

City of Northampton Community Preservation Plan

Revised September 2024
Small Grants Updated 2025



Contents

Overview	1
Application & Project Review Information.....	5
APPLICATION AND REVIEW SCHEDULE	5
APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS	6
REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMISSION	10
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS	11
SMALL GRANTS PROCEDURE	13
EXPEDITED APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURE	16
Historic Preservation	18
Community Housing	28
Open Space	37
Recreation	44
Community Preservation Eligibility Determination Form	51
Community Preservation Project Application Cover Sheet	52
Appendix A: Allowable Use Table	53
Appendix B: CPA Information Guide.....	54
Appendix C: Glossary	55
Appendix D: Preservation Guarantee Guidelines.....	58



FALL 2024

The Northampton Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is pleased to present the 2024 version of the Northampton Community Preservation Plan. The Plan is reviewed continually and revised periodically in response to changing preservation needs and opportunities, and to improve clarity. The Plan relies heavily upon the City's long-term planning documents, which are developed and approved with extensive Board and Committee review and public input.

The Plan describes the process for administering the Community Preservation Act (CPA). It gives an introduction to the CPA, information about the CPA program areas as they apply to Northampton, and contains detailed information about the project application and review process. As such, it represents an informational document for the citizens of the City, a guideline and instructional document for applicants seeking project funding through the CPA, and a guidance document for this and future Community Preservation Committees in making recommendations to the City Council for project funding. We are committed to continue to bringing the CPA to Northampton in the most effective ways that we can, using processes that are transparent and inclusive. We take seriously our role, and welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this Plan and the processes that we use to implement it.

We recognize that the steps necessary to successively apply for CPA funding can be time consuming, perhaps confusing, and maybe even intimidating, particularly for first time applicants. We encourage any applicant with questions concerning the process of applying for a grant to consult Sarah LaValley, the Community Preservation Planner, via e-mail at slavalley@northamptonma.gov, or by calling (413) 587-1263.

The Plan is respectfully submitted to the residents of Northampton with the goal of providing a focus and catalyst for significant enhancement of community preservation goals. We would like to thank the many citizens, City officials, and members of other Community Preservation Committees for their help in the development of this Plan.

Northampton Community Preservation Committee Members, 2024

- Brian Adams (appointed by the City Council) **Chair**
- Christopher Hellman (Elected Member (Vice Chair)
- Kevin Lake (appointed by the Conservation Commission)
- Christian Tait (appointed by the Planning Board)
- Jeff Jones (appointed by the Housing Authority)
- Martha Lyon (appointed by the Historical Commission)
- Julia Chevan (appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission)
- Lemy Coffin (Elected Member)
- Committee Staff: Sarah LaValley, AICP, Community Preservation Planner



Overview

THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA)

The Community Preservation Act (CPA), Chapter 44B of the Massachusetts General Laws, allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund through a surcharge of up to 3% of the real estate tax levy on real property. The act also creates a state matching fund. CPA funds may be used for acquisition and preservation of open space, for preservation and restoration of historic buildings and artifacts, for the creation, preservation, and support of community housing, and for acquisition, creation, preservation and rehabilitation of land for recreational use.

In each fiscal year, at least 10% of the revenues in the Community Preservation Fund must be spent or set aside for open space (including recreational uses), 10% for historic preservation, and 10% for community housing. Up to 5% may be spent on administration.

The CPA stipulates that decisions regarding the allocation of CPA funds in cities and towns that adopt the initiative are to be made by a local Community Preservation Committee (CPC) whose task is to receive and review applications and to make recommendations to the appropriate municipal authority, which in turn makes the final allocations.

THE CPA IN NORTHAMPTON

The residents of Northampton voted, by ballot referendum in November 2005, to adopt the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) at the 3% level of property tax assessment. The City Council then drafted and adopted an ordinance creating the Northampton Community Preservation Committee (CPC). A ballot question proposing repeal of the CPA in Northampton was defeated in November, 2011.

The Northampton CPC consists of nine members, including one representative each from the Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Housing Authority, Planning Board, Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as one member appointed by City Council, one member appointed by the Mayor and two representatives elected in a city-wide election.

The CPC began its work in 2007. Through the end of Fiscal Year 2024, the CPC has completed 182 recommendations for funding of CPA projects resulting in grant awards.

- **The Northampton CPC website:** The CPC website,



<http://northamptonma.gov/1048/Community-Preservation-Committee>, contains a wealth of information related to the CPA and to the CPC, including full reports of the committee’s work, a complete listing of projects, photographs, reports, and links.

THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

All CPC’s are required to “study the needs, possibilities and resources of the city regarding community preservation, including the consideration of regional projects for community preservation.” As part of this process, the Committee is required to consult with municipal boards, as well as hold public hearings. The Northampton CPC uses the Community Preservation Plan as both a way to meet the statutory requirements, and serve as a guide for Committee members, applicants, and the public.

The Northampton CPC adopted its first Plan in November, 2007 for use during calendar year 2008, with periodic revisions and updates

The purposes of the Plan are as follows:

- To establish clear criteria that form the bases of the committee’s evaluation of applications for funding.
- To lay out the processes and the time-lines that the committee will use in its review of applications.
- To provide application forms and background information that are needed by applicants.
- To inform both applicants and the public of the CPC’s goals and of its commitment to an open and transparent approach to reaching its recommendations.
- To provide the Mayor and the City Council with the background information they need in reviewing the committee’s recommendations.

SCHEDULE AND REVIEW PROCESSES

The Committee conducts two funding rounds each fiscal year; the first beginning in August, with recommendations generally completed in December, and the second beginning in January, with funding recommendations generally made in May. It has been common in many years to see the majority of applications received during the fall funding round. The Committee generally attempts to retain some funding availability for expenditures during the spring round, but total applications submitted in excess of funding available has occurred in many years. Detailed financial reports are available on the CPC website.



In addition, the committee may, under extraordinary circumstances, vote to accept applications that, because of market opportunities or other material timing deadlines, require consideration outside of these funding cycles. The CPC's Expedited Review Policy is included on page 16.

We also recognize that, in some cases, preliminary work must be undertaken in order to complete a viable application. When this is the case, the CPC will consider applications for study grants that can be used to test feasibility and develop work plans that would result in a stronger CPA project.

Finally, it should be noted that all projects may not be funded, even if funds are available, and that in any given year some CPA funds may be carried over to subsequent years for future projects.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

The CPA Allowable Use Table, included here as Appendix A, provides a critically important overview of specific areas of funding allowed by the CPA law and the Department of Revenue. All potential applicants should review this table carefully as they consider whether their project might be eligible for CPA funding. Applicants should be aware that, while CPA funds may be used for projects on privately-owned property, the Anti-Aid Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution requires that public funds be used to advance a public purpose. The Committee will look to see that a public purpose can be assured, such as through a grant of public access or a preservation restriction.

In order to determine funding eligibility and priority, the (CPC) will evaluate all applications against the following criteria, with the understanding that not all criteria will be appropriate for every project. The criteria fall into two categories – General, and criteria related to the four program areas: Open Space, Historic Preservation, Community Housing and Recreation. Program-related criteria are described in each of the program sections of this Plan.

The following General Criteria apply to all projects. Projects that satisfy multiple criteria will presumptively be ranked higher than those that satisfy fewer, though each will be reviewed on its own merits and also against the program specific criteria.

1. Serves more than one CPA program area
2. Contributes to the preservation of Northampton's unique character, boosts the vitality of the community, and enhances the quality of life for its residents
3. Addresses recommendations contained in the Sustainable Northampton comprehensive plan and its element: the, Resilience and Regeneration Plan, Historic Preservation Plan, Open Space, Recreation, and Mixed Use Trail Plan

Overview



2018-2025, or is consistent with other city-wide planning efforts that have received broad-based scrutiny and input and can demonstrate wide community support

4. Saves resources that would otherwise be threatened
5. Serves under-served populations
6. Places high value on sustainable, ecologically responsible, energy-conserving structures, locations, and materials; demonstrates that the project minimizes the ecological footprint
7. Receives endorsement by community groups, municipal boards and/or departments, and City residents
8. Leverages additional public and/or private funds, or demonstrates that other funding sources are not readily available or sufficient
9. Demonstrates a high benefit/cost value
10. Can be implemented expeditiously and within budget
11. Advances a public purpose

*Criteria are listed in no particular pattern, priority, organization or structure

The CPC also wishes to emphasize here that, as we review applications against these general criteria, we are committed (as mandated by the CPA) to the overarching goal of long-term preservation whenever possible. Most projects supported by CPA funds, whether historic, open space, housing, or recreation, must provide lasting value to our community. Applications should demonstrate how the project will provide such value.



Application & Project Review Information

APPLICATION AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

A schedule for each funding round with exact dates is posted on the CPC website several months prior to each funding round. The general schedule for each round is consistent each year.

	Fall	Spring
Eligibility Forms Due	Early August	Early January
Applications Due	Early September	Early February
Site Visits	Late September	Late February
Meetings with applicants, public comment meeting	October	April
Estimated Date of CPC Recommendations	November	May
Council Review	December	May/June

As indicated below, committee recommendations must be approved by City Council in accordance with its Council rules and procedures. A contract must then be drafted, approved by the CPC, grantees, and required City departments before funds can be released. Each of these final steps adds a delay between the time that the CPC recommendations are made and the time that approved projects receive funding and work can begin, that applicants should include in project planning.

The committee may, under highly extraordinary circumstances, vote to accept applications that, because of market opportunities or other deadlines, require consideration outside of the normal funding cycles. Potential applicants who believe that their circumstances call for such unusual action may contact the committee staff or chair to discuss the possible submission of an off-cycle application. The CPC policy on Expedited Review of Applications is included starting on page 16.



APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The following four-step process describes the committee's usual procedures for reviewing and recommending proposals, and the city's procedures for final approval and funding. Please also see the modifications contained in the Expedited Review of Applications, on page 16 as well as the Small Grants Procedure, found at page 13.

This section also details the precise information that the committee needs in order to evaluate projects fully and to set priorities among them. As applicants should be aware, levels of funding requested far exceed the funds available. In this competitive climate, only applications that arrive in complete form and that include all of the detailed information requested will be considered by the committee. Applicants who submit a late or incomplete application should expect the committee to return the application for completion and resubmission in a future funding round. Applicants are encouraged to contact CPC members and/or CPC staff to discuss project proposals.

Step 1. Determine Project Eligibility

Because of the complexities of the CPA law, the committee requires all project applicants to begin the application process by submitting a one-page Project Eligibility Determination Form. No funding application will be accepted unless the Project Eligibility Determination Form has been submitted and approved. Applicants are encouraged to discuss possible applications and ideas with staff.

Applicants should refer to Appendix A, Community Preservation Fund Allowable Use Table when filling out the Project Eligibility Determination Form. This information is provided Department of Revenue and contains the most up-to-date information on both the definitions of the four CPA program areas (Open Space, Historical Preservation, Community Housing, and Recreation), and the allowed uses of CPA funds in the four areas.

Project Eligibility Determination Forms must be submitted by email to slavalley@northamptonma.gov, in accordance with project review schedules.

The Chair of the CPC and CPC staff will review Project Eligibility Determination Forms. Staff will contact applicants with any feedback regarding project eligibility.

Step 2. Submit Completed Application.

Please review both the Requirements for Submission and Application **Instructions** before beginning an application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their projects and applications with staff prior to submittal.



