



League of Women Voters of Concord Carlisle

Local Positions

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1. Town Government

The League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle supports a local government which is based on the fullest possible participation of informed citizens in its policy and decision-making processes.

1.1 Town Government, Concord

The League finds that Town Government as now practiced in Concord is both democratic and effective. To make it more responsive, open, and fair, we would support the following improvements:

1.1.1 Increased communications between:

- a) committees and their appointing authorities, including periodic review and supervision, as well as more explicit definition of committee's charges
- b) committees and the public
- c) committee chairs and members, including once yearly training/orientation sessions, and detailed and written orientation information for new members. (Modified 2001)

1.1.2 Increased citizen participation through:

- a) more publicity of hearings
- b) early notices of committee meetings and hearings with agendas
- c) use of all available media to inform public on town affairs
- d) distribution of town information package to newcomers
- e) wider publicity of the need for volunteers for town committees and the means to sign up to volunteer.

- 1.1.3 Committee procedures made more effective by:
 - a) specific term lengths for committee members
 - b) use of sub- and ad hoc committees for specific studies and to relieve overburdened committees
 - c) informative minutes, publicly available
 - d) termination process for unneeded committees
- 1.1.4 Adequate clerical and financial support, with information given to committees by the Town Manager on services available.
- 1.1.5 Fair and responsible appointment process strengthened by:
 - a) expanding use of methods for signing up to volunteer, with regular updating and review by citizens and the Town Manager's office.
 - b) posting vacancies with at least two weeks between posting and appointment
 - c) flexible, informal interviews with prospective appointees
 - d) prompt appointments
 - e) reasonable use of recommendations from committee members
 - f) geographical distribution of committee members for those committees whose functions warrant it.
 - g) use of the following criteria in appointing committee members: availability for attendance at committee meetings; eagerness to serve; expertise; work and/or volunteer experience; ability to work with others; stamina (not in order of priority).
- 1.1.6 League members were firm in opposition to:
 - a) use of volunteer cards or other methods to sign up to volunteer as an exclusive source of appointees
 - b) use of a search committee to nominate appointees
 - c) election of more town committee members other than School Committee and Select Board (Adopted March 1977)
- 1.2 The League supports the continuation of the Town Meeting as the primary deliberative and legislative body of the Town (Adopted February 1996)
- 1.3 The League supports open Town Meeting as currently practiced with voting on Town Meeting issues taking place within the sessions of the town meeting. (Adopted February 1996.)
- 1.4 The League believes that it is the obligation of the Town to provide all citizens seeking to attend Town Meeting the opportunity to participate. If it should become impossible, on a regular and frequently recurring basis, to accommodate all persons wishing to attend Town Meeting, then the League would support a representative form of town meeting as an alternative to the present open Town Meeting. (Adopted February 1996.)
- 1.5 The League opposes any change in Town Meeting Voting that would separate the vote from the deliberative process. (Adopted February 1996.)

- 1.6 The League opposes any voting method that would constrain participants from having full access to information about the questions on which they are voting. (Adopted February 1996.)
- 1.7 To further ensure that the residents of Concord are informed participants, the League urges that the Town take greater measures to:
 - a) Increase the understanding of citizens about their local government.
 - b) Offer a fuller explanation of committee and board duties along with the volunteer cards or other methods established for offering to volunteer. Advertise committee vacancies promptly and widely.
 - c) Enable wide distribution to the Town Report. (Adopted February 1996.)

1.8 Town Government, Carlisle

That the town of Carlisle should continue its present form of government, strengthening its effectiveness by improved communication and cooperation among boards and using administrative and technical support when needed.

- 1.8.1 Support the use of administrative and technical assistance to foster the effective use of volunteers' time and expertise.
- 1.8.2 Support an annual meeting, chaired by the Select Board at which all town committees present their accomplishments and goals.
- 1.8.3 Support issue-oriented meetings as needed, among pertinent boards. The ultimate responsibility for these meetings lies with the Select Board.
- 1.8.4 Support timely distribution of pertinent information by committees to townspeople. (Adopted 1980 Amended 1983.)

