



The City of
WORCESTER

The Community Preservation Act: Overview and Implementation Timeline

For organizations focused on Open Space & Recreation



What is the Community Preservation Act?

Overview

- ***Enabling Statute: Mass General Laws, Chapter 44B – “Community Preservation Act”***
- **Under the Community Preservation Act (CPA), any city or town may establish a special Community Preservation Fund that may be appropriated and spent for Open Space and Recreation, Historic Preservation / Resources, and Community / Affordable Housing.**
- **On November 8, 2022, the voters of the City of Worcester approved the adoption of Question 5.**
- **The vote included the CPA surcharge of 1.5% on the annual property tax beginning in FY24.**

Exemptions:

- **Property owned and occupied as a domicile by any person who qualifies for low-income housing or low- to moderate-income senior housing;**
- **\$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of residential property;**
- **\$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of Class 3 / Class 4 commercial / industrial property;**



How much is the Surcharge?

Overview

- CPA surcharge is split between the final two (2) quarterly bills issued in December of 23/24 and March of 24/25
- There will be a separate bill for CPA. Starting July 2026, the surcharge will be incorporated onto quarterly tax bills

Property Type	Average Value	Annual CPA Surcharge
Single Family – Residential	\$371,094	\$56
Condominium – Residential	\$245,975	\$30
Three-Family – Residential	\$524,309	\$88
Apartment- Residential	\$1,246,431	\$236
Commercial	\$1,200,621	\$496

Check with your mortgage company to determine if they are paying the tax as part of your escrow



The Community Preservation Fund

Overview

The Fund is a separate account made up of three revenue streams

- 1.5% local surcharge on property tax
- An annual state match
- Interest accrued on the Fund Balance

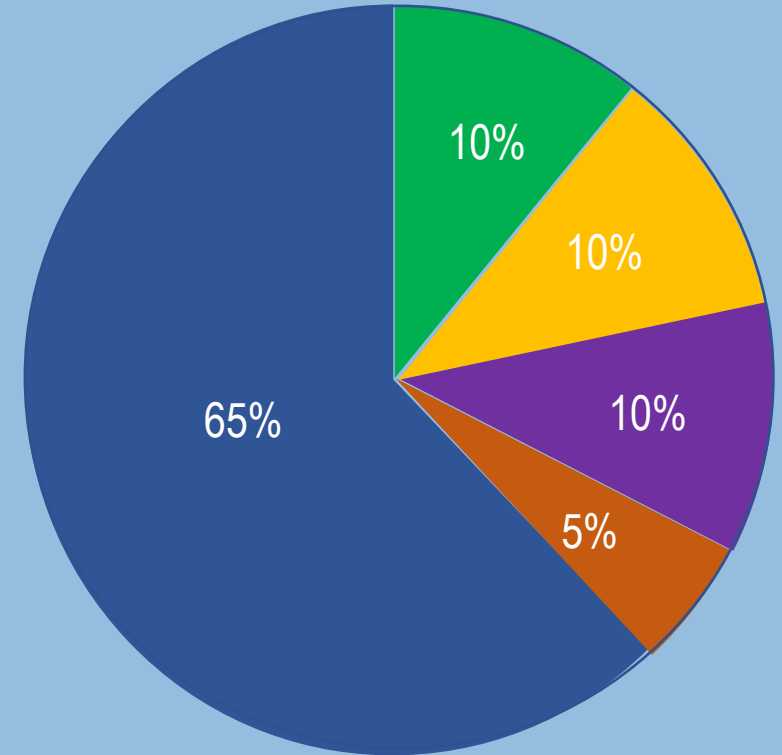
Estimated Revenue in FY24: \$4.023M

Estimated Revenue in FY25: \$4.759M

Restrictions

- Minimum of 10% budgeted to **Outdoor Recreation & Open Space**
- Minimum of 10% budgeted to **Historic Conservation**
- Minimum of 10% budgeted to **Community Housing**
- Maximum of 5% budgeted to an **Optional Administrative Fund**

Minimal restrictions on WHO can apply for these funds.



