

347 Lexington Road
Concord MA 0742
October 14, 2025d

Ms. Eve Isenberg
Chair
Community Preservation Committee
Concord MA

Dear Ms. Isenberg and CPA Colleagues

I write as a Concord citizen concerned about both housing and conservation to ask that you consider favorably two requests that are before the CPA this fall. One would provide initial money for a Conservation Trust Fund. The other would advance plans for a pedestrian bridge over the Assabet River connecting the Baker Avenue business district and the forthcoming NOVO Riverside housing complex with West Concord and the commuter rail station.

We were fortunate in acquiring the Assabet Bluff property for conservation and housing because the owners were willing to wait to complete the sale until the Town, housing and conservation interests were able to raise the needed funds. Not every owner will be so civic minded. If properties go on the market, it may be necessary to move fast so they are not acquired by developers before conservation (and potentially housing) interests have an opportunity to acquire the property. For housing, we do have funds in the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (CMAHT) which can be used quickly to acquire lands for affordable housing. There is no such fund for conservation land. With approval of this request by the CPC, the Department of Natural Resources would have funds to purchase an option on land for conservation. This would allow time for private fundraising, State grant writing, and coordination with CMAHT, which might want to place homes on a less environmentally sensitive portion of the land. Without this ability to acquire a purchase option, the land will be gone before grants can be written and received, or Town funds approved by Town Meeting.

The Assabet River bridge will be a real plus for those who work (and those who will live) in the Baker Avenue complex. By providing a safe path for bike and pedestrian traffic into West Concord, the bridge will reduce the number of cars on Main Street and the risk of collision between a car and a bike or pedestrian. The developers of NOVO Riverside have already committed to providing a trail connection through their development to the path to the bridge. This path can also be used by office workers who wish to commute by train and walk the last

quarter mile to work. It could also help to integrate future development at the MCI site to the Baker Avenue complex and provide direct access from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail..

I hope the CPC will give favorable consideration to both these requests.

Frank (Rich) Feeley

Cc; Delia Kaye, Director of Natural Resources

Elizabeth Hugher, Town Planner

Alyssa Sandoval, Director of Community Development

Keith Bergman, Chair, CMAHT