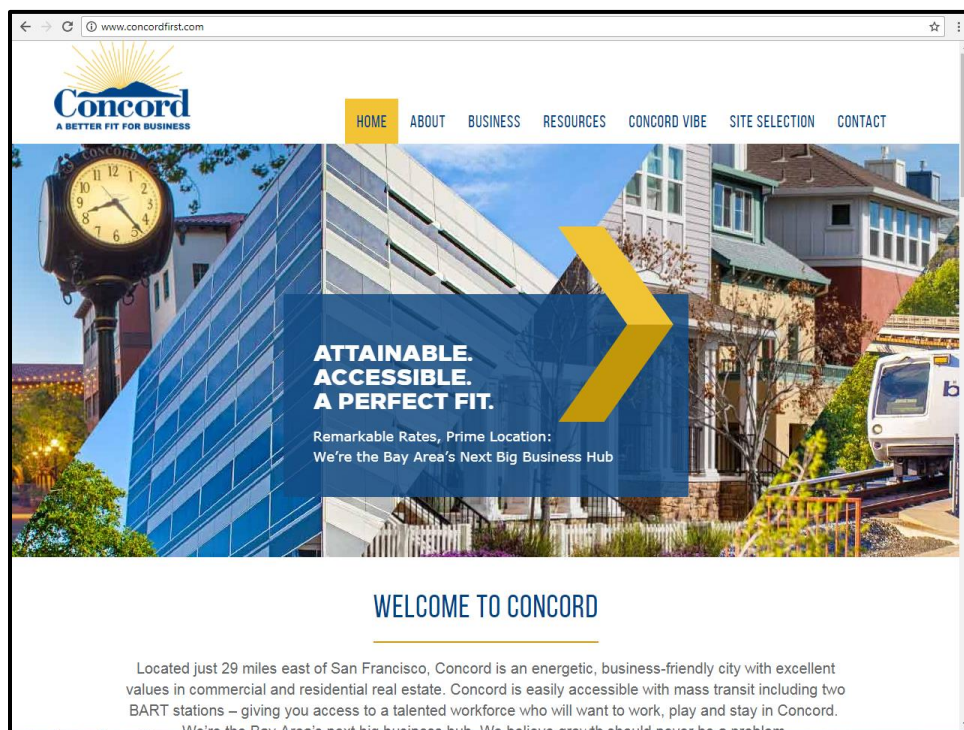
These emerging industries may have special needs with respect to infrastructure, workforce development, Zoning and General Plan issues, and business services. The City will incorporate the needs of these key industries as it works to continuously improve its delivery of efficient, effective business services, and as it continues to update other City policies. The City's Economic Development Program will also develop targeted marketing strategies and other initiatives, all in a coordinated effort to facilitate the growth of these industries in Concord. The following section describes the strategic initiatives to be undertaken as part of the Economic Vitality Strategy.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Goal #1: Implement a comprehensive, integrated Economic Development Marketing Strategy to strengthen Concord's image and brand identity among Bay Area businesses and within key target industries

Objective 1.1: Carry out an integrated Marketing and Public Information Campaign targeted to prospective new businesses that are seeking office, research and development or retail locations, based on well-defined branding strategies.

- A. **City's Economic Development Website Optimization and Internet Marketing.** The City's Economic Development Program will optimize the www.concordfirst.com website for improved speed, functionality and reportability. In addition, online advertising campaigns will be launched as appropriate, targeting websites and other online media that will maximize exposure to key market sectors. In addition, the City's Economic Development Program will use direct marketing tools such as LinkedIn InMail to promote Concord, targeting C-Suite executives and site selectors, as well as established community websites, blogs, developer/real estate-oriented and social media platforms that may include Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.



