



COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

Background

In 2000 the state legislature passed the CPA, allowing cities and towns across Massachusetts to put CPA on the local ballot. In November 2016, CPA passed in Boston with the support of 74% of the voters. As a result, property owners pay a [1% surcharge](#) on their quarterly real estate tax bill that funds the CPA in Boston. The average Boston homeowner pays about \$25/year. A small match from the state adds to the City's fund. CPA is guided by state law and Boston city ordinance.

Boston's Community Preservation Program is expected to raise about \$20 million annually for 1) affordable housing, 2) historic preservation, and 3) parks, open space, and outdoor recreation. By [state law](#), 10% of Boston's CPA funds must be spent in each of the three areas. Up to 5% can be spent on administration. The remaining funds are discretionary. These [eligibility charts](#) describe the types of projects allowed.

Purpose

This Community Preservation Plan is committed to the acquisition, creation, preservation, and enhancement of open space, historic resources and affordable housing across the City of Boston. Through a transparent process, this Plan will guide the allocation of funds to projects that improve and enrich the quality of life in Boston, celebrate the city's distinctive neighborhoods and support the diversity of our residents.

Guiding Principles

Aligning with [Imagine Boston 2030: A Plan for the Future of Boston](#) and the City's agencies and departments, Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds will contribute to building strong neighborhoods through strategic investment. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will evaluate potential community preservation projects based on the following principles:

- Promote equity across Boston neighborhoods by expanding access to resources where they are most needed.
- Fill a gap or critical need where funding is not otherwise available or provide an opportunity that would otherwise not be possible.

- Bring long-lasting benefit and stability to communities, while celebrating the unique identity, population, historic character, and open space of Boston's different neighborhoods.
- Protect the natural environment; deploy sustainable design practices; and address climate resiliency needs.
- Support the needs of Boston's vulnerable populations, especially low-income residents and those who are homeless, families, at-risk households, older adults, veterans, and people with disabilities.
- Ensure that projects do not harm existing historic, open space, or housing resources. When possible, support projects that accomplish more than one of the CPA's three goals of affordable housing, open space, and historic preservation.
- Show a sustainable plan to fund ongoing operations and maintenance.

Eligible Projects

The appendix at the end of this Plan help define what types of projects are allowed and what does not qualify as a CPA project. These [eligibility charts](#) help interpret the [state law](#).

CPA funds are primarily limited to capital projects and include the purchase, construction, and preservation of affordable housing, open space, parks and historic resources. Restoration and renovation are allowable for historic resources and parks. CPA funds may not be used for operation, maintenance, or programming. More detailed information and definitions of allowable projects are outlined in the [CPA legislation](#).

Community Preservation Committee

As per the enabling legislation, a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has been appointed to recommend a slate of CPA projects to the Mayor and City Council for funding. The CPC approves an annual Community Preservation Plan and administrative budget, sets priorities, solicits community input, reviews project proposals, and makes recommendations, holding at least one public hearing annually.

All CPC meetings are open to the public. Attendance by at least five of the nine members represents a quorum. CPC members will recuse themselves from a vote if they, their colleagues, or family members have a vested interest.

The State law and City ordinance spell out CPC appointments. Five members represent City boards and commissions; four at-large seats are chosen by the City Council. The members of the current CPC are listed below with term-end date and appointment basis noted, as determined by [City ordinance](#) and a vote by their respective commission or board.

- Boston Housing Authority: Kate Bennett (2019)
- Boston Planning & Redevelopment Agency: Carol Downs (2020)
- Parks Commission: William Epperson (2021)
- Landmarks Commission: Felicia Jacques (2020)
- Conservation Commission: John Sullivan (2019)
- At-large business member: Matt Kiefer (2019)
- At-large expertise member: Madeligne Tena (2021)
- At-large, civic engagement member: Kannan Thiruvengadam (2020)
- At-large, civic engagement member: Ying Wang (2021)

Needs Assessment: Boston Plans and Data

The Community Preservation Plan draws from several recent plans created by the City of Boston to promote an affordable, equitable, connected, and resilient city. These plans fall under the umbrella of [Imagine Boston 2030: A Plan for the Future of Boston](#) and include: [Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030](#); the [Economic Inclusion and Equity Agenda](#); the City of Boston [Open Space and Recreation Plan: 2015-2021](#); [Climate Ready Boston](#); and others. Plans were developed with input from Boston residents and rigorous data analysis.

Needs assessments for each of the three CPA areas are identified with the goals for affordable housing, historic preservation, and parks and open space.

