



Town of Dracut
Community Preservation Plan
2023-2024

Community Preservation Committee
February 6, 2024



Beaver Brook Farm- Lower field.

Introduction

The Town of Dracut Community Preservation Committee (“the CPC or the Committee”) is pleased to present the 2023-2024 Town of Dracut Community Preservation Plan (“the Plan”). This Plan describes the process for administering the Community Preservation Act (“CPA”) in the Town of Dracut. The Plan presents a description of the CPA as it applies to the Town, a definition of CPA goals and a methodology and procedures by which the CPA is administered. As such, it represents an informal document for the citizens of the Town, a guideline and instructional document for applicants seeking project funding through the CPA, and a guidance document for this and future CPA Committees in making recommendations to Town Meeting for project funding. The Committee fully recognizes that this document may be modified by future CPA Committees in response to changing goals and experience with the CPA over time and anticipates that it may dovetail with the goals of the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership Committee in the updated Housing Production Plan, the soon to be completed Master Plan and other long range planning documents.

The Committee wishes to thank many town citizens, Town and State officials, the Massachusetts Community Preservation Coalition and Committee members as well as insights from neighboring non-profits and municipalities for their help in the development of this Plan.

For additional information on the CPA statute and how it is being applied in towns across the Commonwealth, visit the Community Preservation Coalition website at www.communitypreservation.org. For information on Dracut’s Community Preservation activity, please visit the Town website at www.dracutma.gov.

The Community Preservation Act in Action

The Community Preservation Act, M.G.L. Chapter 44B, as amended on July 1, 2012, (“the CPA”) allows Massachusetts cities and town to raise monies through a surcharge or through other locally raised revenue sources of up to 3% of the real estate tax levy¹. These funds may then be used to acquire, create, and preserve open space; acquire, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore historic resources; acquire, create, preserve, and support community housing; acquire, create, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore land for recreational purposes; and rehabilitate open space and community housing acquired or created with CPA funds. The Act also provides significant matches from the State’s CPA trust fund. The trust fund’s primary sources of revenue are collections of fees dedicated to CPA at Registries of Deeds. Since then, the growing number of communities that have adopted CPA, and reduced State trust fund revenues resulted in lower State distributions. From 2008 through 2023 Dracut receipts from the State’s CPA trust fund varied between 17% and 67%; the trend is declining. In recent years the State has sometimes made some end of the year budget surplus transfers to the CPA trust fund, which helped boost distribution rates.

New CPA revenue is being generated by:

1. **Increase of fees at the Registry of Deeds.** The legislation that was passed in the FY20 budget increases the recording fees at the Registries of Deeds which provide revenue to the statewide CPA Trust Fund. For most documents filed at the Registries, this fee was increased from \$20 to \$50, and the fee for municipal lien certificates was increased from \$10 to \$25.

In recent years, the recording fees have brought in approximately \$24 million annually to the CPA Trust Fund, and it is estimated that this figure will rise to \$60 million after the new fees are fully implemented.

While the FY24 budget was signed into law in July, the Registries will not begin collecting the new fees until the end of the year. At the end of July, the FY24 State

¹ CPA as amended in 2012 allows cities and towns with a minimum of 1% surcharge to vote by ballot to augment their local CPA contribution to up to 2% of their real estate tax levy with other municipal revenue sources “...including, but not limited to, hotel excises pursuant to chapter 64g, linkage fees and inclusionary zoning payments, however authorized, the sale of municipal property pursuant to Section 3 of Chapter 40, parking fines and surcharges, pursuant to Sections 20, 20A and 20A-1/2 of Chapter 90, existing dedicated housing, open space and historic preservation funds, however authorized and gifts received from private sources for community preservation purposes; and provided further, that additional funds so committed shall not include any federal or state funds. CPA as amended in 2012 allows cities and town to adopt an additional exemption of \$100,000 of taxable value of commercial and industrial properties.

Budget was released from Conference Committee, whose members were charged with reconciling the differences between the House and Senate versions of the budget. And while the Coalition was optimistic after the Senate's proposal for the budget included language allocating \$30M in surplus funding for the CPA Trust Fund, unfortunately this language was dropped in the newest version of the state budget.

This development is especially disappointing during a year in which revenue for the Trust Fund has **dropped by over 33%** (primarily due to rising interest rates and declining home sales across the state). Without any additional revenue in the form of surplus dollars, it is likely that the CPA Trust Fund distribution in November 2023 will be significantly lower than what municipalities received in 2022.

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By the end of 2022, 195 Massachusetts cities and towns have adopted the CPA. Each year new communities are added to the program. Each year the state match is distributed in three rounds to the participating cities and towns based on formulas established in the CPA. Only cities and towns that fund the CPA at a 3% level from the local surcharge or other funding sources allowed under CPA as amended on July 1, 2012, can participate in the second and third rounds each year to receive a higher state match. Currently 78 of the 195 cities and towns that have adopted the CPA charge the full 3% local surcharge.

Dracut voters approved the Community Preservation Act M.G.L. Chapter 44B, at the 2001 Annual Spring Town Meeting and at the November 2001 General election. Dracut elected to fund the CPA account through a 2% surcharge on all real estate tax bills with one exemption:

Residential property owned and occupied by a person who qualifies for low-income housing or low – to moderate-income senior housing.

In Dracut, the collection of CPA surcharges began with Fiscal Year (FY) 2002. Revenues (by source) and appropriations (excluding appropriations from set-aside funds) for 2002 through 2023 as audited are shown on Table 1 below. The FY 2023 State match from the CPA trust fund was approximately 38.5%.

In Dracut, the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) consists of a nine-member board. Since 2002, the CPA program in Dracut has generated \$15,502,652 in local surcharges with a state trust fund match of \$7,064,488 for total CPA revenue of \$22,567,141. The matching funds from the State have decreased from 100% in 2002 to 19.01% in 2019 due to the increased number of participating communities and the stable state budget amount. The matching amount for FY24 is 38.51%.