2. Education, Concord and Carlisle

In pursuit of quality education in the public schools:

- 2.1 Support a school organization that encourages the following: stability—requiring few major changes and little redistricting in order to preserve a sense of school community; low pupil-teacher ratios with the lowest in the primary grades; respect for parental preference among a range of teaching styles; broad uniform program aims; sound fiscal management.
- 2.2 Support for a system of guidance and social work that allows for department flexibility and staff mobility and interaction, particularly with the elementary schools. (Adopted July 1980.)
- 2.3 Support for a system of guidance and social work which has as its primary role maintenance of the climate of learning of the student body as a whole and the consideration of the needs of the individual student; and which communicates openly with parents and provides information through channels such as workshops, written material, PTG meetings, etc. (Reaffirmed 1999)

- 2.4 Support additional, vocational education in the school system. An ideal system would include: a) up-to-date facilities adequate to meet the demand; b) flexibility in time, choice, program, and amount of concentration on vocational or academic courses by each student; c) coordination with instruction in both the Concord and Carlisle school systems; d) full use of facilities for the whole community after regular school hours, evenings and summers; e) expansion of an improved work-study program; f) career awareness beginning in the elementary grades. (Reaffirmed 1999).
- 2.5 Support a curriculum development process at Concord-Carlisle High School that uses input from departments, cooperation between departments, citizen input, and administrative and school committee review. Curriculum to afford flexible scheduling of student and teacher time to create opportunities for course options. Curriculum to emphasize an interdisciplinary course offering; development of analytic skills, written and oral communication skills; preparation for citizenship; and requirements for graduation in courses in many disciplines. (Adopted 1971. Amended 1978, 1979, 1983, 1985.)
- 2.6 Support a program of staff development and teacher evaluation to be reviewed regularly by the School Committees (Adopted 1971. Modified 1999.)
- 2.7 Support the availability of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for students of Concord-Carlisle High School and at the Concord and Carlisle Middle Schools. (Adopted 1971. Amended 2001.)
- 2.8 Support a budget that includes adequate funding. (Adopted 1971. Modified 1999.)
- 2.9 Support efforts by the schools and the parents' associations to improve communications with the community. (Adopted 1971.)

3. Public Health

The Concord-Carlisle League of Women Voters recognizes that sexual health issues, including sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies, remain important public health concerns in this country, particularly for young adults. The League also recognizes that sexual activity is the most frequent, though not the exclusive, mode of transmission for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), hepatitis B, and other sexually transmitted infections.

- 3.1 Support a program for making condoms and other safer sex supplies available to young people under conditions that include counseling and education as to the risk of disease and unplanned pregnancy, and the need to assume responsibility for the consequences of their actions.
- 3.2 Support implementing such a program through collaboration with relevant public and private agencies, including the Regional School Committee, the Boards of Health and the Select Boards of both Concord and Carlisle. (Adopted January 1995. Language updated 2002, 2011, 2026)

4. Recreation, Concord

- 4.1 Support a comprehensive public recreation program in Concord.

- 4.2 Support a master plan for recreation in Concord.
- 4.3 Support the acquisition of land to meet the active recreational needs of the Town.
- 4.4 Support the development and maintenance of public swimming facilities, and the improvement of natural bodies of water. (Modified 2007.)
- 4.5 Support the improvement, extension and maintenance of Concord's present bicycle and pedestrian system including the maintenance of sidewalks while ensuring a balance with environmental concerns.
- 4.6 Support the additional facilities for bicyclists, including maps of established bicycle and pedestrian paths, marked paths and street crossings, and safe racks well-placed around Town.
- 4.7 Support recreational activities on conservation lands that do not alter the integrity of the land for conservation purposes.
- 4.8 Support the increased distribution of information on conservation lands to townspeople.
- 4.9 Support making information on conservation land available upon request to visitors to Concord. (Amended 2000)

Bike Footpaths, Carlisle

- 4.10 Support the development of bicycle and pedestrian paths in Carlisle and the promotion of bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- 4.11 Support a pilot project for the development of bicycle and pedestrian paths (Adopted 1982.)
- 4.12 Support a master plan for bicycle and pedestrian paths for all existing town roads.
- 4.13 Support the Planning Board regulations requiring developers to build bicycle and pedestrian paths in all new developments. (Adopted 1973. Amended, 1980, 1982.)

5. Animal Control, Concord

- 5.1 Support a dog control by-law that: is consistent and easy to understand; defines "under control by owner"; prohibits dogs from school property during classroom hours except with express permission of the principal; includes a limited leash law for the business areas of Concord, school property outside of classroom hours, and town playgrounds; includes a provision requiring the cleanup of dog waste for the business areas of Concord, playgrounds, and school property
- 5.2 Support enforcement of Concord's animal control by-law that: is based on a complaint responsive system; includes limited patrolling by dog officers in problem areas such as playgrounds, business districts, and school property plus areas that have a high number of complaints; encourages dog licensing by charging higher fines for unlicensed dogs; encourages citizen participation by expedient and appropriate response to legitimate dog-related complaints.
- 5.3 Support license fees to be set at a level to encourage neutering. (Amended 2000.)