ConcordFirst.com economic development website

- B. **Marketing and Promotions.** The City's Economic Development Program will redesign its line of brochures, maps and other collateral materials that are intended for prospective businesses so the content will be consistent with the City's branding strategy. In partnership with economic development organizations and other support agencies, Economic Development staff will attend key trade shows, conferences and business events, and will send out emails and plan meetings in advance and/or afterwards in order to maximize the

effectiveness of the attendance. At larger trade shows and conferences, staff may also utilize location-based marketing such as geofencing to target site selectors and corporate decision-makers by displaying Concord-specific messages to smartphone/tablet users who enter a predetermined boundary or geographic area. Geofencing messaging can direct recipients to a landing page with Concord information and opportunities specific to their industries.

Objective 1.2: Develop and expand partnerships with businesses, other government agencies and economic development organizations to help promote the region, to leverage the City's Economic Development marketing funds and to advocate for initiatives and policies that benefit the region in general, and Concord in particular.

- A. **Partnerships with Regional Retailers and Hotels.** The City's Economic Development Program will partner with regional shopping centers such as Sunvalley Shopping Center, The Willows, Park & Shop, Veranda, the Concord auto dealership community, other major sales tax generators and the Visit Concord Tourism Business Improvement District to further promote Concord as a shopping, hospitality and entertainment destination.
- B. **Partnerships with Other Government Agencies and Economic Development Organizations to Leverage Relationships to Attract New Investments to Concord.** The City's Economic Development Program will partner with the East Bay Leadership Council, Concord Chamber of Commerce, Contra Costa County's Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative, Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development, Bay Area Council, International Council of Shopping Centers and the California Association for Local Economic Development to pursue initiatives and programs that promote the region's and Concord's business attraction, retention and expansion efforts.

Objective 1.3: Leverage existing City programs, resources and amenities to strengthen the City's economic development strategies.

- A. **Special Events.** The City will continue to sponsor downtown promotions and cultural events at Todos Santos Plaza and throughout the city, including the year-round Tuesday Farmers' Market, annual Music & Market Series, annual Brews Festival, Oktoberfest, the Fourth of July parade, holiday events and other special events.



Thursday Night Music & Market in Todos Santos Plaza

- B. **Concord Vibe Marketing Initiative.** The City will promote activities and opportunities that appeal to Millennials in an effort to attract this generation to Concord to both live and work. Millennials are a sought-after generation for companies seeking employees to join their workforce, so the increased presence of Millennials can contribute to the City's business attraction efforts.

Goal #2: Develop long-term, integrated strategies to target key emerging industries in Concord

Objective 2.1: Develop strategies to facilitate and encourage the development of modern, high-quality office, advanced manufacturing, research and development, engineering and industrial space that can attract and serve the needs of key industry clusters.

- A. **Facilitating Development Planning & Development Approval Process.** The City's Economic Development Program will work with industry contacts to determine the site requirements, building requirements, infrastructure requirements, and other development standards that are needed in order to attract and foster the development of key industrial tenants in Concord. Using this data, Economic Development staff will work internally with Planning, Building, Engineering, Finance, Public Works, and other city divisions as well as developers and brokers to incorporate the needs of key industry clusters into the development planning and to streamline development entitlements, including the Design Review process.
- B. **Planning for Life Cycle of Company Expansion.** The City will pursue strategies to facilitate the business and real estate needs of emerging industries at different points in their growth. The goal will be for companies to feel confident that Concord is an excellent location to address their needs as they progress from the start-up phase to reaching maturity as a medium- to large-sized business occupying one or multiple facilities. This will require partnerships with local brokers and property owners; partnerships with the Contra Costa Small Business Development Center, East Bay Leadership Council and other organizations serving small businesses; incorporating the long-term growth needs of key industries into planning for the Concord Community Reuse Plan (CCRP), and other related efforts.
- C. **Retail Attraction.** The City's Economic Development Program will seek opportunities to continue to attract retail to key commercial areas and to promote a diversified mix of retail uses, including business-to-business retail, non-traditional retail, as well as more standard consumer-based retail such as restaurants, grocery, and specialty retail.