Goals for the Three Funding Areas

Affordable Housing

Safe, stable, affordable housing is a need across all Boston neighborhoods if the city is to remain a healthy and welcoming place for existing and new residents. CPA supports permanently [affordable housing](#) at all levels below the area median income (AMI). Through CPA, Boston seeks to leverage additional resources for housing, meet the [measurable goals](#) outlined in Housing Boston 2030, prevent loss of existing affordable units, and narrow the racial wealth and homeownership gap in the City.

Goals

- Create and expand **permanently affordable rental** housing for various household sizes, income levels, and special needs populations, including accessible units for households with physical or cognitive challenges.
- Address the **home ownership gaps** that exist in the Boston market: racial, income, geographic, household size/composition, etc.

- Complement the built environment of the surrounding neighborhood and **restore existing buildings** as permanently affordable housing.
- Maximize energy efficiency and other **green building practices**, utilize sustainable materials, and integrate climate change ready features that will result in low maintenance, reduced utilities cost, and healthier living environments for occupants.

Affordable Housing Metrics and Needs

Existing Income-restricted

Goals for 2030 - from 2014 Plan

Category	Private	BHA	TOTAL		2030 Goal	To date
Low income non-senior	14,477	8,135	22,612		6,500	2,058
Low income senior	9,392	3,445	12,837		1,500	345
Middle income non senior	2,736	0	2,736		4,000	2,632
Middle income senior	0	0	0		0	20
Other income-restricted	13,643	0	13,643		0	0
Total income restricted rental	40,248	11,580	51,828		12,000	5,055
Unrestricted middle income non-senior	0	0	0		16,000	5,279
Unrestricted middle income senior	0	0	0		2,500	8
Total unrestricted middle income	0	0	0		18,500	5,287
Low/middle income ownership (income restricted units)	1,910	0	1,910		Not specified	529
Low/middle income ownership (resales & market access units)	0	0	0		Not specified	614
Total ownership					5,000	1,143

First Year Funding Priorities for Affordable Housing

1. Construction of more deeply affordable rental housing - 50% AMI or below.
2. Affordable homeownership opportunities for moderate income buyers who are under 100% AMI.
3. Displacement prevention through acquisition by purchasing at-risk properties in order to maintain tenancies and add to Boston's affordable housing stock.

Open Space, Parks, and Outdoor Recreation

Boston residents of all ages and abilities need high-quality open space within walking distance of their homes. There is an increasing body of literature connecting open space to physical, mental, and emotional benefits. Parks and open spaces provide a unique platform for social connections within and across the City's diverse communities. Through sustainable and ecological design, Boston's open space can provide local and regional environmental benefits.

Goals

- Promote the active and passive use of open space and parks by: improving access for all abilities; creating **new outdoor recreation facilities** to fill neighborhood gaps; and providing opportunities for play, exercise, sports, socializing, education, cultural enjoyment, and quiet contemplation of nature for all.
- Work to address disparities in the quantity and quality of open spaces across Boston's neighborhoods and ensure that the availability of open space keeps pace with a growing and changing population, identifying opportunities for **acquisition of open space**.
- Design resilient landscapes to promote ecosystem health, deploy strategies to protect and expand Boston's tree canopy, support native species, protect wetlands and water bodies, manage stormwater, and **mitigate the impacts of climate change**, including higher temperatures, more intense precipitation, and sea level rise.

Parks and Open Space Metrics and Needs

- Boston currently has 7.6 acres of protected open space per 1,000 residents. To keep pace with the City's growing population, an additional 173 acres of protected open space will be needed by 2020 and 451 acres by 2030 to maintain this 7.6 ratio of acres/1,000 residents.
- 97% of Boston residents are within a 10-minute walk of a public park. For maximum health and livability, a 5-minute walk goal on safe, accessible streets is sought.
- [Imagine Boston 2030](#) includes large-scale goals specific to the creation of open space infrastructure. This will guide project decision-making.