- Each project funding application must be submitted using the *Community Preservation Plan* “Project Application Cover Sheet.” Additional pages should be added as necessary. The application and detailed instructions are part of the *Community Preservation Plan*, and are also available online at the CPC website. Submit one electronic copy by email.

Step 3. Community Preservation Committee Review and Public Comment

1. **Application Review:** The Community Preservation Committee will review submitted applications on the basis of the General Criteria for Project Evaluation and the program specific Project Evaluation Criteria for funding included in the *Community Preservation Plan*. In deciding how to allocate funds in any given funding round, the Committee may also account for other relevant factors at the time the applications are being considered. These may include, but are not limited, to the following: the amount of funding available; anticipated future balances; the distribution of past funds among the four eligible categories of projects; bonding obligations and debt service; the diversity of applicants; the applicants' history before the CPC and their past performance and compliance; and, the ability to fully or partially fund projects. Applicants may amend project applications if necessary.

The Committee may request additional or more detailed information, and further clarifications to the submitted proposals. The Committee may request a legal opinion of the City Solicitor to help it assess CPA project eligibility and to provide answers to any other questions that the Committee may have.

1. **Project Review Meetings:** The Committee will normally ask applicants or their representatives to meet with the Committee to discuss questions that members might have regarding their applications. These meetings will be publicly noticed.
2. **Site visits:** When appropriate, the Committee may ask to visit the site of the proposed project, or request a video tour
3. **Public Comment Session:** Although members of the public may attend and speak at all meetings of the committee, the date of a dedicated Public Comment Session will be specified during each funding round. Applicants are especially encouraged to invite their supporters to attend this session and speak on behalf of their applications.
4. **Notification:** The Committee will notify applicants of its decisions concerning recommendations.
5. Committee Recommendations:
 - a. The Committee reserves the right to attach conditions and to require supplementary information or additional agreements, such as preservation



guarantees (see Appendix D), as part of a funding recommendation.

- b. The Committee may recommend a project as proposed by the applicant, may modify the project, or it may recommend partial funding or funding for only a portion or phase of the proposed project. The Committee's recommendations may include detailed project scopes, conditions, and other specifications, as the Committee deems appropriate to ensure CPA compliance and project performance.

Step 4. City Council Vote

The Committee presents its final recommendations for funding to the City Council, which has the final authority to award funds from Northampton's Community Preservation Act Fund. It may approve, approve but with a lower level of funding, or reject recommendations. Members of the public may speak in favor of or against specific recommendations at the Public session preceding each Council meeting.

Step 5. Grant Award Contracts

For projects approved by City Council, the Committee will draft grant contracts for work as proposed in successful applications. Contracts also include standard conditions for CPA work, as well as project-specific conditions. Contracts must be reviewed and approved by the CPC, grantee, City departments, and the Mayor before work can begin. The CPA cannot reimburse for expenses incurred prior to contract execution. Staff will follow-up with grantees immediately following City Council approval with information on the funding amount, funding conditions, project modification as voted by City Council (if any), Community Preservation staff contact information, and guidelines for project execution. If the awardee is a City department or committee, the CPC will create a Memorandum of Understanding.

Step 6. Disbursement and Monitoring of Funds

CPA monies are public funds raised from dedicated Northampton tax revenues and from State subsidies. Projects financed with CPA funds must comply with all applicable State and municipal requirements. Funds are administered and disbursed by the City of Northampton according to city disbursement procedures. CPA grants are reimbursements to grantees for incurred expenses. All requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by invoices for project work, and a completed reimbursement request form, available on the CPC website. If this is not possible, it must be noted in the application.

Applicants should note that the State procurement law, where applicable, requires special procedures for the selection of products, vendors, services, and



consultants, as well as the payment of prevailing wage. This typically applies only when work is being conducted on City-owned property.

Project oversight, monitoring, and financial control over CPA funds are conducted by the Community Preservation Committee and staff. Questions in these areas should be directed to Sarah LaValley, Community Preservation Planner, via email at slavalley@northamptonma.gov, or by calling (413) 587-1263.

The Committee may request project status updates from CPA Fund recipients, up to and including presentations to the Committee at an open meeting. The purpose of such updates is to track the progress of funded projects, aid the Committee in refining the *Community Preservation Plan*, and identify issues that may assist future applicants. All grantees must submit annual and final reports.

Step 7. Reprogramming of Previously Allocated Funds

The CPC recognizes that within the course of a project, as defined by its City Council resolution, grantees may occasionally wish to reprogram previously allocated funds from one line item within a project budget to another. Unless necessary for project success, the CPC strongly discourages these requests. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. CPC approval is necessary for all reprogramming of funds.

Questions regarding reprogramming should be addressed in writing to the Community Preservation Planner, Sarah LaValley, via e-mail at slavalley@northamptonma.gov, or by calling (413) 587-1263. The CPC Planner has been empowered by the committee to act on its behalf on small, routine instances of reprogramming. The Planner will report these to the CPC at the next scheduled meeting. If funds to be reprogrammed are large or the change in use is deemed significant, the Planner will bring the request to the CPC. Requests for such reprogramming will be considered according to the committee's established processes for evaluating applications, including a posted public meeting with the applicant, an opportunity for public comment, and the revisiting of conditions related to the use of the funds. In some cases, the CPC may initiate a hold on release of funds related to the reprogramming request, and ask that the grantee submit a new application.

CPC recommendations for the reprogramming of funds will be forwarded to the Mayor and the City Council.

Instances of reprogramming of funds will be listed as an addendum to the original application on the CPC website.



REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMISSION

The following requirements should be followed in preparing an application for CPA funding.

- Project funding applications must be for funding within a 3-year completion period, the maximum length of time for which the City can enter into contracts. Extensions are possible if circumstances warrant.
- If submitting multiple applications, a priority ranking of the projects should be indicated.
- An application for support of a project that requires preservation guarantees should specifically address how such a guarantee has been or is proposed to be accomplished (Appendix D)
- Applicants should include itemized project budgets, with details describing each item and its estimated cost. If an application is approved for funding, budgets submitted with applications will be considered final project budgets, and any deviation other than small, routine reprogramming, will require approval by the Committee prior to approval of invoices.
- Applicants should obtain three professionally prepared quotes for project costs whenever possible. If such quotes are not available, detailed cost estimates may be used provided the basis of the estimates is fully explained.
- If the funding application is part of a larger project, the applicant should include the total project cost.
- If the applicant is not the property owner, permission to apply must be included. Applicants proposing work at City-owned property, including parks, playgrounds, and protected open space must work with the appropriate City department and/or Board or Commission.

For grant requests that are intended to fund particular areas of activity (affordable housing predevelopment, open space acquisition preparation and due diligence, etc.) but NOT specific programs – hereafter known as “Undesignated Fund Grants” – the following reporting requirements are a condition of the CPC’s approval of the grant request:

- Grantees shall provide an itemized accounting of all expenditures made under the Grant once each funding round and when all funds are expended, to include the total amount of funds expended to date and the remaining balance, plus any information on whether the remaining funds are “pending” (i.e., conceptually allocated to a project, but for which expenditures have not yet been made);
- This accounting will include the name of the program, a brief description, the total amount expended on the program, and a general breakdown of these



expenditures;

- Any subsequent Undesignated Funding application submitted to the CPC for review which has been funded in a prior round shall include the budget report for previous expenditures (including the amount and activities funded) as part of the project application;
- Applications for projects that included use of Undesignated Funds prior to the CPA request should note the fund, amount utilized and uses in the application.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please read the entire CPA Application & Review Process before beginning.
2. Complete the Application Cover Sheet.
3. Include the following information:
4. **Narrative:** A description of the project and, when applicable, of the property involved and its proposed use. Include responses to the following questions:
5. Project location, including address and parcel number
6. What Community Preservation criteria – both general and program-area specific – does this project meet?
7. What community need(s) does this project serve? If the project serves multiple needs and populations, please describe them. If the project serves a population that is currently underserved, please describe.
8. What specific guarantees will assure the long-term preservation of the project?
9. What community support does the project have? Explain the nature and level of the support.
10. How will the success of this project be measured?
11. Is ongoing maintenance and upkeep required? If yes, please explain how this will be accomplished.
12. **Project Budget:** The total budget for this project, including specifically how CPA funds will be spent. All items of expenditure must be clearly identified. Include project quotes, or show why this is not appropriate or feasible. List any additional funding sources, either committed or under consideration. Explain in detail financial need for the project and for CPA funding specifically. Include commitment letters if available.
13. * If the application submission is for a community housing project, please submit a development budget and a sources and uses budget. Also, community housing home ownership projects shall include an affordability analysis, and community housing rental projects shall include a five-year operating budget.



14. **Multi-Year Funding:** If the project is expected to continue over more than one year, or if bonding the project is anticipated, please provide annual funding requirements.
15. **Project Timeline:** Explain the various steps of the project and when they will be completed.
16. **Feasibility:** List and explain all further actions or steps that will be required for completion of the project, such as environmental assessments, zoning or other permits and approvals, agreement on terms of any required conservation, affordability or historic preservation agreements, subordination agreements, and any known or potential barriers or impediments to project implementation.
17. If the project is for open space acquisition, a CR or APR is required. A third party holder of the CR or APR must be identified.
18. **Maps:** USGS topographical map, assessors map, or other map as appropriate, showing location of the project.
19. **Visual materials:** Photographs, renderings or design plans of the site, building, structure or other subject for which the application is made.
20. **Page numbers:** please number all of the pages in the application.
21. Include the following attachments, if applicable and available:
22. Record plans of the land
 - Natural resource limitations (wetlands, flood plain, etc.)
 - Zoning (district, dimensional and use regulations as applies to the land)
 - Inspection reports
 - 21E Reports and other environmental assessment reports
 - Mass. Historic Commission Historic inventory sheet
 - Historic structure report or existing condition reports
 - Existing conditions report
 - Names and addresses of project architects, contractors, and consultants
 - Evidence that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed
 - Documentation that you have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale agreement, option, or deed; or explanation of how the proposed project will proceed in the absence of site control.



- Evidence that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for assessment and/or remediation in place
- Letters of support sufficient to document clear endorsement by community members and groups, and, where appropriate, by municipal boards and departments. In particular, projects should receive the support of applicable boards and commissions for their applications, (Conservation Commission or Agricultural Commission for open space projects, Housing Partnership for community housing projects, Recreation Commission for recreation projects, and the Historical Commission for historic preservation projects).
- Any other information useful for the Committee in considering the project

SMALL GRANTS PROCEDURE

Purpose

To encourage a greater diversity of applicants, broaden community participation, and make applying less formidable, we have developed an alternative funding process for certain small grants of up to \$5,000.00, with a total project cost not to exceed \$10,000.00.

The small grant process was developed to be simpler and less time consuming than the traditional application process. But small grant applicants must still demonstrate their eligibility for funding under the CPA. And, with the exceptions noted below, the merits of the proposed projects will be evaluated according to the general and program-specific criteria in this Plan. In this respect, all projects, regardless of the size of the request, will be treated the same.

Types of Projects Considered in the Small Grant Process

Not all grant requests of up to \$5,000 are appropriate for streamlined review under the small grants process. Those that aren't may still be submitted for consideration during the traditional funding round.

For small grants, the Committee seeks projects that are discrete, tangible and stand-alone. They must be easily implemented and completed within a three year time-period. Small grant proposals should be largely uncomplicated and self-explanatory in nature.



Categories of projects that will be considered for small grants are noted in the following chart. Rehabilitation or restoration of open space and affordable housing may only be proposed if the underlying property was acquired with CPC funding.