Table 1: Community Preservation Act Funds Generated: FY 2002- FY 2023

	Fiscal Year	Local Surcharge	Total Trust Fund Distribution	Percentage	Total Revenue (Local Surcharge + Distribution)
	2002	\$449,547			\$449,547
	2003	\$478,059	\$449,547	100%	\$927,606
	2004	\$502,489	\$478,059	100%	\$980,548
	2005	\$527,457	\$502,489	100%	\$1,029,946
	2006	\$564,011	\$527,457	100%	\$1,091,468
	2007	\$589,671	\$564,011	100%	\$1,153,682
	2008	\$620,335	\$589,671	100%	\$1,210,006
	2009	\$639,360	\$419,472	67.62%	\$1,058,832
	2010	\$652,740	\$222,592	34.81%	\$875,332
	2011	\$685,277	\$177,558	27.2%	\$862,835
	2012	\$705,887	\$182,551	26.64%	\$888,438
	2013	\$733,210	\$189,418	26.83%	\$922,628
	2014	\$767,420	\$382,920	52.23%	\$1,150,340
	2015	\$827,573	\$241,469	31.5%	\$1,069,042
	2016	\$858,092	\$245,385	29.7%	\$1,103,477
	2017	\$891,326	\$176,568	20.58%	\$1,067,894
	2018	\$929,869	\$153,328	17.2%	\$1,083,197
	2019	\$964,944	\$176,813	19.01%	\$1,141,757
	2020	\$1,015,161	\$230,800	23.92%	\$1,245,961
	2021	\$1,031,265	\$290,606	28.63%	\$1,321,871
	2022	\$1,068,960	\$452,103	43.84%	\$1,521,063
	2023	\$0	\$411,671	38.51%	\$411,671

	Fiscal Year	Local Surcharge	Total Trust Fund Distribution	Percentage	Total Revenue (Local Surcharge + Distribution)
TOT		\$15,502,653	\$7,064,488		\$22,567,141

Source: Community Preservation Coalition

Consistent with the terms of the CPA and with the Community Preservation Committee's regulations, the Community Preservation Committee has been formed to administer the CPA. It consists of four at-large members appointed by the Board of Selectmen (Caroline Zuk, Don Plummer, Russ Taylor, and Bruce Cote), a Conservation Commission representative (Rob Sheppard), a Recreation Commission representative (George Malonis), a Planning Board representative (Charles Kanavos), a Dracut Housing Authority representative (Matt Sheehan), and Louise Tremblay, an Historical Commission representative. The CPC meets for regularly scheduled meetings and makes their recommendations at each of the Spring and Fall Annual Town Meetings.

Appropriations to date from the Community Preservation Fund to projects in the four target areas² are shown on the chart below. Appropriations are not equal to actual amounts expended. This is because some projects did not proceed while others did not fully deplete their funding. The remaining balances in the appropriation account are recaptured on a regular basis and made available for new project appropriation in subsequent years.

The Town Manager has assigned the Director of Community Development to provide the Committee with staff assistance. Staff coordinates with the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director, and Town Counsel in the acquisition of real estate, creation of the required restrictions and completes other tasks as required by the CPC. Further work in procurement of professionals for surveys, appraisals and other land-related tasks is completed by staff under the supervision of the CPC and the Town Manager.

This plan has evolved from the previous year's Community Preservation Plans. It incorporates lessons learned from the previous rounds of project selections and funding appropriations. The Committee seeks ongoing input from many interest groups, including Town Departments and committees, environmental and land trust organizations, and the general citizenry. The Committee uses for reference and guidance various planning documents as well as data from the Town Assessor's Department. The Community Preservation Plan attempts to capture Dracut's community preservation needs and goals in the four CPA target areas. This Plan also outlines the processes by which the Committee solicits reviews and recommends

² The CPA allows spending in four target areas: (1) open space; (2) historic preservation; (3) community housing; and (4) land for recreational use (for more information on CPA allowable uses, see the chart on Page 12). Also, the CPA allows for the reimbursement of administrative expenses up to 5% of the annual collections.

project proposals for CPA funding, and it includes the application form and instructions. It is updated every year to reflect changes in goals or emphasis.

CPA Funding Requirements

The CPA mandates that each fiscal year Dracut must spend or set aside for later spending, at least 10% of its annual Community Preservation Fund revenues that were collected from the local surcharge and the State match for each of the three CPA targeted areas: open space and recreation, historic resources, and community housing. Dracut Town Meeting decides each year how much of the remaining 70% of the funds (or 65% of the funds, if it chooses to appropriate 5% of the annual CPA revenues for the administrative needs of the Dracut Community Preservation Committee, as allowed by the CPA statute) to spend on the three purposes identified above or separately for recreation, based on the Committee recommendations. Any monies not appropriated remain in the Fund for further distribution.

A favorable Committee recommendation and a Town Meeting appropriation are both required to spend Fund monies for any community preservation purposes. Appropriations from the Fund, except borrowing, are made by a simple majority vote. Borrowing for CPA purposes requires a two-thirds majority vote.

The Town Meeting may approve, reduce, or reject any appropriation(s) recommended by the Committee. At the Committee's recommendation, Town Meeting may also set aside all or part of the annual Fund revenues for later spending into set-aside accounts for one or more community preservation purpose categories. Town Meeting may not, however, increase any recommended appropriation or set-aside, nor appropriate or set aside any fund monies on its own initiative without a prior favorable recommendation by the Committee.

All residents of Dracut are welcome to attend the Committee's meetings. The times and locations of these meetings are posted at Town Hall and are on the Town's website. Written comments or questions are welcome and may be submitted via email (address) or directed to the Community Preservation Committee, c/o Community Development Director, Town Hall 62 Arlington Street, Dracut, MA. 01826

Gifts to the Community Preservation Committee

The Town of Dracut can accept monetary gifts to the Community Preservation Fund. Gifts can be designated for specific purposes consistent with the four statutory categories- open space, community housing, historic resources, and recreation. Gifts may be made in a variety of forms, including cash and securities. Gifts to the Town of Dracut are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed under the Internal Revenue Code.