Eligible Projects

Overview

Community Housing: Low- and moderate-income housing for individuals and families, including low- or moderate-income senior housing

- **Low-income:** 80% of areawide median income
- **Moderate-income:** 100% of areawide median income
- **Senior:** persons having reached the age of 60 or over

Types of Projects

- **Transfer of funds to Municipal Affordable Housing Trusts (MAHT)**
- **Land purchases for Community Housing**
- **Housing-buydown, rental assistance, and first-time homebuyer programs**
- **Support predevelopment activities (feasibility studies, site planning)**
- **Preservation of existing affordable housing**
- **New construction and adaptive reuse projects**



Eligible Projects

Overview

Historic Resources: A building, structure, vessel, real property, document, or artifact that

(1) is listed on the Massachusetts State Register of Historic Places

OR

(2) has been determined by the local Historical Commission that the historic resource is locally significant

Types of Projects

- **Acquisition of Historic Resources**
- **Historic building restoration and preservation (public and private)**
- **Document digitization and preservation**



Eligible Projects

Overview

Outdoor Recreation: Active or passive recreational use including, but not limited to, the use of land for community gardens, trails, and noncommercial youth and adult sports, as well as the use of land as a park, playground, or athletic field. **Exceptions include:**

- (1) The purchase or construction of artificial turf
- (2) Construction of indoor recreational structures or stadiums
- (3) Dog or horse racing facilities
- (4) Sidewalk construction along ROWs

Types of Projects

- Construction and rehabilitation of dog parks, splash pads, playgrounds, athletic fields, gardens
- Acquisition of land for outdoor recreation
- Construction of trails, including rail trails



Eligible Projects

Overview

Open Space: 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.

Types of Projects

- **Purchase of Conservation Restrictions**
- **Acquisition of land for use as Open Space**
- **Appropriation to Conservation Funds**
- **Preservation of Open Space through invasive plant removal (non-maintenance)**
- **Protecting farmland (match for Agricultural Preservation Restriction)**
- **Restoration/rehabilitation of Open Space ****initially purchased with CPA funds******



Eligible Projects

Overview

	Open Space	Recreation	Historic	Housing
Acquire	YES	YES	YES	YES
Create	YES	YES	NO	YES
Preserve	YES	YES	YES	YES
Support	NO	NO	NO	YES
Rehabilitate/ Restore	NO*	YES	YES	NO*

***Unless acquired with CPA funds**



Example Projects

From Other Communities



Creation of a **feasibility study** for preservation of Mill Brook between Arlington Reservoir and Hurd Field (\$120,000 in 2023).

Removal of invasive species at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area in Northampton (\$6,950 in 2019).

Acquisition of beach area to extend Great Hallow Beach in Truro (\$192,000 in 2018).

Construction of pickleball courts on municipal land in Southampton (\$115,000 in 2020).

Construction of trails on an existing parcel in Sturbridge (\$8,000 in 2021).

Rehabilitation of the local skate park in Tewksbury (\$157,000 in 2022).

Design fees for the **rehabilitation of a public pool** in Weston (\$250,000 in 2023).



Other Notes

for Open Space & Recreation Projects

Conservation Restrictions are required for all acquisition projects using CPA funds

- **CRs must be held by a separate entity than the landowners**

“Preservation” vs “Rehabilitation”

Preservation: Protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction (not including maintenance)

Rehabilitation: Capital improvements, or the making of extraordinary repairs, for the purpose of making lands 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



The Community Preservation Committee

Overview



April 11, 2023: City Council adopts an *Ordinance Establishing the Community Preservation Committee (CPC)*

Role of the CPC:

- Prepare and annually revise the Community Preservation Plan
- Prepare CPA Application Guidelines
- Recommend CPA Budget and Projects to City Council

Role of the Community Preservation Manager

- Manage the Community Preservation Program (CPP)
- Liaise for and support the activities of the CPC
- Provide technical assistance to the CPC and CPA Fund applicants
- Track CPA funding and ensure compliance

Membership:

- 4 at-large members
- 1 member of the ConComm
- 1 member of the Historical Commission
- 1 member of the Planning Board
- 1 member of the Parks and Rec Commission
- 1 member of the Worcester Housing Authority board

Staggered terms



The Community Preservation Plan

Example Priorities



- Promote **climate equity** and **resilience** by supporting open space and recreation initiatives, including through the **expansion of the tree canopy**, that **help to mitigate the effects of climate change** for Boston residents, **especially BIPOC populations** and neighborhoods that lack access to quality open space and recreation.
- Improve and create **waterfront access**.
- Promote **healthy local food access** in **historically underserved Boston neighborhoods** such as through funding for community gardens, urban agriculture properties, and community farms.
- Support larger **City efforts to create more public open space** in historically underserved Boston neighborhoods to **promote health equity for BIPOC** and other marginalized populations.
- Improve and maintain **existing parks**, playgrounds, and other open space facilities.
- Support larger City efforts to **promote the creation of greenways** that connect neighborhoods, provide park and recreation amenities, and support multimodal recreational infrastructure including biking and walking.
- Integrate **green infrastructure** and open space into neighborhoods, such as community-, rain-, and pocket parks.



Community Preservation Program in FY25

Projected Timeline



Goal: *To recommend robust, eligible CPA projects to City Council in FY26*

Fall 2024:

- Review existing plans and meet with stakeholders/community
- Identify CPA eligible priorities for the four categories
- Draft Community Preservation Plan and Funding Application
- Share information with the public about CPA opportunities

Winter 2024:

- Hold Public Hearing on the Plan and Application draft
- Advertise Grant Opportunity
- Open Funding Applications for FY26
- Publish final draft of the Community Preservation Plan

Example Plans to Review:

- Historic Preservation Study
- Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Strategy
- Worcester Now-Next Long-Range Plan
- Housing Production Plan (in progress)
- The Green Worcester Plan



Community Preservation Program in FY25

Projected Timeline



Spring 2025

- **Advertise Grant Opportunity**
- **Receive and review Funding Applications**
- **Recommend a slate of CPA eligible projects to City Council**
- **Recommend the FY26 CPA budget**

Summer 2025:

- **Publicize funded projects**
- **Begin review of Plan and Application process**

Outreach Strategies:

- **Visits to Boards and Commissions**
- **Direct engagement with organizations**
- **City social media posts**
- **Monthly Newsletter**
- **Required public hearing**



Next Steps

Your Input

Meetings with Division Staff and Local Commissions

- Reviewing existing documents related to historic resources
- Identifying where things have changed since the document's publication
- Identifying priorities
- Identifying the biggest funding needs as identified by the city AND community
- Considering other funding resources for historic resources
- Identifying the stakeholders we need to talk to

Open Space and Recreation Plans to Review:

- Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Forestry Master Plan
- Green Worcester Plan
- Now|Next
- Others?



Next Steps

Community Input

Meetings with Historical Resources focused Community Groups

- **Share information about CPA eligibility and the project timeline**
- **Request feedback on priorities identified by Staff, Boards, and Commissions**
- **Request suggestions on application process**
- **Update priorities based on feedback**

General Public Outreach

- **Share information with any community group that would like to learn more about CPA and the CPP**
- **Listen to feedback on the identified priorities and the application process**
- **Hold a public hearing on the draft plan and application process**



Additional Resources

Worcester Community Preservation Act webpage:

<http://www.worcesterma.gov/finance/taxes-assessments/community-preservation-act>

Worcester Community Preservation Committee webpage:

<http://www.worcesterma.gov/boards-commissions>

Community Preservation Coalition:

<https://www.communitypreservation.org/>



Additional Resources

City Newsletter



Sign up for the
Community Preservation
Newsletter



Your Input



Please fill out the Priority Survey



Want to learn more about CPA and the CPP?

Reach Out to City Staff



We can:

- Answer questions on project eligibility
- Tell you about application openings and deadlines
- Listen to your priorities around project categories
- Listen to your input on the Community Preservation Plan
- Listen to your preferences for application procedures
- Give a talk on CPA to your community group

Contact:

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