Table 1 ELIGIBILITY FOR SMALL GRANT PROCESS

	Open Space	Historic	Recreation	Housing
Acquire	NO	NO	NO	NO
Create	NO	NO	NO	NO
Preserve	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
Support	NO	NO	NO	NO
Rehab/ Restore	Eligible , if acquired with CPC funding	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible , if acquired with CPC funding

The following provides further guidance regarding the types of project proposal being sought. **This list is not exclusive and the Committee encourages applicants to think creatively about other possibilities.** If you are uncertain, please consult with the CPC staff.

Examples of Possible Small Grant Projects

- Signs, Plaques
- Interpretive or Educational Kiosks or Installations
- Trails
- Invasive Species Control
- Archiving of Historic Records
- Grading/Soil Treatment/Vegetation Planting
- Water Control Structures
- Habitat Management; Wildlife or Protected Species Enhancement
- Historic Rehab - Discrete Projects (Fences/Doors/Painting)



- Park Benches, Bleachers, Playground Equipment

The following projects generally will not be appropriate for the small grant process, either because of their complexity, the involvement of real property acquisition, or because the proposed funding is a precursor to or integral piece of a larger project. All projects proposed to take place on city property must be already supported by the appropriate city department or committee (i.e., parks and recreation support for work proposed at parks or athletic fields).

Projects or Parameters Not Appropriate for Small Grant Process

- Funds to be used for acquisition, creation or support of Open Space, Recreational Land, Historic Properties or Affordable Housing
- Assessments or Feasibility Studies
- Design Work
- Housing Support for Residents of Affordable Housing
- Soft Costs for Existing or Future Projects
- Cost Overruns for Existing Projects
- Supplementing Municipal Funds (e.g., Conservation Fund) or Appropriations, or projects appropriate for Capital Improvement
- Salaries, overhead or related expenses
- Segmenting of projects
- Rehabilitation of privately-owned historic structures that provide no public access or use

Although funding request may entail a matching funds or in-kind-services component, they need not. And unlike the traditional funding round, such outside contributions, though always desirable, will not be a factor in project evaluation for small grants. CPA funds may be awarded under the Small grants program up to \$5,000.

To the extent matching funds are contemplated:

1. the total project cost should not exceed \$10,000; and,
2. the match must be secured at the time the application is submitted.

There is no limit for the donation of in-kind supplies or labor.

Finally, for work proposed on private or municipal lands other than the applicant's, the application must evidence the support and permission of the landowner(s).



Small Grant Application Process and Timing

Requests for Small Grants will be made through a Combined Eligibility and Application Form, available on the CPC website or from the Office of Planning and Sustainability. Small Grant applicants are required to consult with CPC staff prior to submitting the Combined Eligibility and Application Form. Any letters of support should be submitted with the Form.

Small grants will be considered at the initial meeting starting each funding round. The intent is for the application to stand-alone. The applicant therefore will not be expected to make a presentation during the meeting. At that meeting, to the extent practicable, the Committee will make final recommendations to be forwarded to the City Council for its consideration, separately from those recommendations traditionally made at the close of the funding round.

The Committee reserves the right to deny a request for small grant funding should the nature of the project, or questions raised in response, warrant fuller consideration through the traditional funding round. Applicants will be notified if this is the case to gauge their desire to further participate in the funding process.

EXPEDITED APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURE

The CPC believes that in general the public benefit is best served when the committee conducts its review of applications in its two regularly scheduled yearly rounds. At those times available funding is known, applications can be weighed against one another to prioritize recommendations, and the process is clearly spelled out and maximally transparent. At the same time, we recognize that occasionally a situation may arise in which a project that would normally be of very high priority may require fast-track funding due to time constraints such as a requirement to close on an unexpected real estate purchase, a deadline for matching or leveraging funds in an unforeseen grant opportunity, or other reasons that could not have been known at the time of the previous CPC review round.

In order to accept an application for expedited review, the CPC must make the following determination:

Expedited review is necessary for successful project completion that supports the goals established in the CPC plan.

The CPC shall make this determination by considering the following questions:

- a. When is a CPC commitment needed and why?
- b. When is disbursement needed and why? and



- c. What is the impact on the project of the deadlines for CPC commitment and disbursement not being met?
- d. Why is the project important to community preservation in Northampton? and
- e. What are the potential negative impacts to community preservation in Northampton of not reviewing this project on an expedited basis?

Note: The CPC may consider any relevant information, including but not limited to the merits and drawbacks of the proposed project, the availability of CPC funds, anticipated future project requests, and anticipated fairness to future project requests.

The CPC's agreement to undertake expedited review is not an agreement to recommend the project for CPC funding. If the CPC approves expedited review, the CPC shall use the following process:

1. The CPC will inform the applicant of the expedited timetable for review and of information it needs to conduct the review in addition to a completed application. If the applicant does not provide a completed application and all requested information within the time deadlines established by the committee, the CPC may rescind its decision to review the application on an expedited basis. Expedited applications must include the same information as all other applications, please refer to 'Requirements for Submission' on page 10.
2. The review will go forward according to the standards and processes spelled out for all reviews in the CPC Plan, except that the committee will endeavor to complete the review in a single meeting. The quality and completeness of the application will be especially important in supporting the expedited review process, where time does not permit successive rounds of questions and answers. If the CPC makes a funding recommendation, it will send that to the City Council for consideration at its next meeting. Applicants should understand that the post-CPC elements of the process may be constrained by other timelines.



Historic Preservation



Background

The preservation of historic resources within a community is essential for the vitality of its unique character. Historic properties are important in defining a sense of place. Historic Resources provide a tangible connection to history through material presence—real places that we can experience, that we use, frequent, or inhabit in daily life. Historic Landscapes and buildings provide opportunity for education and understanding our cultural and historical past, and provide economic benefits, identity, and civic pride. The individual threads composing the historic fabric of a community are non-renewable resources, running through time telling the community’s story while enriching the present and future.

When lost through destruction or neglect, irreplaceable ties to the past are obliterated forever. Without a sense of history or connection to the past, an older community may trade its authentic character for anonymous new non-compatible developments.

Threats to Northampton’s historic preservation efforts include, but are not limited to:

- Neglect and delayed maintenance
- New development and expansion that intrude upon or destroy historic resources
- Inappropriate renovation and modificationLack of information and planning for what is historically and culturally significant in the community, including insufficient documentation of many existinh resources

Project Eligibility

A historic resource is defined in the Community Preservation Act to include a building, structure, vessel, or other real property that is either:

- Listed on the State Register of Historic Places, which includes all properties on the Federal Register of Historic Places; or
- Determined by the local Historic Commission to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture, or culture of the city.

To be eligible for funding, historic preservation projects in Northampton must meet one of the above criteria. If funds are being requested for a project not listed on the State Register, the applicant must obtain a letter of support from the Northampton Historical Commission. CPA funds may only be spent or set aside *“for the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources.”*



In connection with historic preservation projects, applicants should consult the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#) and [Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes](#). Historic projects must comply with these standards. The [Standards](#) are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. The [Guidelines](#) offer general design and technical recommendations to assist in applying the Standards to a specific property. Together, they provide a framework and guidance for decision-making about work or changes to a historic property. National Park Service [Preservation Briefs](#) provide information on preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring historic buildings. These NPS Publications help historic building owners recognize and resolve common problems prior to work, and can be a useful resource to inform projects.

Detailed technical studies known as [Historic Structures Reports](#) (HSR) and [Cultural Landscapes Reports](#) (CLR) are critical tools to inform work on historic buildings, and should be used as a first step to guide preservation efforts and priorities. A historic structure report provides documentary, graphic, and physical information about a property's history and existing condition. Broadly recognized as an effective part of preservation planning, an HSR also addresses management or owner goals for the use or re-use of the property. It provides a thoughtfully considered argument for selecting the most appropriate approach to treatment, prior to the commencement of work, and outlines a scope of recommended work. Preparation of HSR or CLR can be part of an applicant's match for a project, or could constitute a separate CPA application in advance of work.

Resources

The Community Preservation Act authorizes the CPC to make recommendations "for the acquisition and preservation of historic resources." Among its definitions, the Act refers to "historic structures and landscapes" as "a building, structure, vessel, or real property that is listed on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture or culture of a city or town." As noted above, a broad range of historic properties meet the definition and are eligible for funding under the CPA.

Hundreds of historic buildings and landscapes are located within Northampton. Some of these resources are in dire need of restoration, rehabilitation or preservation. The CPA offers an option when other approaches are insufficient to accomplish these community objectives.



Historical Commission

The Northampton Historical Commission receives staff support through the City Office of Planning and Sustainability. The Commission carries out limited activities with private donations made through a gift account and occasionally from Planning's budget or grants. The charge of the Mayoral-appointed board is to preserve and protect the City's historic resources through public education and preservation programming. The Commission presents periodic annual Historic Preservation Awards to properties which have been sensitively restored or renovated, or which have compatible additions.

Prior to passage of the CPA in Northampton there was little direct public funding for historic preservation other than federal historic preservation tax credits. Regulatory tools for protection included a Demolition Review Ordinance, a Central Business Architecture Ordinance, a West Street Architecture Ordinance and a Local Historic District (Elm Street and Round Hill).

The Demolition Review Ordinance was enacted in 2005 for the purpose of protecting and preserving significant buildings and structures that constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, economic, political, and/or social history of the City. Through 2024, the Historical Commission has reviewed 117 demolition applications, and found 21 of these to be 'preferably preserved,' resulting in demolition delays. Most of these were demolished following the delay period, one was moved, one was restored, one was incorporated into development, and one was turned into a museum, using CPA funds.

Design Ordinances

The **Central Business Architecture** Ordinance was adopted in 1999 to preserve and enhance the pedestrian-scale character, culture, and economy of downtown Northampton by preserving historic and architecturally valuable buildings and features, and by encouraging compatible building design. The West Street Architecture Ordinance was adopted a decade or so later with more limited goals to ensure new buildings are compatible with the area.

The **Elm Street Historic District** was adopted for lower Elm Street in 1994 as a [MGL Chapter 40C](#) district. In 2012, the district was expanded to Round Hill, partially with the support of CPA funds. The Historical Commission also serves as the Local Historic District Commission; administering design review in the District. A [Design Guidelines](#) manual, which serves as a reference for property owners and the public, describes the



review process for work within the District and a framework for permit evaluation . A CPA grant award funded the creation of this useful guide. Northampton's Zoning provides density bonuses and expanded allowable uses for placement of Historic Preservation Restrictions on certain types of former houses of worship, schools, and other institutional uses.

Funded Historic Projects

Additionally, the Northampton Historical Society (d.b.a. Historic Northampton), a 501 (c)(3) private non-profit museum of local history with a collection of approximately 50,000 objects and three historic buildings, and the Forbes Library, an historic building designed by William Brocklesby, which houses an extensive local history and genealogy collection, are guiding forces in creating and maintaining public awareness and the need to preserve Northampton's historic resources. Historic Northampton has received CPA funds for critical work to preserve its extensive collections. Historic Northampton, the Academy of Music and Forbes Library have received significant CPA support for rehabilitation. Other important historic resources that have received funds for historic rehabilitation include , 22-34 New South Street, First Churches, City Hall, Memorial Hall, the Smith Charities Building, and the old Hampshire County Courthouse

Also with CPA support, the Historical Commission was able to expand an Historic Resources Survey for the City of Northampton. As a result of this work, historically significant properties have been identified and can be tracked into the future. The City's collection of Form B's, the historical survey form used to catalog significant buildings was originally compiled in 1975 and had not been updated since 1988. Many buildings in the City have never been surveyed at all, often because of a lack of information at Forbes Library and other reference sources that served as the primary resources for extensive inventory work started in the 1970's. An accurate inventory is essential for good preservation planning. This inventory can serve as the basis for expanded documentation and preservation efforts, including identification of potential National Register and Local Historic Districts. For example, the inventory forms were instrumental in the expansion of the Local Historic District, and also helped define the boundaries of the Pomeroy Terrace National Register District. CPA funding was also provided to complete this successful nomination for review by the Department of the Interior.