HOW CPA FUNDS CAN BE USED

Community Preservation Act funds must be used for public community preservation purposes. The following guidelines summarize these public purposes.

Community preservation is defined by the Act as, “the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space, the acquisition, creation and preservation of historic structures and landscapes, and the acquisition, creation and preservation of community housing.”

Preservation is defined as, “the protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction.”

As detailed by the CPA, Fund monies may be spent to undertake the following primary community preservation purposes:

- The acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space. Open space, as defined by the CPA, “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, freshwater marshes and other wetlands, river, stream, lake and pond frontage, lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve and land for recreational use.”
- The acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of community housing. The CPA defines community housing as, “low- and moderate-income housing for individuals and families, including low-or moderate-income senior housing.” This means housing for persons and families with incomes below 100% of the Lowell Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area’s (Lowell PMSA) median income as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CPA defines the term “support of community housing” as including, but 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 “affordable housing.”
- The acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of historic resources. The CPA recognizes historic resources as “a building, structure, vessel, real property (including a historic landscape), document or artifact that is listed on the State Register of historic places or has been determined by the local historical commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture, or culture of the city or town.” For CPA purposes, the local historic preservation commission is the Town of Dracut Historical Commission.

- The acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of land for recreational use. The CPA defines recreational use as, “active or passive recreational use including, but not limited to, the use of land for community gardens, trails and non-commercial 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.” The CPA also provides “that with respect to the 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”. A “capital improvement” is defined as: “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 a 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 Preservation Act Funds may also be used for the following purposes:

- The “rehabilitation or restoration of open space and community housing that is acquired or created” using CPA monies.
- Revenues “set aside” for “later spending”.
- Annual “administrative and operating expenses” of the Committee, not to exceed 5% of the Fund annual revenues.
- Annual principal and interest payments, preparation, issuance and marketing costs for bonds or notes for borrowing for community preservation purposes.
- Damages payable to property owners for real estate interests taken by the Town by eminent domain for community preservation purposes.
- “Local share for state and federal grants” for allowable community preservation purposes.
- Property acquisition-related expenses including appraisals, land surveys, baseline studies to establish conservation values, title searches, legal fees, costs regarding the issuance of the required restriction on the land, and other closing expenses for the project.
- If a grant of a perpetual restriction to a not-for-profit conservation organization is intended, the amount requested at Town Meeting may include funding for the holder of the restriction for ongoing site monitoring and potential enforcement.

As of July 1, 2012, the CPA also encourages the Committee to consider “regional projects for Community Preservation”.

The Community Preservation Act funds may **not** be spent for the following purposes:

- As a replacement or substitute for operating funds. The CPA is a supplementary funding source intended to increase available resources for community preservation acquisitions and initiatives.
- Payment for routine maintenance, defined in the CPA as “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.”
- Gymnasiums, stadiums, or any similar structure.
- Acquisition of artificial turf for athletic fields.
- Projects without a public purpose or public benefit.

Is Our Project Allowable?

Oct. 2012: The chart below demonstrates the allowable uses of CPA funds in each of the CPA project categories: open space, recreation, housing, and historic preservation. This chart is critical for determining whether a proposed project is eligible for CPA funding.

Projects are only eligible for CPA funding if they fit in a box with a green "Yes" in the chart below:

	Open Space	Historic	Recreation	Housing
Acquire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Create	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Preserve	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support	No	No	No	Yes
Rehabilitate and/or restore	Yes, if acquired or created with CPA funds	Yes	Yes (new as of 7/8/2012)	Yes, if acquired or created with CPA funds

Chart adapted from "Recent Developments in Municipal Law", Massachusetts Department of Revenue, October 2012. Source: Community Preservation Coalition.

The same table with more detail can be viewed at:

<https://www.communitypreservation.org/allowable-uses>

The present ratio of CPA fund expenditures is.

- Open Space Acquisition/Recreation: 10%
- Affordable Housing: 10%

- Historic Preservation: 10%
- Administrative Expenses- for projects within the above programmatic areas: 5%

The minimum distribution required by the CPA Law is 10:10:10:5, with the remainder allocated to any of the categories voted upon by Town Meeting. We have recently learned that we can have that minimal ratio and place the remaining 65% in an open category that can be allocated to any of the other as needed, and we have reverted to that option.

These distribution rations have changed over time. Initially the fund was heavily weighted to saving for open space purchased and reserved 75% of funds for that. Housing, historical preservation, and administration were 10,10, and 5 respectively.

Subsequently the allocation was changed to help defray the expense of a large commitment to senior housing. The allocation was 55% open space, 30% housing, 10% historical, and 5% administration.

The new 10,10,10, 5 model was adopted in 2022.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The CPC's Community Preservation Plan is intended to coordinate with existing town documents, such as the Dracut Master Plan and Housing Production Plan, as much as feasible. The key open space and recreation goals that have been identified that are important to Dracut residents include, but are not limited to:

- Preserve existing elements of Dracut's rural and agricultural character.
- Protect the environment.
- Improve and expand both passive and active recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.

In reaffirming these three key goals the residents of Dracut continue to recognize the importance of open space and adequate passive and active recreational areas as critical to preserving the character of the Town and thereby the quality of life shared by its citizenry.

The Recreation and Open Space plan, adopted by the Town in 2020 references town-owned lands for all uses, including recreational uses. The CPA allows and encourages the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space. CPA funds may be used to protect open space by outright purchase, through bonding, through purchases made in conjunction with other private and/or public funds, and/or by extinguishing or limiting development rights through the purchase of permanent land conservation or agricultural preservation easements or restrictions. In identifying multiple land preservation and

funding methods, the CPA essentially recognizes the prohibitive costs of land in communities such as Dracut, and similarly recognizes that CPA funds alone will likely not be sufficient for the protection of significant tracts of land.