- 5.4 Support an innovative approach to dog licensing that: encourages licensing by mailing reminders to owners of all dogs reported on the Town census; follows up on known unlicensed dogs; has mail-in license forms; has a flexible licensing schedule perhaps tied to the time period that a dog is due for rabies shot; encourages prompt licensing by charging late fees.
- 5.5 Support educational activities such as: information packets prepared by the town and widely distributed to town citizens explaining the laws and responsibilities of a dog owner; community programs on animal care, possibly through the schools. (Adopted May 1985.)
- 5.6 Support the immunization of cats against rabies (in accordance with state law) and strongly urge the immunization of all domestic animals against rabies and other contagious and potentially life-threatening diseases.

6. Crime Prevention

- 6.1 Support efforts to heighten public awareness about crime prevention, including educating citizens to report suspicious incidents to the police, and establishing neighborhood groups both to prevent crime and as a method of developing a stronger sense of community.
- 6.2 Support efforts to prevent juvenile crime by identifying youth needs and concerns and coordinating the development and implementation of youth services. (Modified 2008.)
- 6.3 Support police department crime prevention efforts, particularly educational programs in the schools and in the community at large.
- 6.4 Support increased use by the Concord district court of restitution and alternative sentencing, including the community service work program in Concord.
- 6.5 Support effective methods of identifying and publicizing the costs of vandalism to Town property.
- 6.6 Support effective methods of supervising heavily used Town conservation land. (Adopted December 1980.)

7. Tourism, Concord

In order to provide a pleasant experience in Concord for visitors to the revolutionary and literary sites and to maintain and improve the quality of life for Concord residents, the League supports:

- 7.1 Visitors' services with adequate public parking and toilet facilities located in the vicinity of the Milldam and the West Concord shopping district. (Revised 2001.)
- 7.2 Improved directional signs particularly small, robust informational maps.
- 7.3 Public or private groups publishing maps or recordings which will direct visitors taking walking or biking tours of the Town.

8. Hanscom Field

- 8.1 Oppose extension of Hanscom Field (Massport) into a major airport
- 8.2 Support maintenance of general aviation activity at Hanscom Field at no higher than the 1973 level.

- 8.3 Support the participation of Concord and other Towns in the solution to problems associated with Hanscom Field.

9. Long Range Planning

- 9.1 Support of local and regional long-range planning. Cooperation in the development of comprehensive planning criteria for the towns.

10. Town Facilities

- 10.1 Support for the re-use of surplus buildings: (a) consistent with the character of the neighborhood; (b) consistent with the current zoning; and (c) consistent with the preservation of architectural features.
- 10.2 Support for the reuse of surplus buildings which: (a) use private funding whenever possible; (b) satisfy a need within the community; (c) are sound economic investments for the community; and (d) which are planned to be self-supporting when possible.
- 10.3 Support for rehabilitation of surplus buildings for: (a) elderly housing; (b) low income and family housing; (c) recreation; and (d) education.

11. Land: Use and Management, Concord

- 11.1 Support strategic land management to achieve: preservation of open space, a diversity of housing types, and land for municipal uses.
- a) municipal use
 - b) stewardship of our historic and literary past
 - c) recreation, active and passive (i.e., conservation)
- Decisions about purchases should be made by weighing acquisitions against an overall plan with attention to balance, location, and possibilities for multiple use. (Modified 2007)
- 11.2 Support Town acquisition of land for affordable housing, including subsidized housing
- 11.3 Support land-taking by eminent domain only as a last resort and when it satisfies the public need and the public good; this could also be useful in clearing title to a property when ownership is unclear. Modified 2007.
- 11.4 Support the protection of wetlands and lands in the flood plain through strong enforcement of
- legislation regulating wetlands, flood plains, and conservation lands; through such methods as percolation tests and Town acquisition of such Concord lands.
- 11.5 Support acquiring open land in densely populated areas of Concord. Support visibility of land as an important criterion of Town Acquisition.
- 11.6 Support a land transfer tax (Note: This position was adopted prior to Concord and Carlisle approving the Community Preservation Act real estate Property tax surcharges.) (Modified 2008.)