Needs

- Historic properties in Northampton are threatened for a variety of interacting reasons. Limited funding capabilities and other capital priorities have impeded the City's ability to fund historic preservation projects or to conduct surveys to document resources. There is, therefore, a need to make funds available to



specific and identifiable non-maintenance, capital municipal projects that preserve our City's historic heritage as well as to update and supplement existing databases and inventories.

- The Historical Commission, in cooperation with the Planning Board and Office of Planning and Sustainability, using CPA and other funds, completed a comprehensive [Historic Preservation Plan element](#) of the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan. This community-wide effort to identify, assess, and plan for preservation of the City's historic resources also informs preservation priorities for CPA funding as well as broader City regulations, ordinances, policies, and incentives. The Plan includes a concise history of the City, overview of issues, challenges and successes, and goals and recommendations to protect and preserve the City's diverse historic resources.
- Property owners and individuals are often unaware of the important historic and architectural characteristics of their properties. Significant historic structures and properties in Northampton have been altered and materials have been replaced with inappropriate materials that do not respect the original architecture. Particularly in existing and potential historic districts, an effort is needed to bring about more awareness on the part of residents as to the importance of many types of design elements. A significant need exists for public education about the purposes and impacts of historic preservation.
- Finally, age, deterioration, neglect and misuse threaten historic properties in Northampton. The Northampton Historical Commission, in reviewing properties applying for demolition permits, has been told that a particular historic property is simply "beyond repair" and must be torn down. In some cases, a property may indeed be in serious jeopardy, but often the Commission requests more information and encourages renovation. The jurisdiction of the Demolition Review Ordinance, however, allows for a maximum demolition delay period of just one year. There is a need, therefore, for a funding source to provide a bridge between restorations and tear downs, and to create incentives for property owners not to demolish. CPA funds could be a prospective source of funds to provide real incentives that result in meaningful alternatives to demolition.

Possibilities

- Citizens, public officials, historic preservationists and others have suggested a variety of project ideas since enactment of the CPA. The primary needs identified are planning and surveying projects, renovations of municipal assets, and funding incentives for preservation by private property owners.



- For private property owners looking to permanently protect their historic properties, one of the most effective legal tools available is a preservation restriction – a private legal interest conveyed by a property owner to a preservation organization or to a government entity. A preservation restriction is one way to use CPA funds to protect the historic character of privately owned property that has been determined to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture or culture of the City. Preservation Restrictions are often made a condition of CPA funding to safeguard expenditures of CPA funds and provide an additional level of protection for historic resources in the future. Acquisition of a preservation restriction by the City, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, or a nonprofit specializing in preservation could also be a standalone project. A property owner’s use of funds provided through acquisition of a restriction should be utilized for critical building work, and should be detailed in the application

PRIVATELY OWNED HISTORIC RESOURCES

Many historic resources in Northampton are owned by private entities and individuals. Rehabilitation and restoration are allowable CPA expenses under Historic Preservation regardless of ownership; private ownership in and of itself does not preclude the use of CPA funding. However, all CPA awards must be made in order to advance a public purpose. Spending of any municipal funds to advance a private purpose would violate the Anti-Aid amendment of the state constitution. A clear finding must be made that any work proposed is in the broad public interest, and in the case of funding a private business, should also consider implications for future applications. Interior rehabilitation projects proposed within privately owned structures, for example, should not be allowed.

There are many examples of grants to nonprofits both locally and statewide, in these cases either/or a preservation restriction or a public access agreement is generally required. CPA awards for restoration of churches listed on the National Register or found to be of historic importance were a common expenditure until *Caplan v. Acton*, 2018, complicated potential funding of religious organizations regardless of historical importance in 2018. The Anti-Aid Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution, Mass. Const. Amend. Article 42, § 2, as amended by Article 103, restricts grants of public funds to private organizations. A three-factor test to determine the constitutionality of grants challenged under the Anti-Aid Amendment has been developed by the court:

- (i) whether the proposed grant is for the purpose of founding, maintaining or aiding [the institution, private organization, nonprofit, church, etc.];



(ii) whether the effect of the grant is to substantially aid [the institution, private organization, nonprofit, church, etc.]; and

(iii) whether the grant avoids the political and economic abuses which prompted the passage of the Anti-aid Amendment. Commonwealth v. School Comm. of Springfield, 382 Mass. 665, 675 (1981). Caplan v. Acton, 479 Mass. 69 (2018). Massachusetts case law likewise prohibits gratuitous payments, gifts or grants of public funds (which include CPA funds) to individuals. (Opinion of the Justices, 313 Mass. 779, 784 (1943).

Project Evaluation and Guidance Criteria should be considered closely when considering use of CPA funding on privately-owned resources.

Project Evaluation Criteria

As explained in the Overview Section of this Plan, all projects will be evaluated using the General Project Evaluation Criteria. In addition, the CPC, in consultation with the Northampton Historical Commission and the Sustainable Northampton Steering Committee, has identified the following Project Evaluation Criteria for historic preservation proposals. Proposals brought before the CPC should accomplish some or all of the following*:

1. Protect, preserve, enhance, restore and/or rehabilitate properties, features or resources of historical significance
2. Include a focus on the historical function of a property or site
3. Demonstrate eligibility for a local, State or National Historic Register listing, and support of the local Historic Commission
4. Provide assurance of the ability to maintain the historic resource over the long term
5. Include the granting of a permanent historic preservation restriction or other preservation guarantee (see Appendix D)
6. Furthers the Goals and Recommendations of the [Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan](#)
7. Aim to broaden public understanding of Northampton's social, cultural, and physical history

*Criteria are listed in no particular pattern, purpose, organization or structure



ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR EVALUATING PROPOSED HISTORIC PROJECTS

Architectural Significance

- Is the architect notable?
- Is the architectural style distinctive?
- Does the property fit in and contribute to the architectural context of the neighborhood?
- Are there other important architectural features?
- Has the property been maintained in an historically appropriate manner? Have original features been altered?

Historical/Cultural/Social Significance

- Is the building or landscape on the National Register of Historic Places or the State Historic Register? Is the building or landscape located in a National Register Historic District or a Local Historic District?
- Has it been designated Historic, or Preferably Preserved by the Northampton Historical Commission?
- Has a survey form been done on the property? If so, what is the level of historical significance attached to the property?
- What role does this building or landscape play in Northampton's social or cultural history?

Ownership and Financing

- Who owns the building or landscape? Is ownership likely to change hands? Is ownership non-profit, religious, private, etc.
- What are the financial and management capabilities of the owners?
- Is there a demonstrated financial need for this project?
- What other funds will support this project? Have other resources, such as historic tax credits, or state and foundation grants, been applied for?
- What are plans and capabilities for continued maintenance into the future?

Level of protection

- Is the building protected by a preservation restriction or equivalent? A restriction will generally be required for privately-owned resources if not already in place

Historic Preservation



- How will a CPA expenditure be protected in the future?
- What is the potential for loss or destruction of the property?
- Is the applicant willing to accept appropriate historic restrictions?

Necessity and Appropriateness

- Are proposed materials consistent with historic renovation?
- Do building techniques conform to the historic nature of the project?
- Does the proposed work cover essential and important features of the property?
- Has an [HSR or CLR](#) or evaluation by a qualified preservation professional been completed? Is the work proposed consistent with its findings and recommendations?

Contribution to the public interest

- To what extent does the public benefit from the historic preservation project?
- Do the owners of the building or landscape offer public service or community oriented activities to Northampton residents?
- To what extent will the public have access to the building or landscape in its entirety and/or the restored portions of the building or landscape?

Public Support

- What is the level of public support for this project from users, neighbors, professionals, historic groups, and community leaders?



Community Housing



Background

The Community Preservation Act defines "community housing" as "low- and moderate-income housing for individuals and families, including low- or moderate-income senior housing." Low-income housing is "housing for those persons and families whose annual income is less than 80% of the area-wide median income (AMI) as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Moderate-income housing sets the income threshold for individuals and families at less than 100% of the area-wide median income. Currently, HUD classifies Northampton as part of the Springfield metropolitan statistical area, (MSA) which creates a lower fair market rent for Northampton than if it was calculated using Northampton alone. . The housing vouchers based on the Springfield MSA often do not cover the rents in the higher priced Northampton, which creates a barrier for people using the vouchers

Housing affordability promotes social and economic diversity in the City's population. Affordable housing opportunities make it possible for seniors without substantial assets or on fixed incomes to age in place, for young families to buy their first home, for local employees to live in the communities where they work, and for the community to address the basic needs of its most vulnerable citizens, including persons with disabilities and the homeless, with supportive services through their housing.

The Northampton Housing Partnership is a Mayor appointed commission charged with articulating and addressing the short- and long-term housing needs of the community. They often advocate for the preservation of existing affordable housing and the creation of new units in urban core areas and in scattered site locations. The Housing Partnership serves as the City's Fair Housing Committee and helped to create the Assessment of Barriers to Fair Housing in Northampton report released in 2019. They have sponsored workshops to provide information on fair housing laws and landlord/tenant rights.

The City's Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Housing Plan (www.northamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2096) completed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission 2012, with the assistance of CPA funds, states "The convergence of housing trends in Northampton – increasing numbers of households, lower incomes, increasing poverty, rising prices, lower housing production, declining supply of rentals, difficulty in obtaining financing, large up-front cash requirements for homeownership and rentals – all point to a growing affordability gap! If demographic and housing trends are left to evolve unchecked, Northampton will lose ground on its ability to be a place where families across a full range of economic and social strata can call home."



More recently, the [2019 Assessment of Barriers to Fair Housing Report](#) updated and expanded upon these findings, noting that Northampton's housing prices are some of the highest in the region, as the City is an extremely desirable place to live. Northampton is a "community of opportunity" with access to good schools, a business-rich downtown, and important community and social services. This is part of the reason that costs are increasing for both homebuyers and renters at rates higher than those of surrounding communities and the region at-large.

Affordable Housing provider Valley CDC, highlighted challenges for affordable and workforce housing being experienced following the Covid-19 pandemic in an assessment of its successful mortgage subsidy program: During the past two years demand for housing has been strong but housing inventory has been low, making the market very competitive for FTHB. Increasing interest rates make homeownership less affordable. The buyer's lack of ability to purchase homes drives up rental prices. Mid-career homeowners are not becoming move-up buyers and making starter homes available for sale to new young buyers. Inflation and higher rental costs affect the ability of buyers to save, reduce debt, and move forward with a home purchase

Northampton is currently facing a rental affordability problem. Housing cost burdens in Northampton are significant, especially for renters. Renter households in Northampton spending more than 30% of household income on housing costs range from 45%-60% by census tract according to the American Community Survey. Those who spend over 30% of their income on housing are considered "housing cost burdened" by HUD. Northampton has a high incidence of renters. Of the City's 13,000+ housing units, more than 4,600, or 35%, are rental units. The highest percentages of renters are located in and around the downtown, where more than half of all units are rented. The City has worked with a number of non-profit development corporations over the years to increase the inventory of affordable housing. These include the Valley Community Development Corporation, Way Finders, The Community Builders, Inc., Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, Inc., Home City Housing Development, LLC, Friends of Hampshire County Homeless Individuals, Inc., ServiceNet, Inc., DIAL/SELF, and the Northampton Housing Authority.