Sunvalley Shopping Center

- D. **Retail Center Investment.** Develop strategies to promote reinvigoration and repositioning of retail centers throughout the City by seeking best practices in incentivizing improvements and utilizing land use and code enforcement tools to facilitate basic property upgrades.

Objective 2.2: Enhance Educational and Workforce Development Opportunities

- A. **Program Assessment and Facilitation.** The City's Economic Development Program will continue to support the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, private school operators, EastBayWorks, along with the California Employment Development Department, California State East Bay – Concord, and other educational institutions in their efforts to link the business community to local educational resources.
- B. **Community Training.** The City's Economic Development Program will work with Local, Regional and State Agencies who are focused on building a diversified training and retraining program to meet the rapidly changing technical and professional needs of the business community. The City's Economic Development Program will promote partnerships and support of the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Diablo Valley College, EastBayWorks, Contra Costa Small Business Development Center, Workforce Development Board and other agencies in promoting their training programs and referral services.

Goal #3: Business District Strategies

The City's Economic Development Program will continue to implement its downtown revitalization strategy, and will begin developing comprehensive business district strategies for all business districts in Concord. The key business districts to initially focus on include:

- Clayton Road
- North Concord
- Monument Boulevard/Shary Circle/Detroit Avenue
- Other business districts as time and resources are available



Monument Sign in North Concord

Objective 3.1: Develop District Strategies for Concord's Key Business Districts

The City's Economic Development Program will develop and implement comprehensive business district strategies for Clayton Road, North Concord, Monument Boulevard, and other business districts as time and resources provide. These strategies will incorporate the unique characteristics of each area, promote the businesses currently operating in these areas and encourage reinvestment, development and redevelopment opportunities to support business attraction efforts.

Objective 3.2: Continue Downtown Revitalization Efforts

- A. **Downtown Management & Merchant Organization.** The City's Economic Development Program will continue to support the activities of the Todos Santos Business Association in order to strengthen relationships between the City and the business community. Where possible, the City's Economic Development Program will develop programs to address the needs raised by this association in a proactive manner. In addition, the City will execute a comprehensive Downtown Management Program that addresses issues related to appearance, maintenance, circulation, wayfinding, safety and parking.
- B. **Special Events.** The City will continue to sponsor promotions and cultural events at Todos Santos Plaza and throughout the city, including the year-round Tuesday Farmers' Market, annual Music & Market Series, the annual Brews Festival and Oktoberfest, Fourth of July parade, holiday events and other special events. The City will review opportunities to co-sponsor and/or present new special events in the downtown area and throughout the city that promote the downtown businesses, community identity, the arts, and are consistent with the businesses in the downtown.