- The City's [Open Space and Recreation Plan 2015-2021](#) identifies specific needs in every neighborhood, and environmental justice markers. It will guide project decision-making.
- The City's upcoming Parcel Priority Plan will identify potential new open spaces for protection or acquisition to meet current or anticipated community needs.
- Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) has a new Asset Study which rates the physical condition of every City park. CPA proposals for City-owned parks, urban wilds, and outdoor recreation facilities will be need-tested using this Asset Study.
- The 2016 Tree Canopy Assessment for the City of Boston determined that Boston has 27% tree canopy coverage. Sustaining and expanding this coverage, through protection of existing trees and implementation of best practices for planting and care of new trees, will help the City address multiple climate resilience, health, and quality of life goals.
- Boston has 150 community gardens with about 10,000 residents growing their own food. Waiting lists are often long. Creation of new community gardens through acquisition of available land is sought in many neighborhoods. Community gardens also serve as restful green spaces enjoyed by the entire neighborhood. CPA will prioritize gardens that are permanently protected, offer public daytime access and welcome community visitors.
- Urban farms that offer clear benefits to neighbors, such as a community gathering place, may be supported with CPA funds. Purely commercial farms will not be considered for CPA.
- Greenways, offering safe connections between parks and neighborhoods, are sought.
- Schoolyards offer outdoor play areas within walking distance for many families, yet landscaping and outdoor classrooms pose significant maintenance challenges. CPA will fund design and installation of recreation areas, game courts, and playground equipment on permanently protected schoolyard parcels only.
- Looking at the [Boston Open Space Map](#) one can see subsections of the city where a local park or playground is not within a 5-minute walk.
- The [Open Space and Recreation Plan 2015-2021](#) identifies specific needs in every neighborhood, as well as environmental justice markers. It will guide project decision-making.
- [Climate Ready Boston](#) and its associated neighborhood-level planning identifies areas where investments in open space can directly contribute to reductions in the City's vulnerability to coastal flooding, intense heat, and major storms.

First Year Funding Priorities for Parks and Open Space

- Acquisition and development of new open space to address access gaps in the city as identified in the [Open Space and Recreation Plan 2015-2021](#).

- Restoration and improvements that serve high need populations as identified in the [Open Space and Recreation Plan 2015-2021](#).
- Enhanced active recreation use and play value in parks with a specific focus on inclusion.
- Expanded capital projects to add value to design and construction elements above and beyond original plans.

CPA funds may not be used for maintenance and everyday operating costs; programs and activities, including staff; supplies like athletic equipment, paint, lumber, or materials for repairs; indoor athletic facilities unless they are in a historic building; and artificial turf.

Historic Preservation

Historic buildings, landscapes, and resources are defining elements in Boston's sense of place. All residents need access to the economic development, sustainable living, and cultural connection that historic preservation brings. Bostonians in every neighborhood feel incredible passion for their local history and support preservation of their special local places to ensure their longevity.

Goals

- Protect threatened or vulnerable historic resources through **preservation, rehabilitation and restoration**. Support strategies to make historic structures energy efficient and protect them against climate change impacts.
- Activate underutilized, historic resources in our neighborhoods that add to community vibrancy and celebrate local history and culture. Encourage creative **new uses for spaces** that retain historic features.
- Ensure **equitable access** to historic resources in the community that provide a public benefit. Support historic resources that recognize Boston's cultural communities and enhance our understanding of the full breadth and depth of Boston's history.
- Respect the historic and architectural character of threatened resources and their **local context**. Promote positive preservation practices and work to correct and prevent adverse modifications, including demolition. Include a preservation easement to protect resources in perpetuity.

Historic Preservation Metrics and Needs

- Boston has over 8,000 Landmarked historic properties, many of them within the nine historic districts in downtown Boston, Roxbury, South Boston and Brighton. This status confers regional and often national significance.

- Historic resources include: landscapes, artifacts, buildings and structures, gravestones, and documents that are listed on or qualify for the State register of historic places or are determined by the [Boston Landmarks Commission](#) to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture, or culture of the City of Boston.
- The Boston Landmarks Commission typically will consider historic designation for a resource if it meets the eligibility requirements to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Boston's existing historic surveys are more than 25 years old. Updating these surveys neighborhood-by-neighborhood and creating a single system and database is needed in order to set priorities for CPA funds. New surveys should also identify risks to Boston's historic resources posed by climate change and determine opportunities to link development with sensitive, community-based preservation.

First Year CPA Funding Priorities for Historic Preservation

1. Updated historic surveys of Boston's neighborhoods with a single database and unified format.
2. Repair and restoration projects that are visible from the public realm at sites that are accessible to the public.
3. Final funding support for historic projects.

Transparency and Community Engagement

The Community Preservation Act was passed due to community organizing and robust civic engagement. In that spirit, Boston's Community Preservation Program seeks to ensure transparency, equity, and resident involvement and input.

Goals

- Link with community groups and individual leaders to organize **neighborhood forums** on an ongoing basis for information sharing, trainings, and community-based priority-setting.
- Hold the required (by state law) **annual public hearing** in a central location, accessible for residents from all neighborhoods to solicit input on neighborhood needs and possibilities.
- Post **project application information online**.