The Northampton Housing Authority has several public housing properties dedicated to elderly and residents with disabilities. The private sector offers several independent living communities, with varying ranges of affordability. There is a 55 years old and older community on Bridge Road and an assisted living facility at Village Hill, both completed in 2015. These are housing models enjoying huge popularity across the country.

Provision of affordable, workforce, and moderate-income housing has been a priority in Northampton long before the CPA. CPA funds have been able to fill an important



funding gap, contributing at least a portion of funding for 45 community housing projects through fiscal year 2024. . These totaled over \$6.3 million in CPA funding, and have leveraged 25 times that amount in tax credits and other sources. The leverage that CPA funding provides is critical for affordable housing projects to be successful. When complete, these projects will assist in providing nearly 300 permanent housing units and 22 temporary units at two different shelters. Funding was also provided for support for community housing, including the establishment of a fund for predevelopment costs, eviction prevention, a fund for first, last month rents and security deposits, and a program to provide up to \$50,000 in direct assistance to qualifying homebuyers. A fund was established that allows the City to complete necessary due diligence and predevelopment costs at potential affordable housing sites, which can then be turned over shovel-ready for development to nonprofit partners.

Project Eligibility

Community housing is defined to include housing for persons or families earning up to the locality's area-wide median income. However, for housing units created with CPA funds to be counted toward a community's Chapter 40B subsidized housing inventory, the units must serve those earning less than 80% of area median income and comply with additional DHCD requirements that some projects seek to avoid as being uneconomical.

The Act provides that community preservation funds may only be expended for *“the creation, preservation, and support of community housing and for the rehabilitation or restoration of such community housing that is acquired or created”* under the Act. For CPA funds spent on community housing, the Act requires that wherever possible, preference be given to *“the adaptive reuse of existing buildings or construction of new buildings on previously developed sites.”*

The July 2012 revisions to the Act expanded the definition of support of community housing, which includes, but is not limited to, *“programs that provide grants, loans, rental assistance, security deposits, interest-rate write downs or other forms of assistance directly to individuals and families who are eligible for community housing or to an entity that owns, operates or manages such housing, for the purpose of making housing affordable.”*

The CPC will evaluate all proposals for community housing projects to ensure their consistency with fair housing laws and best practices. The CPC will follow the fair housing guidelines published by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development when it evaluates



projects. (<http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/fair-housing-and-civil-rights-information.html>)

Needs

The Housing Partnership supported the a Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Housing Plan for the City in 2012, with CPA support funding. The Plan analyzed affordable housing in Northampton and created action items to preserve and create affordable housing, as well as to provide guidance to the City and the Community Preservation Committee as it seeks to evaluate proposals for housing projects.

The following general categories reflect the needs assessment process undertaken by the Housing Partnership. They have been identified based on prior information acquired during the Sustainable Northampton Master Plan Process from 2008, updated in 2021, and from several other citizen input processes, including the Northampton Vision 2020 Plan, Grow Smart Northampton Plan, Section 418 Certification, Three County Continuum of Care Goals and Objectives, consultations with service providers and public forum feedback, as well as the consultation and citizen participation processes associated with Consolidated Plans and Annual Action Plans required by HUD for CDBG entitlement communities.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Data show that it is far more cost effective to preserve tenancies than to provide shelter and services for those who have lost their housing. Unfortunately, there are few funding sources for prevention activities. Efforts such as the Tenancy Preservation Program, Tenant and Landlord Mediation and Housing Stabilization Programs are highly effective ways of preserving housing for those at-risk of homelessness. As the “All Roads Lead Home Plan” from 2008 states, “Prevention must be a key part of our strategy, because it is humane, cost-effective, and critical to ending homelessness.” 240 homeless individuals were counted in the Hampshire County 2023 point in time count, and there are homeless encampments in various locations around the City, especially in summer when shelter resources are reduced or unavailable.

Shelters and Rapid Re-housing

The City has two year round emergency shelters for individuals funded partially through CDBG funds. One is the Grove Street Inn (91 Grove Street). capacity for 20-24 beds for men and women. The other shelter is the Interfaith Cot Shelter (43 Center Street) and houses ten people in three separate suites. Both facilities are usually full, especially in the winter. The City worked with ServiceNet and several community volunteers to



create the Interfaith Cot Shelter due to the increased shelter need. This program operates during the winter months from November through April. With State funding sources never guaranteed, continued operation of these programs is critical. Physical rehabilitation of the Grove Street Inn has been prioritized in the City's CDBG 5 year Performance Plan, as well as continued support for the emergency shelter system overall.

Another housing option is located on the Veterans Administration (VA) Campus in Leeds and only available to military veterans. This program is administered by Soldier On, which is separate from the VA. The Soldier On program consists of 45 one bedroom units serving veterans from throughout the New England area.

As the Needs Assessment states, "These temporary shelters have reflected a crisis management response to helping the homeless, saving many lives." More recently, however, "there has been a shift from focusing all resources on crisis management to preventing homelessness by quickly providing housing with wrap-around services as needed through a rapid response Housing First model." Programs such as Yvonne's House, the five supportive housing units for the homeless in Valley CDC's King Street SRO, and the 2020 rehabilitation and units added to Valley CDC's Sergeant Housing SRO embody this new approach. COVID-19 has dramatically increased the need and advocacy for Housing First in Northampton. The CPC has received at least one funding request for CPA funding to create Housing First for people who are homeless, and would provide wrap around services.

Rapid re-housing programs ensure that if people find themselves homeless that their stays in the emergency shelter system are brief. Currently there are no beds in Northampton meeting this definition, but it is a housing model needed in the community.

PRODUCING AND PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Finally, according to the Needs Assessment, "the City needs to focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing at a variety of levels of affordability, including both rental and homeownership options."

After interviewing housing and homeless providers, the Housing Partnership has identified new Single Room Occupancy(SRO) housing and a Safe Havens Program to be its top priorities for addressing homelessness and near homelessness in Northampton.

SRO units provide "next step" housing for individuals coming out of shelter. SRO's, especially enhanced SROs (rooms that offer bathroom and meal preparation facilities) also function as permanent housing for those with limited incomes, or for those looking



for small, efficient rental units. The City has lost over half of its SRO housing stock over the past few decades. The creation of new, safe and affordable SRO units is a goal of the Partnership.

Safe Havens/Housing First programs provide housing for the chronically homeless mentally ill that circulate regularly through the area homeless shelters.

Rental Housing for Families. Northampton is a very desirable community in which to live and has an expensive rental housing market. Homeownership is out of reach for many families and there is a significant need for additional rental units that are affordable to low- and moderate-income families. In order to be competitive for state and federal resources that are available for the development of long-term affordable housing, private and non-profit developers generally need to demonstrate a commitment of local financial support. CPA funds can be combined with and used to leverage state and federal financing programs to create permanent affordable rental housing for low and moderate income families.

Other high-priority needs include the following:

- Preservation of existing affordable rental stock
- Housing rehabilitation resources
- Affordable homeownership for families
- Housing for at-risk and special needs populations
- Looking beyond traditional housing models to promote alternative living options such as live/work spaces for artists, and co-housing opportunities

In Northampton, the CPC has supported studio apartments (f/n/a SRO housing), housing for the homeless, affordable rental housing, and affordable home ownership.

Possibilities

As new residential developments are proposed, CPA funding could be used to buy down the cost of affordable units that builders include in new developments. In addition, CPA funds could be used to help first-time homebuyers or other homebuyers afford a home in Northampton. CPA funds could also be used to support the housing needs of low- or moderate-income senior citizens through several funding mechanisms to assist with housing costs. CPA funds could be used to provide financial incentives to promote the creation of affordable accessory apartments within the existing housing stock.



CPA funds could be used to assist private affordable housing developers in leveraging other federal and state funds. This is extremely helpful where a project requires multiple funding sources and those other sources require a demonstrated commitment of local financial support in order to qualify for funds.

CPA funds could be used in certain circumstances for direct assistance to individuals and families, including counseling and financial assistance, to enable these individuals to acquire and then stay in a home.

CPA funds could be used to assist public and nonprofit entities that provide support for community housing, as defined above.

Project Evaluation Criteria

As explained in the Overview Section of this Plan, all projects will be evaluated using the General Project Evaluation Criteria. In addition, the CPC, in consultation with the Northampton Housing Authority, and the Northampton Housing Partnership, has identified the following Project Evaluation Criteria for community housing proposals. Proposals brought before the CPC should accomplish some or all of the following:

1. Create or preserve community housing – both rental and home ownership, with a focus that matches community needs for households
2. Promote and encourage use by diverse populations
3. Provide housing that is harmonious in design and scale with the surrounding community
4. Intermingle affordable and market rate housing
5. Ensure long-term affordability (Appendix D), with a focus on:
 - a) Housing ownership affordability of at least 30 years
 - b) Housing rental affordability of at least 30 years, or such longer period as may be contained in an Affordable Housing Restriction granted to the Commonwealth.
6. Promote the use of existing buildings or construction on previously-developed or City-owned sites
7. Give priority to Northampton residents and employees, consistent with fair housing. For information about fair housing, see Appendix B
8. Provide the City credit for units under M.G.L. Chapter 40B
9. Provide housing that incorporates supportive services for those in need of services, including the homeless and persons with disabilities.



10. Is LEED or Energy Star certified, complies with energy stretch code, and has a very low HERS rating, and is fossil fuel free, or meets City energy and sustainability performance standards for affordable housing projects with significant city funding
11. Enhance nonprofit capacity for providing housing and related services
12. Provide mixed-use development opportunities
13. Provide housing in locations that promote walking, biking, and use of public transportation, and discourage single-occupancy vehicle trips
14. Provide housing for households with incomes below 80% of area median, and based on community need give special consideration for funding to projects which restrict at least some units to even lower income households including households with incomes below 50% or 30% of area median.
15. Is accessible to people with disabilities or is visitable for people with disabilities

**Criteria are listed in no particular pattern, purpose, organization or structure*



Open Space



Background

Protected open space is essential for a variety of reasons.

For the long-term sustainability of Northampton, open space contains key natural resources upon which the health of our community and our future sufficiency depend: food, biofuel, clean water, air & soil. Northampton farmland provides us with healthful local food and a connection with the land and with one another. As Northampton endeavors to “re-localize” in the face of rising energy /transportation costs & climate change and as we expand our Northampton Designs with Nature program to catch stormwater before it creates downstream flooding and water quality problems, we must take great care to preserve the precious resources held within our open spaces.

Open space also enhances the quality of life for residents. Undeveloped areas provide places to experience beauty, solitude, and a connection with the natural environment.

Protection of open space provides essential habitat for non human life. Plants and wildlife require tracts of undeveloped area to thrive and their protection and preservation is a critical necessity.

Open space, once conserved, costs relatively little to maintain. The open spaces we maintain in protected wetlands, protected farms, conservation areas, and parks constitute our natural environmental legacy.

Open space preservation contributes to the City’s overall resiliency to climate change and connected landscapes. Acquisition of land that will experience more frequent flooding with increased rainfall patterns, and the prioritization of protecting land for the long-term migration of wildlife and plants that is critical for healthy ecosystems to thrive with climate change can serve current open space needs and be more resilient in the future.