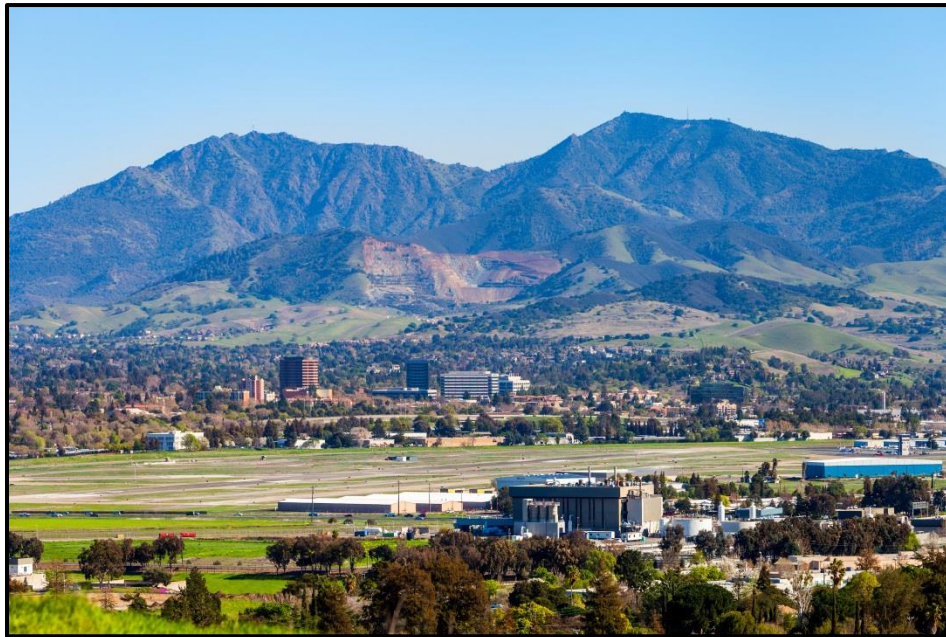


Todos Santos Plaza

Goal #4: Retain, Expand, Develop and Attract Business

Objective 4.1: Strengthen the positive business climate that supports the growth, development and prosperity of Concord's business community.

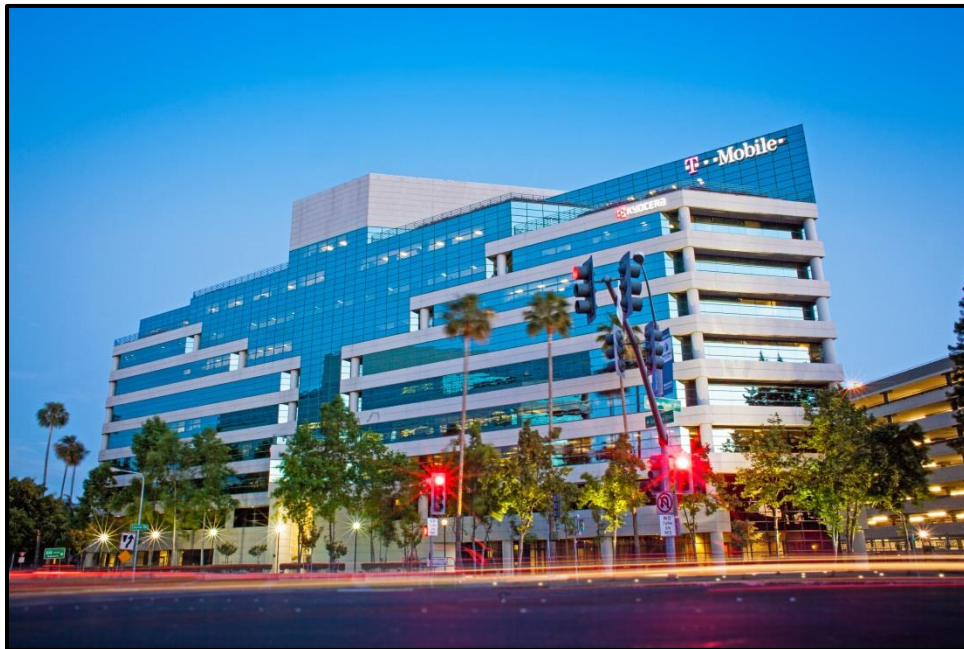
- A. **Business Surveys.** The City's Economic Development Program will reinstate Business Surveys to seek the input of businesses on an ongoing basis. These online surveys will gather information about existing firms, evaluate the business climate and identify business problems, business opportunities and firms with expansion or relocation plans.
- B. **Customer Service.** The City of Concord will continue to seek ways to further expedite permit decisions, such as coordinating inter-jurisdictional permit reviews to speed, clarify and ease communication between applicants and permitting agencies, and will also provide employee training and support to further implement improvements to customer service.
- C. **Ombudsman and Information Services.** Economic Development staff will continue to serve as an ombudsman and information resource to existing and prospective businesses, providing information, direction, advice and documents on all issues pertaining to doing business in Concord and Contra Costa County.
- D. **Business Communications.** The City's Economic Development Program will continue to regularly communicate with residents, businesses, property owners and other stakeholders and partners using electronic media, print sources, flyers, advertisements, radio, television, e-mail notifications, and other appropriate avenues to ensure information of interest is provided to Concord's residential and business community.
- E. **Business Recognition Awards Program.** In cooperation with the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, the City will continue to honor throughout the year companies that have shown significant growth or innovation, have longevity in Concord, support Concord's community, are major employers, or are major tax revenue generators.
- F. **Welcome Letters.** The City's Economic Development Program will continue to send welcome letters, signed by the Mayor, to targeted new businesses in Concord in order to make them feel welcome, promote cooperation with City Hall, and provide them with a resource to contact when issues arise that affect the success of their business.