The CPC works with various town committees (Open Space, Recreation, Agricultural, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Dracut Water, etc.) in identifying potential open space resources for acquisition and protection. The Open Space Committee focuses much of its attention on parcels that are adjacent to existing parcels as well as parcels that have diverse habitats, land that comprise combinations of uplands, wetlands, and forests.

To acquire open space under the CPA, an appraisal is typically required, and CPA funds used to acquire a parcel cannot exceed the appraised value of that property. However, other funds may be used to augment CPA funds. In the past, the CPC has used state CSA funds to supplement municipal expenditures.

CPA funds may also be used to support land protection efforts through the development of land protection strategies, such as the development of local land Open Space Plans, which are required by the State as a prerequisite for receiving funding for land purchases. Similarly, CPA funds may be used to establish land protection trust funds, the monies of which can be used to conduct preliminary land assessments and enable the Town to rapidly respond to land protection opportunities.

Conservation restrictions are required for all lands acquired under CPA for Open Space and Recreation; until this document is completed and filed, the terms of the CPA acquisition have not technically been completed.

The following properties and projects have been and continue to be of interest to the Town of Dracut and its Committee for use as public open space:

Margaret Brox et al- 461 Methuen Rd- Family Woodlot

41 acres of land within proximity to the recently acquired 27-acre Yapp Farm, this land would provide almost continuous open space connections to other area properties and promote wildlife corridors and superb natural habitat. The property is presently under a forestry management plan (61B), which provides the town with the first right of refusal.

The family has expressed a real interest in the land being part of a greater conservation area and has offered to have some of the frontage of their property on Methuen Road used for parking and public access.

Deborah Moylen – 371 Richardson Rd.

This 23.7-acre property is part of the Richardson family estate and currently owned by Deborah Moylen. This property consists of open farmland, currently being hayed, and some wooded areas. Additionally, this area abuts the previously purchased Yapp Farm, and another 4.95-acre Richardson family lot at 383 Richardson Rd. approved for purchase by the Town at the June 2020 Town Meeting. Ms. Moylen has expressed a desire to preserve this land and we will work with her at the appropriate time to accommodate this open space preservation. Recent tax assessment is \$158,700.

Frank J. Gorman Jr. – 401 Richardson Rd. Rear

This 15.47-acre property is an access locked parcel of land strategically located adjacent to the Yapp Farm property, and the above-mentioned Deborah Moylen property.

Pauline Hand/Burgess Family Trust- 766 Arlington St (Kenwood Ski Tow)

The Kenwood Ski Tow provided recreation for area residents for decades. Geographically challenging for residential development, due to topography and wetlands, this 80-acre property could be using for passive recreation and wildlife habitat protection in the middle of an increasingly densely developed part of town. Although the family had the land appraised at near \$800,000, we have indicated we would be willing to spend up to \$300,000 CPA funds since so much of the land is naturally protected by its slopes and the wetlands. We would of course get the appraisal updated if we were to pursue this. Many people in town would love to see this property preserved and opened once again to the public. It would have both historic and open space value, for passive recreation, and would be protected in perpetuity by a Conservation Restriction.

The property has five frontage lots on Methuen Street and Arlington Street carved off from the main parcel. There have been other discussions of developing at the upper portion of the property, off Bayberry Road and Cranberry Road. As the bulk of the site limited access, utility easements, steep slopes and endangered species habitat, this property will be difficult, if not impossible, to develop. Previously, town staff has encouraged the family to develop under the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) provisions within the Dracut Zoning Bylaw to limit impacts on the property. Based on this approach, most of the land is likely to remain open for the foreseeable future.

61, 61A and 61B Lands.

The CPC continues to have great interest in the possibility of preserving much of the open land and farmland in this part of town. It is of priceless value as farmland, habitat, for passive recreation, aesthetically, and local pride in its history. The CPC is working with other groups, such as the Open Space

Committee and the Agricultural Commission, on an analysis of tax designated 61 properties to determine what properties would be of interest to the CPC in future years.

Recreation

The CPA statute defines recreational use as “active or passive recreational use, including, but not limited to, the use of land for community gardens, trails and non-commercial youth and adult sports, and the use of land as park, playground or athletic field.” The Town’s priorities for recreational opportunities and facilities are documented in the revisions to the Master Plan. A key goal in this document is to improve Dracut’s recreational opportunities, recognizing the importance of adequate passive and active recreational areas as critical to preserving the character of the Town and the quality of life for its residents. The following properties and projects have been and continue to be of interest to the Town of Dracut and its Committee for use as public recreational areas:

High School Track & Field- 1660 Lakeview Avenue

In 2014 the Town voted to resurface the High School track. The estimated price was \$500,000. In spring, 2019, the Town Manager and the School Department proposed a comprehensive sports fields project that would resurface Beaudry Stadium to an artificial turf field, with revised bleacher locations and other amenities. The second field, which surrounds the track, was also proposed to be surfaced with artificial turf. The high jump area was to be relocated and the track was to be resurfaced. The proposal for both fields and the track is intended to keep these highly used fields functioning and in good condition for the foreseeable future. Grass fields have proven not to hold up as well, due to the extensive use of the fields.

As CPA funds must be used on public spaces, the School Department will be required to keep the fields open to the public. CPA funds also restrict the use of these funds on turf fields. Therefore, all grading and groundwork may use CPA funds, with the actual artificial turf and related elements coming from other funding sources.

Town meeting voted to approve \$4,463,952 in CPA funding this project and the Veteran’s Park project at the Spring 2019 Annual Town Meeting. An additional 1,031,250 was also voted for those non-CPA related expenditures.