Currently in Northampton, public and private organizations, businesses, farmers, and individual citizens provide our residents with open space and conservation areas that contribute greatly to our high quality of life. However, development, escalating land values, and limited municipal financial resources have contributed to the loss or degradation of potential open space areas, and have foreclosed opportunities for their permanent protection. Protection of currently private owned open space through acquisition or conservation easements or agricultural restrictions remains a primary goal in Northampton.



Project Eligibility

The CPA law requires that a participating community “*shall spend, or set aside for later spending, not less than 10 percent of the annual revenues in the local Community Preservation Fund for open space, which may include land for recreational use.*” Open space is defined to include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Agricultural land
- Well fields, aquifers, recharge areas, and other watershed lands
- Grasslands, fields, or forest lands
- Wetlands and other water resources
- River, stream, lake and pond frontage
- Scenic vistas
- Land for wildlife habitat, biodiversity or nature preserves
- Urban parks and conservation areas

With regard to permissible purposes for which CPA funds may be spent on open space, the Act specifically provides that CPA funds may only be expended for “*the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space and for the rehabilitation or restoration of such open space that is acquired under the CPA.*” Open space acquired in whole or by part with CPA funds must have a permanent conservation or agricultural preservation restriction held by a third party.

Resources

Northampton’s open space resources (excluding land for recreation) may be inventoried as follows:

- Farmland, publicly or privately owned
- Connecticut River, Mill River, Parsons Brook, and all riverfront property, as well as other water bodies, including brooks and streams
- Wetlands, vernal pools and other protected resource areas
- Small undeveloped parcels that remain in a natural state or that otherwise provide open space to urban and suburban neighborhoods
- Vista parcels and parcels with significant geologic formations, including rock outcrops



- City, state, or federally owned land not used for active recreation and primarily for natural habitat purposes
- Undeveloped institutional and privately-held land

Various organizations are active in the protection and management of open space in Northampton. The Conservation Commission, the Agricultural Commission, the Department of Public Works, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Agricultural Resources, MassWildlife, Mass Audubon, Kestrel Trust, Broad Brook Coalition, and other non-profit land trusts have been active in protecting and acquiring open space in the City of Northampton, and helping the City to manage and improve open spaces. A complete inventory of open space can be found in the Open Space, Recreation, and Multi-Use Trail Plan section of the Sustainable Northampton Plan (2021).

Since 2007, the City has protected more than 2,500 acres through acquisition of fee-interest and permanent conservation and agricultural preservation restrictions. CPA funds contributed to hard or soft costs for most of these transactions. The CPA has contributed to significant open space projects. These include:

The allocation of approximately \$1,000,000 of CPA funds for the purchase of the Bean and Allard farms on Spring Street in the spring of 2010. This provides an additional 37 acres of conservation land, 116 acres of prime farmland for local agricultural uses and the Grow Food Northampton community gardens, and 24 acres of land for the Florence Fields Recreation Area, which was also funded in large part through the CPA.

Pine Grove, a former 18-hole golf course was acquired by the City in 2020. The 105-acre area includes more than half a mile of Nashawannuck Brook riparian area, is part of a wildlife corridor, and abuts existing protected areas in the Rocky Hill Greenway, in itself created primarily using CPA funds. Using CPA and state funds, and in partnership with the Division of Ecological Restoration and MassAudubon, the City has been pursuing natural communities restoration and climate change adaptation. The area has quickly becoming a destination for walking and birdwatching, and a trail network, including an ADA-accessible loop, is being planned as part of long-term comprehensive site restoration.

Other significant purchases funded in whole or part through the CPA include major additions to the Broad Brook Greenway/Fitzgerald Lake, Parsons Brook Greenway, Rocky Hill Greenway, and the Saw Mill and Mineral Hills.



Needs

Prior to adoption of the CPA, the City was acquiring and permanently protecting almost 100 acres of open space, in fee or by easement, annually. Since the Community Preservation Act was implemented, that figure has gone up to just under 150 acres a year by expanding the funding available for open space protection and allowing additional projects both large and small to be completed. Still, as Northampton has developed in recent years, residents have recognized that open space is being lost and the permanent protection of open space to serve a wide variety of needs is a critical quality of life issue. This was heightened by Covid-19, as residents turned to local trails and open spaces near home more than ever before for exercise, fresh air, nature watching, and recreation. .

Just over 25% of Northampton, of which about 20% includes some of the most ecologically valuable land, has been preserved. Preservation efforts should continue, prioritized on ecological and climate resilience values and on contribution to the City's broader land use goals.

During numerous public meetings with City boards and officials, the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, and Recreation Commission have consistently heard concerns that important open space and recreation needs are not being met.

The Conservation Commission and Planning Board, working through the public planning process, have identified the following, as Northampton's most pressing open space needs:

- Link and expand existing open space to provide passive recreation, wildlife
- movement between natural habitats, and climate changed induced migrations.
- Protect vistas and viewsheds.
- Protect a range of critical and natural plant and animal habitats, including wetlands, rare and endangered species habitat, and riparian lands along the Connecticut, Mill, and Manhan Rivers and other rivers and streams.
- Preserve open space parcels that help define Northampton's character, including parcels at city entrances and gateways.
- Protect farmland, forestland, and the rural character of outlying areas.
- Protect Northampton, Easthampton, and Hatfield drinking water supply watershed and aquifer lands.

Provide access to open space resources especially for environmental justice



populations/low and moderate income areas, including small open spaces in urban areas.

- Ensure development is sensitive to ecological resources, vistas, and open space.
- Serve the needs of those with disabilities in public open space.
- Ensure fishing and informal swimming opportunities throughout the City.
- Protect Smith Vocational agricultural and forestry lands, including some of the oldest trees in the city at the former at the Veterans Administration Medical Center.
- Protect key parcels in the last remaining large undeveloped areas of town – Broad Brook and Beaver Brook Watersheds, Parsons Brook Greenway, Marble Brook Greenway, Saw Mill Hills, Mineral Hills, and the Meadows.

Possibilities

When parcels become available, proponents seeking to protect them could use CPA funds in combination with other land acquisition strategies to acquire properties or obtain conservation restrictions that ensure their protection as open space.

In the case of particularly significant parcels, proponents might also use CPA funds to obtain rights of first refusal, long-term purchase options or life estate agreements to purchase the land when and if the current owners wish to sell. Further possibilities include the use of CPA funds to create or improve critical habitat areas such as: wetlands, vernal pools, pastures and forest areas.

In addition to funding stand-alone open space projects, CPA funds have also been used to contribute to 'funds' available as needed for open-space related costs. These include the conservation fund, a fund administered by the Conservation Commission for soft costs and predevelopment items for which quick action is necessary related to open space purchases, and a local Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program.

CPA can also be a source of funding for capital improvements, restoration, or extraordinary repairs to open spaces for which CPA funding was used in initial acquisition or creation. As more areas are conserved using CPA funds over time, this creates opportunities for improving many of the City's Greenways for improved habitat and passive recreation.

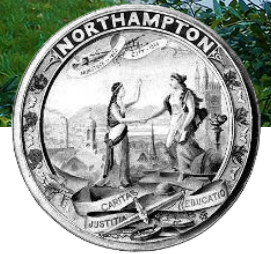


Project Evaluation Criteria

As explained in the Overview Section of this Plan, all projects will be evaluated using the General Project Evaluation Criteria. In addition, the CPC, in consultation with the Northampton Conservation Commission and the Office of Planning and Sustainability, has identified the following Project Evaluation Criteria for open space proposals. Proposals brought before the CPC should accomplish some or all of the following:

- Permanently protect important, unique or threatened plants, animals, habitat or corridors, including areas that are of significance for biodiversity
- Preserve Northampton's rural and agricultural character, scenic views and community character defining views
- Provide opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education
- Provide connections with existing non-motorized multi-use trails or potential trail linkages
- Preserve valuable surface water resources, including rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, buffer zones, vernal pools and riparian zones
- Protect aquifer recharge areas and drinking water quality and quantity
- Provide climate change mitigation opportunities such as flood control/storage and nature-based design, restoration of disturbed areas, carbon sequestration, and preservation of resilient landscapes
- Preserve large strategic tracts of undeveloped land and parcels adjacent to existing permanently protected open space
- Provide valuable open space opportunities in urban neighborhoods and near environmental justice populations
- Protect farmland and rich agricultural soils
- Restore former farmland that that has been allowed to lie fallow on previously protected open spaces
- Advance goals and objectives of the 2018-2025 Open Space, Recreation, and Multi-Use Trail Plan, 2021 Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan, and Climate Resilience and Regeneration Plan.

**Criteria are listed in no particular pattern, organization or structure*



Recreation



Background

Recreation contributes to the health and wellbeing of Northampton. Well-developed resources for recreation enhance quality of life, increase property values, improve health status for youth and adults, create a stronger sense of community, and buffer the hard edges of the urban environment.

The City of Northampton Parks and Recreation Department works diligently to promote the wellbeing of individuals and the greater community by providing a wide range of high quality recreational opportunities to meet the needs of our residents and visitors. These activities contribute to a healthy lifestyle and include playgrounds, athletic fields, programming, and community events.

The Northampton Parks and Recreation Department offers a wide variety of recreation programs. Recreational areas receive heavy demand from a variety of organized sports leagues. Field use and availability and storage space for sport-related equipment is a critical concern for citizens, visitors and community groups. It is often challenging to balance the available resources, the need to restore and rehabilitate recreational fields and spaces that accommodate the range of community interests.

The use of parks, recreation areas and open space has risen since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, along with increased value on local and accessible leisure opportunities. Additional park and recreation spaces and facilities will likely be needed to meet continued high demand for new and refurbished recreation resources, address new recreation needs, and to improve our ability to responsibly manage the resources currently owned by the City. Additionally, the rehabilitation and restoration of existing facilities is important to continue the recreational opportunities afforded on existing lands. Both active and passive recreation spaces are an important consideration.

In addition to the City, numerous private entities and organizations contribute to the rich landscape of recreational opportunities for youth and adults. These include landowners, such as Massachusetts Audubon Society, Smith College and others, and a wide variety of organizations that manage, staff, offer or promote recreational programming, such as soccer, baseball/softball, lacrosse, and football leagues, bike safety and rail trail use, outdoor clubs, YMCA programs, and rowing and water sports programs. Largely volunteer, these groups add the coaching, organizational and fundraising components needed for successful recreational programs in Northampton.



Project Eligibility

Recreational use is defined to include active or passive recreational use. These can include a wide variety of options, such as community gardens, trails, noncommercial youth and adult sports, water sports, swimming, rowing, canoeing and kayaking, equine activities, cycling, parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, and courts, and dog parks

The Act provides that CPA funds may only be expended on *“the acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of land for recreational use.”* CPA funds cannot be used for artificial turf for athletic fields, horse or dog racing, or the use of land for a stadium, gymnasium or similar structure.

Please refer to Appendix A, Allowable Use Table. The Act’s definitions of “rehabilitation” and “maintenance” provide further clarity about which types of projects are eligible for CPA funding (see the Glossary of Terms at Appendix C).