View of Buchanan Field Airport, Downtown Concord and Mt. Diablo

Objective 4.2: Provide assistance to attract, retain, and expand businesses in Concord

- A. **Goodwill Visits.** The City's Economic Development Program will continue to conduct goodwill visits to major employers and sales tax generators to build strong, long-term relationships, improve communication between the City and the business community, demonstrate Concord's concern for its existing major businesses, and to encourage these businesses to remain and expand in Concord. The City will utilize proprietary subscription databases, broker consultant insights and market research to identify those Concord businesses with leases expiring in the following 12-18 months to strategically and proactively target those specific companies to determine if they're considering relocation or expansion so that the City may take appropriate action to keep their business in Concord.
- B. **Business Retention Visits.** The City's Economic Development Program will continue to conduct business retention/expansion/welcome visits to small businesses that are expanding, new to the community, or in a growth sector in order to build a rapport with the business community, encourage communication between the public and private sectors and to encourage these businesses to remain and expand in Concord, and to promote the City to their business colleagues.



Concord Gateway Center II

- C. **Participation in business events and community building activities.** The City's Economic Development Program will support local business organizations' efforts that encourage business leaders to contribute to the community by having staff serve on appropriate task forces and special committees, contribute to projects and sponsor events. Staff will also work with these organizations to increase the number of events and activities they host in Concord so that potential business executives may meet with City leadership and see the opportunities in Concord first-hand.
- D. **Home-Based Businesses.** The City will continue to support the development of entrepreneurs in home-based businesses by providing business licenses and home-based business permits to these businesses. The City will encourage and foster the development of

“executive suites” facilities and other services to encourage and assist home-based businesses in their expansions into commercial spaces.

- E. **Small Business Seminars.** In order to provide new information, resources and trends on marketing, planning, management, advertising, financing and other business topics of interest to Concord’s small business community, Economic Development staff will continue to facilitate small business seminars and other appropriate programs with its partners, such as the Contra Costa Small Business Development Center, Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Development Board, Todos Santos Business Association and the Small Business Administration. These events will also continue to promote local business-to-business transactions.
- F. **Business Attraction.** The City’s Economic Development Program will create more robust attraction programs to broaden Concord’s business and economic base by identifying sites and available space that would be desirable to businesses in all sectors and their respective representatives. The City’s Economic Development Program will work aggressively with brokers, realtors, site selectors, trade associations, the East Bay Leadership Council, Concord Chamber of Commerce and the Todos Santos Business Association to evaluate and encourage opportunities for new businesses that enhance our economic base. The Economic Development Program will actively implement strategic outreach to businesses that are likely to relocate and that fit Concord’s targeted industries. The City’s Economic Development Program will continue to work with brokers and property owners on land assembly opportunities for larger development projects, and will leverage the upcoming Concord Community Reuse Plan (CCRP) to attract growing companies to Concord that will later need more space that may be provided within the CCRP.
 - a. CCRP: Staff will create project-specific marketing materials, leverage existing regional partnerships to promote the base as a regional economic development opportunity, utilize the Blue-Ribbon Taskforce work to attract institutions of higher education, monitor existing Concord companies for expansion plans and position current Concord commercial space as a temporary location that will enable companies to easily expand into the new development.
 - b. Cannabis: Staff will monitor the industry, including best practices adopted by other cities and identifying properties and/or amenities that are most desirable for Cannabis industry operations, while also collecting trend information to maximize Concord’s visibility and marketability with industry leaders.

The initiatives in this document will further develop the City’s economic vitality and ensure Concord’s position as a premier business location.

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For more information:

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