At the Spring 2019 Town Meeting the Town voted to appropriate \$2,811,000 in CPA funds to update the football field and track oval. This work was completed in 2020 and the fields are in use.

Combined Tennis / Pickle Ball Court

In June 2023 the Town voted to allocate \$50,000 for the design of a combined tennis / pickleball court to be located on school grounds. Tennis courts were requested by the school department so they could implement a viable tennis program. The pickleball courts are at the request of many citizens.

The school department has ensured these courts are to always remain available to the public, except when are used by the school.

Veterans' Park

Veteran's Park, located off Broadway Road, is a centrally located, heavily used sports facility. With walking paths, spray pad, sports fields and various spectator seating areas, the facility is used by all age groups. When the field drainage support systems were installed in 2012 the materials used were not sufficiently porous to adequately drain the fields, resulting in delays in the ability to use the field surfaces after heavy rains and/or in the early spring. Funds, in the amount of \$1,600,000, were voted at the Annual Spring 2019 Town Meeting (with the High School Field project- see above) to provide for better drainage of the fields, so that the fields could be used more readily after wet weather events. Construction work started in July 2019, with work also to include re-surfacing of the splash pad area with a more child-friendly, rubberized surface.

This work was completed in 2020.

Hovey Field Extension

In June 2012, the Town Meeting voted funds for the acquisition of two properties at 509 and 515 Hildreth Street to be added to the existing Hovey Park sports fields. The funds were used to acquire both properties, remediate a leaky oil tank from one of the homes and to ultimately demolish both structures. The vacant lots were then cleared and, in June 2016, \$400,000 in CPA funds was voted for the purposes of design and construction of a passive park with T-ball field for young children. In spring 2019, the project was put out to bid, with construction moving forward on the project. The project did result in the need for additional funds, which were provided out of the general fund. With minor exception, the field improvements will be completed this fall.

This project was completed, and the park is in use. The CPC stands ready to assist in park improvements as necessary and allowable under CPA restrictions.

Additional Recreation Projects

These recreation-oriented projects have recently been presented to the town for votes, were approved at the 2022 and 2023 Town Meeting and are in progress.

At the June 2022 Town meeting voted to approve \$50,000 for the study for the design and placement of a recreation court in East Dracut. This is on hold pending the results of the school courts study.

At the June 2022 Town meeting the voters also approved \$60,000 to fund the development of the Town of Dracut Open Space and Recreation plan. This work is on-going.

At the June 2023 the Town voted to allocate \$170,000 to construct a fitness station at Veteran's Park. This allocation was augmented by a \$50K grant from Blue Cross / Blue Shield.

Historic Preservation

With the completed revision of the Town's Master Plan the CPC is ready to help in the restoration, preservation, and identification of the various historic, agricultural, and cultural properties of the town.

In 2012 the CPC funded a \$50,000 study, completed by Fisher/Larson and Associates, entitled "Historic Preservation Plan and Town-Wide Survey of Historic Resources for the Town of Dracut, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. This preservation plan, prepared with the guidance of the Dracut Historical Commission, lays out a roadmap for documentation and preservation of Dracut's most important buildings and historic resources. Given Dracut's agricultural history, many of its historic resources are farm buildings as well as the farmlands around the buildings. The CPC is working to protect both farmlands as well as the buildings associated with the farm.

The Committee has acted on the following historic properties and is further interested in protection of agricultural lands within the community:

Beaver Brook Farm - 761 Mammoth Road

Purchased with \$2.8m CPA Open Space funds (\$2.5M for the acquisition + \$300,000 for consultant etc. as needed) at the June 2015 Town Meeting, this 25-acre farm has been in the hands of the Beaver Brook Farm Visioning Committee, a group of residents chosen by the Town Manager to develop a Master Plan for the future of this spectacular land and its unique historic buildings. During the past 5 years, that goal was never reached, but accomplishments included 1) a historic/architectural assessment of all the

buildings, 2) demolition of the dairy complex that included a barn and silo, presumably b/c of safety and insurance considerations, 3) decision not to reconstruct the historic water tower in the form of a cell tower, 4) decision to separate off the main house (second oldest in Town) and sell with a historic restriction to someone qualified to repair and restore it, 5) decision to rent the Squash Barn to a Terraponics/indoor container gardening company, a proposal which has since been withdrawn, 6) removal of hazardous asbestos from the site of an earlier barn, 7) construction of a walking trail through the property connecting with the School Complex across Beaver Brook to be used also as a Cross Country Trail, 8) removal of dead trees and debris from the creek near the crossing, and 9) finally enlisting the help of students from the Conway School of Landscape Design to draw up that Master Plan using input from citizens at two public meetings. The \$300,000 CPA funds originally allocated for a consultant has been spent on some of the above, and an additional \$30,000 was approved for work relevant to the Trail.

In 2020 the BBFC approved a plan for the farm and will present to the Board of Selectmen for approval. In anticipation of that approval, the Town voted to appropriate \$50,000 for a consultant to help develop and manage an implementation plan. This appropriation has since been rescinded.

The Town voted to allocate an additional \$250,000 to be applied to the exterior renovation of the Squash Barn.

The Town voted to allocate \$250,000 for the stabilization of the Seed Shed / Corn Crib, and \$200,000 for the demolition of the workshop.



Image: Seed shed / Corn Crib undergoing stabilization work
Photo courtesy of Bruce Cote



Image: Seed shed / Corn Crib after stabilization work
Photo courtesy of Bruce Cote

Additional funding will be requested as the implementation plan is fleshed out and the CPC is ready to assist in funding as allowable under CPA restrictions.

The CPC remains intensely interested in this project and will help in whatever way it can to ensure its optimal use for the community.



Beaver Brook Farm dairy complex and silo. The structures were demolished in 2018.