Resources

The “acres of parkland per 1,000 population” metric is the most common technique for determining whether a community has “enough” parkland. There is no standard acreage amount in the United States, and it can vary widely due to a community’s history, culture, demographics, density, development patterns, and other factors. For example, the acreage level of services (LOS) of communities within a current National Parks and Recreation database ranges from less than two acres per 1,000 citizens to over 100 acres per 1,000 citizens. Acreage LOS should be used in conjunction with other needs assessment techniques to gauge a community’s need for additional parkland, such as surveys, focus group meetings, and population projections which may indicate that a population’s needs are not being met, and additional parkland may be required. More land area for recreation can be less expensive and more sustainable to manage if that allows areas for fields to rest, reducing pressure for artificial turf, irrigation, more intense organic maintenance that requires funds and additional staffing, and possible chemical treatments that are needed when fields are used more extensively with no rest.

Although there is pressure to expand the number of acres of recreational facilities in the City of Northampton, the City provides its citizens with many active and passive recreational opportunities. Passive recreation interests are available and accessible within the numerous permanently protected conservation areas throughout the City. In addition, the City of Northampton and the Northampton Parks and Recreation Department, in cooperation with community groups and other partners provide a range of active recreational resources to the citizens. These include: community gardens;



playgrounds and active recreation facilities associated with school properties; multi-use recreation areas (Maines Field, Sheldon Field, Veterans Memorial Field, Florence Recreation Fields, Arcanum Field, Ellerbrook Field, and the Connecticut River Greenway park); Musante Beach, multi-use trails and walkways; soccer fields; multi-use park facilities; and urban pocket parks. An inventory of permanently protected open space and recreational areas, current to its date of publication, including multi-use paths, can be found in the 2018-2025 Open Space, Recreation, and Multi-Use Trail Plan.

Further, there are a number of private recreation facilities in Northampton. Golf courses, fair grounds, tracks and tennis courts, marinas, outdoor recreation centers, and indoor facilities, are a few of the facilities woven into the landscape of Northampton.

Northampton and the surrounding towns have a significant and historic resource in the Connecticut River, which in addition to its historic functions as a source of food, water, transportation, and its breathtaking beauty, is an unparalleled recreational resource. Points of access for exercise water sports, including swimming and canoeing and kayaking, are important to our citizens, and rising waterfront real estate values make the insurance of public access to river front of considerable importance.

Needs

With CPA funding, the Parks and Recreation Commission completed a Recreational Feasibility Study and Needs Assessment for the City of Northampton in 2010. This assessment indicated that demand for recreation facilities is rising and, as these facilities are more intensively used, a need to provide periodic relief so they can recover and continue to serve the community's needs. While many needs for new fields and recreational spaces have been met through CPA funding, there is a continued ongoing need to rehabilitate existing field space for recreational use, taking into account climate mitigation needs. If rehabilitated effectively, many parks could be utilized more efficiently. In addition, Maines field, Sheldon field and Arcanum field have been identified as requiring restoration work. Sheldon Field has expansion capacity on land that has been banked for recreation but is currently not being used for that purpose. The need for a new, updated needs assessment has been noted.

Demand for recreational facilities is driven by several factors, among which are the growth of sports opportunities for girls and women, the increasing popularity of organized leagues for youth and adults, widespread recognition of the benefits of exercise on physical and mental health, and the generalized need for relaxation as a response to the frantic pace of modern life. Together, these factors have steadily placed increasing pressure on existing spaces dedicated to recreation. The Covid-19 pandemic



underscored the need for local recreational opportunities, as more people sought passive and active recreation close to home. Furthermore, due to resource limits, some Northampton citizens must search beyond the City limits to participate in their preferred recreational activities. Demand for accessible recreation amenities has also risen, due to various factors, such as our aging population and other needs. Needs for restrooms in particular have risen, as well as for increased accessibility for users of varying needs for offerings and facilities. Increased demand for water-based recreational opportunities also continues to be present, though development of any new facilities for river access has been challenging to to cost, environmental concerns, and safety.

Possibilities

'Recreational' uses encompass a wide variety of potential projects, and CPA funds can be used to fund the development, rehabilitation, creation, or expansion of any lands that fall into this category. Examples of these facilities might include: sport fields, tot lots, pickleball courts, fitness trails, auditory and tactile outdoor recreation kiosks, kayak rowing and canoe launch areas, cross country skiing trails, ice skating areas, cycling, rail trails, multi-use trails, and other pathway developments. Additionally, CPA funds could be used to rehabilitate or restore recreational land or facilities in order that they satisfy their intended purpose, and help maximize the value and use of land already dedicated to recreation.

CPA funds have already been used to fund several significant recreation projects that have, and will continue, to expand the opportunities available within the City.

In 2011 the CPA funded approximately \$1,200,000 for the development of five multi-purpose fields and two baseball fields at the former Bean-Allard Farm. This award followed a \$910,000 allocation to help fund the purchase of the Florence Recreation Fields area, and the land across Meadow Street that was developed into Grow Food Northampton's organic community gardens, as well as associated river corridor and farmland. These projects now provide 24 acres for playing fields, walking trail, play structures, and 410 community garden plots.

The need for a riverfront park providing boat access to the Connecticut River was addressed in 2013, when the CPA provided \$190,000 to a million-dollar project to convert the former Lane asphalt plant on Damon Road into a Connecticut River Greenway park. This facility now provides boat docks, access to the northern terminus of the Northampton-New Haven Canal, and, with the cooperation of the Parks and Recreation Department and Northampton Community Rowing, a boathouse and rowing programs. Improved accessibility to the boat launch was added in 2023 , primarily with MassTrails funding.



Since the CPA legislation was amended to allow improvements to existing recreational facilities, project proponents have been very active in seeking funds for this type of work. Projects funded in this area include new playgrounds for the Jackson, Finn Ryan Road and Bridge Street schools, as well as Lampron Park, Florence Recreation Fields, and Hampshire Heights. In 2023, the CPA funded a study, then \$350,000 towards the construction of accessible Pickleball Courts at Ellerbrook Field Park. Additionally, the CPA has provided nearly one million dollars for the design and construction of a new and expanded Pulaski Park, which provides recreation opportunities downtown.

These projects are all a major step in meeting the needs specified in the Parks and Recreational Needs Assessment.

Project Evaluation Criteria

As explained in the Overview section of this Plan, all projects will be evaluated using the General Project Evaluation Criteria. In addition, the CPC, in consultation with the Northampton Parks & Recreation Commission and with broad public input as part of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, has identified the following Project Evaluation Criteria for recreation proposals. Proposals brought before the CPC should accomplish some or all of the following*:

1. Support multiple active and passive recreation uses;
2. Serve a significant number of residents;
3. Expand the range of recreational opportunities available to Northampton residents of all ages
4. Enhance the appreciation of the natural world and its conservation
5. Contribute to the positive health status of its citizens
6. Benefit conservation and recreation initiatives
7. Maximize the utility of land already owned by Northampton (e.g. school property)
8. Promote the creative use of former railway, waterways and other corridors, including connecting corridors, to create safe and healthful non-motorized transportation and exercise opportunities
9. Expand recreational opportunities for those segments of the population that are underserved given the current location of existing recreational lands and unique needs of different segments of the community

Forms



10. Accomplish any of the preceding by restoring or rehabilitating existing facilities or lands to serve their intended purpose.
11. Incorporate environmentally friendly design and long-term maintenance
12. Have the support of the Northampton Parks & Recreation Commission and other groups and partners involved in recreation

**Criteria are listed in no particular pattern, organization or structure*

Community Preservation Eligibility Determination Form

The purpose of this form is to make sure that all project applications applying for Community Preservation Act funding are eligible for funding. Please refer to Appendix-A – Allowable Use Table in the *Community Preservation Plan* when filling out this form. This form must be approved in order for an application to be accepted.

Project Title:

Project Sponsor/Organization:

Contact Name:

Property Owner and Address, if applicable:

Mailing Address:

Daytime phone #:

Fax #:

E-mail address & Website:

CPA Program Area (check those that apply):

Open Space Historic Preservation Community Housing Recreation

Project Purpose (check those that apply):

Acquisition Creation Preservation Support Rehabilitation/Restoration

Project Summary: Please provide a brief description of the project.

For CPC Use Eligible: _____ Not Eligible: _____ Date: _____

Reviewer: _____



Community Preservation Project Application Cover Sheet

I: Project Information

Project Title: _____

Project Summary: Please provide a brief description of the project.

Estimated start date: _____

Estimated completion date: _____

CPA Program Area (check those that apply):

Open Space Historic Preservation Community Housing Recreation

II: Applicant/Developer Information

Contact Person and or/primary applicant: _____

Property Owner and Address, if applicable: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Daytime phone #: _____

Fax #: _____

E-mail address & Website: _____

III: Budget Summary

Total project budget: \$ _____

CPA request: \$ _____

% of budget: _____

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date Submitted: _____

Appendix A: Allowable Use Table

ATTACHMENT V-2 - COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND ALLOWABLE PROJECT SPENDING PURPOSES (G.L. c. 44B, § 5)

	OPEN SPACE	HISTORIC RESOURCES	RECREATIONAL LAND	COMMUNITY HOUSING
	Land to protect existing and future wetlands, aquifers and recharge areas, watershed land, agricultural land, grasslands, fields, forest land, fresh and salt water marshes and other wetlands, ocean, river, stream, lake and pond frontage, beaches, dunes and other coastal lands, lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve and land for recreational use	Building, structure, vessel, real property, document or artifact listed on the state register of historic places or determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of the city or town	Land for active or passive recreational use including, but not limited to, the use of land for community gardens, trails, and noncommercial youth and adult sports, and the use of land as a park, playground or athletic field	Housing for low income individuals and families and low or moderate income seniors Moderate income is less than 100%, and low income is less than 80% of US HUD Area Wide Median Income
ACQUISITION - Obtain property interest by gift, purchase, devise, grant, rental, purchase, lease or otherwise. Only includes eminent domain taking as provided by G.L. c. 44B	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CREATION - Bring into being or cause to exist. <i>Seideman v. City of Newton, 452 Mass. 472 (2008)</i>	Yes		Yes	Yes
PRESERVATION - Protect personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SUPPORT - Programs providing grants, loans, rental assistance, security deposits, interest-rate write downs or other forms of assistance directly to individuals and families who are eligible for community housing, or to entity that owns, operates or manages it, for the purpose of making the housing affordable				Yes, provided the housing asset itself is made affordable by the expenditure
REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION - Capital improvements, or extraordinary repairs to make assets functional for intended use, including improvements to comply with federal, state or local building or access codes or federal standards for rehabilitation of historic properties	Yes, if open space asset acquired or created with CP funds	Yes, provided that rehabilitation complies with Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties	Yes (includes replacement of playground equipment)	Yes, if housing asset acquired or created with CP funds
APPROPRIATIONS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST G.L. c. 44, § 55C				Yes; however, trust is required to spend CPA funds for CPA community housing purposes.
	Maintenance expenditures are prohibited for all assets even if they could otherwise be considered acquisition, creation, preservation, support, rehabilitation or restoration Maintenance means incidental repairs that do not materially add to value of property or appreciably prolong property's life, but keep property in condition of fitness, efficiency or readiness			



Appendix B: CPA Information Guide

- The Northampton Community Preservation Committee website, <http://northamptonma.gov/1048/Community-Preservation-Committee> contains contact information for Committee members; meeting agendas and minutes; and meeting times and locations. It also includes a variety of documents, including this plan.
- As part of enacting the Community Preservation Act in Northampton, the City Council created the Community Preservation Committee. The ordinance which the Council approved can be found online; search for 'Community Preservation Committee' at <http://www.ecode360.com/NO2226#NO2226>
- The Community Preservation Coalition, of which the Northampton CPC is a member, is a nonprofit organization that works with municipalities to help them understand, adopt, and implement the CPA. The Coalition website has a wide variety of information, including links to other CPA communities and information on funded projects. www.communitypreservation.org
- The Community Preservation Act, the enabling legislation for the CPA (Chapter 44B, Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws) may be found at <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/gl-44b-toc.htm>
- The state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has a site that includes a number of helpful documents. <http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/content/cpa.asp>
- The state Department of Revenue (DOR) is responsible for administering the CPA. It has the authority to institute regulations and procedures, and to make rulings about how CPA funds may be used. (Go to www.mass.gov/dor and then to For Local Officials, Municipal Data and Financial Management, Data Bank Reports, Community Preservation Act).
- The Northampton Office of Planning and Sustainability website contains links to most of the documents referred to in this Plan. <http://www.northamptonma.gov/plan>
- Fair Housing is an important concept that the Community Preservation Committee fully endorses. The CPC will review, and project sponsors are encouraged to review, the fair housing guidelines articulated by the Massachusetts DHCD, at DHCD's website at <http://www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/hd/fair/affirmativefairhousinggp.pdf>. Consistency with this specific DHCD policy is not a required project review criteria for projects applying to the CPC; however, consistency with fair housing is required, and particular attention will be paid by the CPC to fair housing in reviewing any project proposal that includes a local preference component.