Applying for Funds

A Request for Projects will be released at least once annually. The RFP will be published online, with notice posted on local news outlets and shared through community networks.

1. Complete and submit a project eligibility form.
2. [Contact CPA staff](#) if you need technical assistance for:
 - a. Making connections with other project stakeholders in your neighborhood
 - b. Project conception and design
 - c. Budget and financing
 - d. Completing the full application.
3. **First Application Release: Pilot Program- by April 1, 2018** - Detailed information and forms will be on the website: www.boston.gov/community-preservation
4. A second, larger round of funding will be announced in September 2018.
5. Applicants are encouraged to follow guidelines in this Community Preservation Plan to ensure their projects meet needs and priorities as identified in [Imagine Boston 2030: A Plan for the Future of Boston](#), [Housing a Changing City](#); the [Economic Inclusion and Equity Agenda](#); [Open Space and Recreation Plan: 2015-2021](#); [Climate Ready Boston](#).
6. The Community Preservation Committee may choose to reserve a limited amount of funding for eligible projects where there is a critical, *immediate* need. Contact CPA staff for more information.

The first year of funding the CPC will prioritize projects that:

- Have a visible and positive impact on the surrounding community and offer public access and benefit to a maximum number of people.
- Demonstrate community support and partnership.
- Close a final funding gap and leverage additional financial resources.
- Save resources that would otherwise be threatened.
- Show a sustainable plan for ongoing maintenance, funding, and community engagement to ensure long-lasting benefit.
- Preserve the essential character of the neighborhood.
- Benefit a currently underserved community.
- Demonstrate the project is practical, feasible and can be implemented expeditiously and within budget.
- Produce an advantageous cost/benefit value.

- Preserve currently owned city assets.
- Receive endorsement by municipal departments or boards/commissions.
- Meet the goals identified in [Imagine Boston 2030: A Plan for the Future of Boston](#), [Housing a Changing City](#); the [Economic Inclusion and Equity Agenda](#); [Open Space and Recreation Plan: 2015-2021](#); and [Climate Ready Boston](#).
- Include a blend of two or more CPA categories: historic preservation, affordable housing, or parks and open space.

An initial **Pilot Program** in Spring 2018 will fund projects that need \$500,000 or less to close a funding gap and are ready to start within 90 days of receiving CPA funds (with extensions granted if unforeseen circumstances arise and applicants are in communication with CPA staff). Applicants not funded in the Pilot will be contacted by CPA staff about why their project was not recommended. Those projects that meet the eligibility criteria but were not funded may apply in the next round.

All CPA materials, as well as submitted projects being considered will be posted on www.boston.gov/community-preservation

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS FROM THE STATE LAW

[Community Preservation Act General Laws Chapter 44B](#)

The CPC will only consider proposals that are **eligible** for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding according to the terms of the CPA legislation; specifically, proposals for:

- ❖ The acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space.
- ❖ The acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources.
- ❖ The acquisition, creation, and preservation of land for recreational use.
- ❖ The acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of community housing
- ❖ The rehabilitation and restoration of open space, land for recreational use, and community housing that is acquired or created using monies from the fund.

Capital Improvements

“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.

“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.

Historic Resources

"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.

Open Space, Parks, and Outdoor Recreation

"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.

"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.

Affordable Housing

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

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

"Support of community housing", shall include, but not be 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.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

The Community Preservation Act requires that any "real property interest" acquired (purchased) with CPA funds be permanently protected with a deed restriction. A real property interest applies to land, buildings, or other physical things. [Section 12a of the](#)

[Community Preservation Act](#) requires this permanent restriction to ensure that the property continues to be used for the applicable CPA purpose. Restrictions are legal documents that place limitations on the use of a property. These restrictions apply to all future owners of the property, and can't easily be changed or removed by subsequent owners.

Given this statutory requirement, a CPA project involving acquisition of any real property interest is technically not complete until the restriction is approved by the appropriate State agency and filed at the Registry of Deeds. There are the four types of restrictions that are commonly used in CPA projects:

Community Housing Projects:

Affordable Housing Restrictions

Approved by the [MA Dept. of Housing and Community Development \(DHCD\)](#)

Open Space Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Projects:

Conservation Restrictions

Approved by the [MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs \(EOEEA\)](#)

Open Space Agricultural Projects:

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions

Approved by the [MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources \(DAR\)](#)

Historic Projects:

Historic Preservation Restrictions

Approved by the [Massachusetts Historical Commission \(MHC\)](#)

More information about deed restrictions can be found here:

<http://www.communitypreservation.org/content/deed-restrictions>