Preservation of Historic Resources

Historic Resources are defined by the CPA as buildings, vessels, or real properties that are listed on the State Register of Historic Places or are significant in the history,

archeology, architecture, or culture of Dracut as determined by the Dracut Historical Commission. CPA funds may be used for the acquisition, preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of historic resources (including Town-owned historic resources), but not for routine maintenance. Unless such historic resources are in public ownership, the public purpose of investments in historic resources must be apparent, and/or must be protected by a preservation restriction that ensures public benefit. All projects funded in the Historic Resources category must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (See attached Appendix 3).

Currently, Dracut has a considerable number of historic assets including municipal buildings, private homes, mill complexes with their related mill housing, monuments, and other ancient artifacts. To date, due to the historical survey work and knowledge of historic structures within Dracut, the Town has several buildings eligible for State and National Register designation, but none have been listed. The listing of many of Dracut's historic properties would recognize the importance of these properties as resources to the community. There are no historic districts; there is no demolition delay bylaw, which many communities have adopted.



The Fox property at 324 Broadway Road was of interest to the CPC but was demolished in 2018 to make way for 42 new, over 55 residential developments.

To better document historic resources, in 2016 the Dracut Historical Commission applied for a grant with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

Approximately 170 structures were surveyed, with many properties consisting of farm complexes with multiple buildings. The MHC \$15,000 grant was matched with \$15,000 in CPA funds, resulting in a significant amount of work, for a total of \$30,000. The CPC is looking at funding two mill studies- the Navy Yard and Collinsville/Beaver Brook Farm mill- with CPA funds. Having this documentation can lead to use of historic State tax credits that can be used to further rehabilitate these structures.

The rural, agricultural, and historic character of Dracut is currently threatened by the rapid rise of local land values. It is often easier and more economical to remove older structures and replace them with new, much larger structures that are frequently out of scale with their neighborhood and setting, a development trend which damages the historic integrity of the Town. The lost structures which gave a sense of history and cultural character to a neighborhood are lost forever. Similarly, the Town is frequently placed in a position of defending itself from large developments and subdivisions that diminish its rural and historic character.

Goals of the Committee relative to historic resources include:

- Working with the Historical Commission, protect, preserve, rehabilitate and/or restore historic properties and sites throughout Dracut, which are of historic, architectural, archeological, and cultural significance. Work to assist owners of historic resources.
- Working with the Historical Commission, continue the efforts noted in the Historic Preservation Plan by continued funding of historic survey work on properties within Dracut.
- Preserve existing rural/historic character of the Town, including, but not limited to, residential and non-residential buildings, barns, outbuildings, burial grounds, markers, monuments, stone walls, fields, cart paths, historic land and streetscapes and scenic vistas.
- Provide education and community outreach regarding extensive historical and cultural resources within Dracut. Include economic development and tax incentive information and resources to educate on the financial benefits of historic tax credits.

The Committee has been and will continue to be interested in preserving some of Dracut's more significant architectural resources. Properties include:

Mitchell's Boundary Pine Marker

All the corners along the boundary of the Town of Dracut are marked with a granite stone marker, some 4 feet high and others easy to miss. The details of these markers and their fascinating history have been documented in the amazing “Boundary Atlas for the Town of Dracut, MA” (2012) document by Stephen P. Adie. The most important of these marks is the original site of the boundary between Massachusetts and New Hampshire, where an ancient Boundary Pine was replaced by a massive stone marker erected in 1890 and engraved with all the details of its significance. Mr. Adie led a site visit to this marker recently and sparked the interest of the CPC and the Open Space Committee in ensuring both its preservation and public access to it. (The property is on land owned by PJ Keating.) Although no specific steps have been taken to ensure these goals, the project remains on our radar along with the eventual protection and repair of all the other 20 markers.



Residents and board members on a recent site walk to the boundary marker near Black Oak Lane.

Town Cemeteries

The Town of Dracut has numerous historic cemeteries that require additional maintenance and repair, particularly historic headstones. These cemeteries are located as follows:

Broadway Road in front of Richardson Cemetery:	Bailey Cemetery
Broadway Road:	Richardson Cemetery
Parker Road:	Varnum Cemetery
Off Matty's Way, upper Hildreth Street:	New Boston Cemetery
Hildreth Street, Lowell, MA.	Hildreth Cemetery
Mammoth Road, after Pine Valley Drive:	Oakland Cemetery
Jordan Street, Lowell, MA.	Hamblett Cemetery

The Town's Department of Public Works maintains all cemeteries, including the two located in Lowell, MA. The Town's Historical Commission, working with the Community Preservation Committee and Department of Public Works, needs to assess the condition of each of these cemeteries, with special consideration to the headstones located within the cemeteries. On an as-needed basis, these groups need to work together to develop a preservation plan for each of these locations and allocate funding (possibly with Massachusetts Historical Commission grant funds) to restore the cemetery headstones on an as-needed basis.

Many of these gravestones are of founders and/or prominent figures of the Town of Dracut. It is in the Town's best interest to restore these headstones or to prevent them from further damage so that they can be reviewed and maintained for future generations.

Approved Historic Preservation Expenditures 2022-2023

These historic preservation activities have recently been presented to the town for votes, were approved at the June 2023 Town Meeting and are in progress.

The Town voted to allocate \$240,000 for the restoration of vital records at Dracut Town Hall. The project goal is to preserve the historical & vital records of the Town of Dracut. This project both preserves the character of our Town and meets CPC goals by its very definition: Restoration of historical & vital records kept in the vault of the Town Clerk's office.

The Town voted to allocate \$50,000 for an engineering study for the restoration and preservation of Coburn House. Funding will provide for architectural services to

prepare a conceptual plan and a scope of services to address the repairs and renovations needed at the historic Coburn House.