12. Planning, Concord

- 12.1 Support development of a land use plan in Concord that 1) has land capacity as a key component, 2) defines specific principles and policies, and 3) utilizes appropriate data maps.
- 12.2 Support positive action towards the achievement of Concord town planning goals in the conversion of any municipal buildings.
- 12.3 Support the regular updating of the Concord accessory apartment conversion bylaw as a means to provide housing alternatives within existing housing stock. (Modified 1999, 2007.)
- 12.4 Support the principle of acquiring land with the intention of later leasing or selling parts of it if the intent to do so was made clear at the time of purchase or if the land was found to be surplus to Town needs.
- 12.5 Support the concept of land banking (i.e., acquiring and holding land for an as-yet undefined future use). (Criteria to be considered for Town land acquisition include the ability to be developed, location, linkage, potential uses, preservation, access, public safety and health. Each parcel of land is unique; therefore, it is difficult to establish priorities in criteria for purchase, but the ability to be developed may be the most important.) (Adopted 1987. Modified 2007).

13. Housing, Concord

- 13.1 Support housing at all income levels in Concord. In particular, there should be a supply of low- and moderate-income housing in Concord to ensure inclusion of the elderly, those on fixed incomes, young people, families, disabled/handicapped persons, teachers, and town employees.
- 13.2 Support the following criteria to support implementation: (a) sound planning should be the basis of such development; (b) private and public efforts to provide such housing should be encouraged, especially if they provide economic mix within neighborhoods; (c) low rise, low density, multifamily dwellings that fulfill the Town's need and is most in keeping with the desire to preserve the "open land" character of Concord. (Revised 1999. Modified 2007. Language update 2026.)
- 13.3 Support a mix of housing to meet the needs of a variety of age and income levels.

14. Agricultural Land Use, Concord

- 14.1 Support preservation of farmland in Concord by the following methods: The Farmland Assessment
- 14.2 Act, conservation restrictions, purchase of development rights, land trusts, and tax reform.
- 14.3 Support Concord acquisition of farmland where other methods of preservation could not be used and the alternative would be the likely loss of the land to development.

- 14.4 Support the agricultural use of MCI-Concord agricultural land, and public education on the potentials and challenges of farming in Concord.

15. Housing, Carlisle

- 15.1 Support mixed income housing (low, moderate, and fair market) in Carlisle with priority to housing needs for the elderly. We recommend that consideration be given to rehabilitation and/or conversion of existing buildings and new construction of housing units that will be in keeping with the rural character of Carlisle. We further recommend the use of rent subsidies and tax abatements where applicable. (Adopted 1978).

16. Environmental Health

Solid Waste Disposal

- 16.1 Support a solid waste disposal method that is safe and protects the health of the community and the environment; any method must be economically feasible and well managed.
- 16.2 Support improved methods of operation at existing landfill sites.
- 16.3 Support regionalization of solid waste disposal facilities
- 16.4 Support recycling education programs in the schools

Sanitary Sewage Facilities

- 16.5 Support improvements needed to maintain present systems at their peak performance.
- 16.6 Support first priority for tie-ins for those areas contiguous to the existing collection line, which are in dire need of service. (Reaffirmed 1999)

17. Wetlands

- 17.1 Support preservation and/or acquisition of wetlands and related uplands in the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord River Basin as well as other actions by appropriate federal, state, and local agencies.
- 17.2 Support the preservation and/or acquisition of the wetlands and related uplands in the Shawsheen River basin in Concord (Elm Brook).
- 17.3 Support strengthening Concord flood plain and wetland bylaws. (Adopted March 1981. Moved from 12.4 2007.)

18. SUASCO River Basin

The SuAsCo (Sudbury Assabet Concord) River Basin Group represents nine Leagues in the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River Basin. The SuAsCo River Basin Group allows the Leagues to approach water resource problems on a regional basis.

- 18.1 Support (a) comprehensive long range planning and coordinated action for use of water and related land resources in the SuAsCo Basin (b) measures to protect and maintain water supply, flood control, fish and wildlife, state and local agencies to accomplish the above; (c) adequate funding for federal, state and local agencies to accomplish the above; (d) federal, state, and local action to achieve flood plain zoning, stream encroachment planning, conservation easements, and the improvements of river flows.
- 18.2 Oppose high power transmission lines running overhead through areas zoned for residence.

19. Transportation

- 19.1 Support development of sustainable and resilient public transit options in Concord which would serve residents, workers, and visitors by providing first-mile last-mile connections to our two commuter rail stations, connections to medical and other vital services for residents who do not have use of a car, and connections to adjacent towns and other existing regional transportation networks. (Adopted 2026)

LWVCC Program as Affirmed at 2026 Annual Meeting.