Appendix C: Glossary

TERMS FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT

As used in this act, the following words shall, unless the context clearly indicates a different meaning, have the following meanings:

"Acquire", obtain by gift, purchase, devise, grant, rental, rental purchase, lease or otherwise. "Acquire" shall not include a taking by eminent domain, except as provided in this chapter.

"Agricultural Preservation Restriction", , a permanent deeds restriction that represents the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of agricultural land, and protects the farmland for future agricultural use

"Annual income", a family's or person's gross annual income less such reasonable allowances for dependents, other than a spouse, and for medical expenses as the housing authority or, in the event that there is no housing authority, the department of housing and community development, determines.

"Capital improvement" , reconstruction or alteration of real property that: (1) materially adds to the value of the real property or appreciably prolongs the useful life of the real property; (2) becomes part of the real property or is permanently affixed to the real property so that removal would cause material damage to the property or article itself; and (3) is intended to become a permanent installation or is intended to remain there for an indefinite period of time.

"Community housing", low and moderate income housing for individuals and families, including low or moderate income senior housing.

"Community preservation", the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space, the acquisition, creation and preservation of historic resources and the creation and preservation of community housing.

"Community Preservation Committee", the committee established by the legislative body of a city or town to make recommendations for community preservation, as provided in section 5.

"Community Preservation Fund", the municipal fund established under section 7.

"CP", community preservation.



"Historic resources", a building, structure, vessel, real property, document or artifact that is listed on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of a city or town.

"Legislative body", the agency of municipal government which is empowered to enact ordinances or by-laws, adopt an annual budget and other spending authorizations, loan orders, bond authorizations and other financial matters and whether styled as a city council, board of aldermen, town council, town meeting or by any other title.

"Low income housing", housing for those persons and families whose annual income is less than 80 per cent of the area-wide median income. The area-wide median income shall be the area-wide median income as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"Low or moderate income senior housing", housing for those persons having reached the age of 60 or over who would qualify for low or moderate income housing.

"Maintenance", incidental repairs which neither materially add to the value of the property nor appreciably prolong the property's life, but keep the property in a condition of fitness, efficiency or readiness

"Moderate income housing", housing for those persons and families whose annual income is less than 100 per cent of the area-wide median income. The area-wide median income shall be the area-wide median income as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"Open space", shall include, but not be limited to, land to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers and recharge areas, watershed land, agricultural land, grasslands, fields, forest land, fresh and salt water marshes and other wetlands, ocean, river, stream, lake and pond frontage, beaches, dunes and other coastal lands, lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve and land for recreational use.

"Preservation", protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction

"Real property", land, buildings, appurtenant structures and fixtures attached to buildings or land, including, where applicable, real property interests.

"Real property interest", a present or future legal or equitable interest in or to real property, including easements and restrictions, and any beneficial interest therein, including the interest of a beneficiary in a trust which holds a legal or equitable interest in real property, but shall not include an interest which is limited to the following: an estate at will or at sufferance and any estate for years having a term of less than 30



years; the reversionary right, condition or right of entry for condition broken; the interest of a mortgagee or other secured party in a mortgage or security agreement.

"Recreational use", active or passive recreational use including, but not limited to, the use of land for community gardens, trails, and noncommercial youth and adult sports, and the use of land as a park, playground or athletic field. "Recreational use" shall not include horse or dog racing or the use of land for a stadium, gymnasium or similar structure.

"Rehabilitation", capital improvements, or the making of extraordinary repairs, to historic resources, open spaces, lands for recreational use and community housing for the purpose of making such historic resources, open spaces, lands for recreational use and community housing functional for their intended uses including, but not limited to, improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal, state or local building or access codes; provided, that with respect to historic resources, "rehabilitation" shall comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties codified in 36 C.F.R. Part 68; and provided further, that with respect to land for recreational use, "rehabilitation" shall include the replacement of playground equipment and other capital improvements to the land or the facilities thereon which make the land or the related facilities more functional for the intended recreational use.

"Support of community housing", includes, but is not limited to, programs that provide grants, loans, rental assistance, security deposits, interest-rate write downs or other forms of assistance directly to individuals and families who are eligible for community housing or to an entity that owns, operates or manages such housing, for the purpose of making housing affordable.

ADDITIONAL TERMS

It is important for the *Community Preservation Plan* and related documents to be as clear as possible. If there are additional terms that need to be defined, please let us know. You can contact Sarah LaValley, Community Preservation Planner, at (413) 587-1263 or slavalley@northamptonma.gov.



Appendix D: Preservation Guarantee Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows taxpayer money to be used for open space, community housing, historic preservation, and recreation projects. Some CPA projects create something new, which is then preserved, while some preserve something that already exists. But in every case it is important for the preservation goals of the community to be met. Because of this, the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) requires that the Grant Agreement for every CPA project involving real or other property include some kind of preservation guarantee.

The Committee reserves the right to require the preservation guarantee it believes will best serve the community. Generally, however, the Committee will require permanent guarantees for Open Space, Historic Resource and Recreation projects. A preservation guarantee will be required for Community Housing projects.

TYPES OF CPA PROJECTS & RELEVANT PRESERVATION GUARANTEES

Acquisition (applicable to Open Space, Historic Resources, Recreation, Community Housing)

The CPA Law requires that an open space, historic resource, recreation or community housing real property interest that is acquired with CPA funds must be bound by a permanent restriction, recorded as a separate instrument, that meets the requirements of sections 31-33, inclusive, of [Massachusetts General Laws, Chapt 184](#), which limits the use of the property to the purpose for which it was acquired. The permanent restriction shall run with the land and shall be enforceable by the City. The permanent restriction may also run to the benefit of a nonprofit organization, charitable corporation or foundation selected by the City with the right to enforce the restriction. The City may appropriate monies from the CPA fund to pay a nonprofit organization created pursuant to Chapter 180 of the Massachusetts General Laws, to hold, monitor and enforce deed restrictions on the property.

Creation (applicable to Open Space, Recreation, Community Housing), and Preservation or Rehabilitation/Restoration (applicable to Open Space, Historic Resources, Recreation, Community Housing)

Projects that are created, preserved, rehabilitated or restored with the use of CPA funds must have a guarantee deemed appropriate by the Community Preservation Committee. See below for our guidelines on long-term vs. short-term guarantees.



Note: Open Space, and Community Housing rehabilitation/ restoration projects are only allowed if the property was acquired or created using Community Preservation Act funds.

Support. Support projects are only allowed in the area of Community Housing. Support projects are not required to have preservation guarantees.

HOW PRESERVATION GUARANTEES WORK

General definition of a preservation guarantee: For the purposes of the Northampton Community Preservation Committee, a preservation guarantee means a limitation on a property that is appropriate for the protection of open space, historic resources, recreation or community housing. Every preservation guarantee is included or referenced in the Community Preservation Committee Grant Agreement, which CPA funding recipients must sign.

The Committee may consult with various City boards and other organizations to help determine the most appropriate preservation guarantee. Applicants may be requested to meet with a City board as part of the CPC application review process.

The Community Preservation Committee understands that not every applicant is familiar with preservation guarantees; the Committee is prepared to offer technical assistance to applicants in this area. The CPC has a number of standard guarantees already written, and generally these can easily be modified to fit a particular project. Applicants may need to obtain legal advice prior to acceptance of a guarantee. However, the Committee will make every effort to draft preservation guarantees, so that legal advice will only be necessary for the review of such documents.

EXAMPLES OF LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM PRESERVATION GUARANTEES

The following is a list of the most common preservation guarantees. It is not a conclusive list of all preservation guarantees that may be approved by the Community Preservation Committee. CPA projects vary widely and the Committee reserves the right to require whatever preservation guarantee it believes will best serve the needs of the community. Recognizing that preservation guarantees are complex, the Committee encourages applicants to contact us to discuss the range of preservation guarantees that might be appropriate for a particular project.

Conservation Restriction (Long-Term): A Conservation Restriction is a long-term preservation guarantee which applies to Open Space and Recreation projects. It protects open space and recreation areas from development and limits certain activities



that would be detrimental to the open space or recreation land purchased with CPA funds. A Conservation Restriction is a specific type of restriction that carries the highest level of protection, and therefore it must be approved by the Massachusetts Secretary of Environmental Affairs as well as the Community Preservation Committee and City Council. Conservation restrictions or agricultural preservation restrictions are required for all open space acquisitions funded with the CPA.

Affordable Housing Restriction (Long-Term): An Affordable Housing Restriction is also a long-term restriction that provides the highest level of preservation guarantee, requiring any such Restriction to be approved by the Massachusetts Director of Housing & Community Development as well as the Community Preservation Committee and City Council. An Affordable Housing Restriction protects low-income and moderate income housing units.

Historic Preservation Restriction (Long-Term): A Historic Preservation Restriction provides the highest level of preservation guarantee, requiring any such Restriction to be approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission as well as the Community Preservation Committee and City Council. A Historic Preservation Restriction ensures that inappropriate changes are not made to historic properties.

Note: The above terms (Conservation Restriction, Affordable Housing Restriction, Agricultural Preservation Restriction and Historical Preservation Restriction) are formal names which are always capitalized. This helps differentiate them from other terms.

These ways of guaranteeing the permanent or long-term preservation of CPA projects are most appropriate for large projects, and are required for projects in which a real property interest is acquired. However, many other CPA projects do not rise to the level of needing long-term preservation guarantees. Below are examples of some other preservation guarantees.

Deed Restrictions: Deed restrictions are restrictions on a deed that place limitations on the use of the property. A deed restriction may initially run with a property for no more than thirty years. However, a deed restriction may be extended if it is written to allow the holder of the restriction to re-record it prior to its expiration. The Northampton Community Preservation Committee and the Northampton City Council must approve all deed restrictions.

Memorandum of Agreement: A memorandum of agreement (MOA) or cooperative agreement is a document written between parties to cooperatively work together on an agreed upon project or meet an agreed upon objective. The purpose of an MOA is to have a written understanding of the agreement between parties. The MOA is a legal



document that is binding. The Northampton Community Preservation Committee and the Northampton City Council must approve all Memorandums of Agreement.

Mortgage: A mortgage is a conditional pledge of property to a creditor as security for performance of an obligation or repayment of a debt. The Northampton Community Preservation Committee and the Northampton City Council must approve all mortgage agreements.