Affordable Housing

The CPA statute defines “community housing” as housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families, including senior housing. “Low-income housing” is for households whose annual income is less than 80% of the area-wide median income. “Moderate income housing” is for households whose annual income is less than 100% of the area-wide median income. The area-wide median income is determined annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Dracut’s estimated area-wide median income in 2017 is \$86,716, finally passing the Greater Lowell region’s median household income of \$79,284 in 2013-2017. However, for housing units created with CPA funds to be counted towards Dracut’s 10% affordable housing goal set by the State, the units must serve those households whose annual income is less than 80% of the area-wide median income. CPA funds can also be used for housing units serving households of 80%-100% of the Area Median Income even though they will not count toward Dracut’s 10% goal.

Dracut does have some lower-priced market housing units, primarily small one and two-bedroom condominiums converted from apartments, but very few of these qualify as affordable housing units under State law. In Massachusetts, the term “affordable housing” applies to housing units made affordable to low-and moderate- income households by a recorded deed rider that restricts sale prices and rents in perpetuity to income eligible households. Additional details on affordable housing requirements may be found in both the Town’s updated Master Plan and the recently adopted 2020-2024 Housing Production Plan, prepared by the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership Committee.

CPA funds may be expended “for the acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of community housing and for the rehabilitation or restoration.... Of community housing acquired with CPA funds,” but not including maintenance. The Dracut Housing Authority, the Town of Dracut and, in the future, the Dracut Affordable Housing Trust, are the local agencies primarily responsible for implementation of community housing projects.

Both the updated Dracut Master Plan and the 2020-2024 Housing Production Plan document the need for affordable units in Dracut. The goals for providing affordable housing using CPA funds include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Acquire, create, preserve, and support community housing and rehabilitate or restore community housing that is acquired or created under CPA. Give

preference to the reuse of existing structures and to the construction of new buildings on previously developed sites.

- Limit or subsidize purchase price or rental fees to HUD's established maximum low- and moderate- income limits to ensure that units are counted toward Dracut's 10% goal for affordable housing.
- Promote economic diversity of Dracut residents by providing housing for households earning a range of 30% to 100% of the Area Median Income.
- Provide permanent rental housing units that include support services for elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Encourage non-profit organizations to build and advocate for affordable housing in Dracut.
- Encourage diversity in Dracut's population by achieving a mix of homes that enhances Dracut's town character and provides needed choices for all its residents.
- Encourage housing designs that preserve the character of Dracut's established residential neighborhoods.

The CPC has and will continue to support the following projects:

Dracut Centre School – 11 Spring Park Ave.

This elementary school building, built in 1905 is filled with memories of many residents in their earliest school years. Belonging to the Town and for years used as a Town Hall Annex until the new Town Hall was constructed, it has long been eyed for affordable housing. Recently efforts have concentrated on developing the building, which is in good structural state, into nine rental units for veterans. CPC proposed and the June 2019 Town Meeting approved \$661,000 to rehabilitate the building into such units. Half of this will come from Historical & half from Affordable Housing Funds. The property will be sold to the Coalition for a Better Acre, a Lowell-based non-profit with a good track record for accomplishing such projects. Further funding was obtained from CBA's application to the State's Community Scale Housing Initiative (\$1.8m). Every effort was made to preserve not only the exterior of the building (already funded by \$200,000 CPA Historical funds) but also as much as possible of the interior features. As with all CPA-purchased properties, the building must be protected by a Historical Preservation Restriction.

This project was completed in 2022 and all units are occupied. The historical preservation has been recorded and the project is awaiting final financial close-out through documentation from the Coalition.



Constructed in 1905, the Dracut Centre School was used as a four-room schoolhouse until the early 1980s, when it was converted to the Town Hall Annex. It is being sold to Coalition for a Better Acre, a non-profit housing group, who will be constructing nine units of Veteran's housing.



Image: Completed Dracut Center School restoration
Photo courtesy of Bruce Cote

Senior Housing Complex – 144 Greenmont Ave.

Since the purchase and transfer to the Dracut Housing Authority in 2012 of the 17-acre former Harold Richardson Farm at 144 Greenmont Ave. for \$ 907,000 (and an adjacent property on Bridge St. to allow a second access), DHA has been attempting to work out a plan to fund the development of a Senior Affordable Housing Complex on the property. One plan was drawn up that would allow about 62 units, but no progress was made in finding funding for its realization. In the meantime, the CPC allocated \$3 million towards construction. In 2018, the DHA returned the property and project it to the Town, with its future being relegated to the Town Manager. A resulting plan has Common Ground Development Corp., a nonprofit subsidiary of Community Teamwork Inc., as the proposed developer of a 3-story 60-unit building, the final cost of which is estimated at \$18,850,000. Funding beyond the \$3m CPA funds will be sought from sources such as the Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

We are including this in our 2023 Community Preservation Plan in part to inform residents of its status but also to indicate that we are not planning to provide further CPA funding for this project.

Conservation and Other Restrictions

The CPC is in the process of making sure that, as is dictated by the CPA law, all properties and projects funded by CPA funds are covered by a Restriction document, one that is separate from the deed and clearly outlines the conditions of preservation and future use and allowances of the land and structures involved.

At present Town Staff, in particular The Community Development Director is working on the Conservation Restriction for the Beaver Brook Farm which will be held by the Dracut Land Trust, Inc.. Restrictions for other CPA-funded holdings will then also be developed.

The CPA Funding Application Process

With the Annual Town Meeting taking place the first Monday of June, the Committee encourages applicants to apply early in January, for the application for CPA funds to be fully reviewed by the Committee. This time frame will allow for the complete submission of applications, scheduling of inspections and, if required, appraisals, scheduling and holding of a public hearing on the project and time for deliberation. The Committee will make recommendations on the project to the Board of Selectmen before Town Meeting, as well as at the scheduled Town Meeting.

If Town Meeting votes to approve the project, the Committee will issue an award letter with the conditions of the project. CPA monies are public funds. Projects financed with CPA funds must comply with all applicable State and municipal requirements, including

the State procurement law (M.G.L. Chapter 30B), which requires special procedures for the selection of products, vendors, services, and consultants.

All CPA funds are administered and disbursed by the Town of Dracut. All bid documents or requests for proposals must be approved by the Town Manager before publication. All purchases of goods and services require a Town of Dracut purchase order issued by the Town Manager or his designee. Final decisions regarding the selection of goods and services are the responsibility of the Town Manager or his designee. All contractual agreements with vendors or service providers must be approved and signed by the Town Manager. Payments are made only after the receipt of goods or services. The Town Manager may approve partial payments for partially completed services as may be specified in a Town-approved service contract or on a case-by-case basis.

The guidelines do not strictly apply where a CPA appropriation is made as a grant to a non-governmental entity. However, the CPC and the Town Manager, or his designee, may require accounting and reporting procedures that are appropriate in the context of the project and satisfy the Town's need to comply with municipal finance laws. Projects should commence within three years of the date of Town Meeting.

For questions about procurement and other financial requirements and procedures, the applicant should contact the Community Development Director or the Town Treasurer. General questions concerning the application process should be directed to the CPC chairman, or applicable town staff.

The Committee may request project status updates from Fund recipients. The purpose of such updates is to aid the Committee in refining the Plan and to identify issues that may assist future applicants.

The Committee has signs that give funding credit to the Dracut CPA program. These signs are available from the Committee and should be posted at project sites.

CPA Application Process

Over the years the CPC application process has been somewhat informal. This is partially because the CPC could not gauge when land to be preserved, the primary focus of the use of CPA funds, would become available for sale. Several CPC members, who are longtime residents of the town, have had negotiations or have heard of land on the market prior to the land being advertised. This information has been helpful for early discussions between the town and the landowners.

Although there were two town meetings annually, one in early June and one in early November, the CPC has worked towards gearing their CPA funding applications towards a schedule to meet the Spring Town Meeting timeline. Projects should be submitted well in advance so that the CPC has the time to properly assess each project, review the applications with the applicants, collect additional information, hold a public hearing, and deliberate and make recommendations to town meeting.

The following yearly CPC schedule was created to provide stability and reliability into the application funding process. Although the committee recommends following the timeline below, some project timing issues are bound to arise. In those cases, submittal to the Fall town meeting may be requested.

CPC ANNUAL SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

September

- Public Hearing to garner input on priorities.

October

- Discussion of updates to Community Preservation Plan

November

- Vote to approve Community Preservation Plan
- Update on projects in progress

December

- 12/1 – applications due to Community Development Director
- Review applications for eligibility and completeness

January

- Project discussions with applicants

February

- Project discussions with applicants

March

- Budget update & staff input
- Vote on project recommendations & closures

April

- Update on projects in progress

May

- Committee Reorganization
- Town Meeting Planning as needed.

June

- Town Meeting w/ recommendations
- Final budget update following Town Meeting

July

- No Meeting

August

- No Meeting

Submissions:

Submissions should be made to the CPC chairperson or to the Director of Community Development in a timely manner for the CPC to review the project. Submissions should be made on the CPC's application forms, with additional information requested attached to the application forms. Five copies of the application and attachments should be provided.

CPC committee members and town staff are available to help complete any documentation and guide applicants through the application process.

The CPC's review of the application forms for the project will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Is the project eligible for Community Preservation Act funding?

- If the project is partially eligible, will a Memorandum of Agreement or condition within the CPC's decision be required?
- Is the project ready for this round of CPA funding... is it ripe for consideration?
- Is the proposed project consistent with the Dracut CPC's Needs and Possibilities Plan?
- Is the narrative of the proposed project clear and feasible?
- Who has site control? Has the application been signed by the property owner?
- Is there additional information needed from the applicant? If so, what additional information is needed and when will the supplemental information be provided?
- Have cost estimates and budgets been provided that are feasible?
- Have maps, photographs, environmental reports, and other related materials been provided?
- If historic funds are being requested, has historic survey information been provided as well as information on the eligibility to get state tax credits?
- Has the applicant contacted the immediate neighborhood with the proposed idea and funding request?

Notification and Recommendations:

Once satisfied that all issues and questions have been resolved, the CPC shall make a vote on the project and notify the applicant, in writing, of their decision. The CPC may recommend a project as proposed by the applicant, or may modify the project, or it may recommend partial funding or funding for only a portion or phase of the proposed project. The CPC's recommendations for Town Meeting may include detailed project scopes, conditions and other specifications as the Committee deems appropriate to ensure CPA compliance and project performance.

Town Meeting Vote:

The Committee will present its recommendations to the Annual Town Meeting for discussion and vote. Town Meeting has the final authority to award funds from Dracut's Community Preservation Act Fund. A simple majority vote is required to approve funding. A two-thirds vote is required for borrowing.

Award Letter:

For projects approved by Town Meeting, the Committee shall issue award letters with information on funding amount, funding conditions, project modification as voted by Town Meeting (if any), Town staff contact information, and guidelines for project execution.

Project Execution:

Funding for approved projects will be available following the issuance of the award letter subject to conditions contained in the award letter. CPA monies are public funds. Projects financed with CPA funds must comply with all applicable State and municipal requirements, including the State procurement law (M.G.L. Chapter 30B), which requires special procedures for the selection of products, vendors, services, and consultants.

All CPA funds are administered and disbursed by the Town of Dracut. All bid documents or requests for proposals must be approved by the Dracut Town Manager and/or Procurement Officer before publication. All purchases of goods and services require a Town of Dracut purchase order issued by the Town Manager and/or the Town Accountant or their designee. Final decisions regarding the selection of goods and services are the responsibility of the Town Manager. All contractual agreements with vendors or service providers must be approved and signed by the Town Manager.

Payments are made only after the receipt of goods and services. The Town Manager may approve partial payments for partially completed service as may be specified in a Town-approved service contract or on a case-by-case basis at his/her discretion.

Where private or other public funding sources supplements a CPA appropriation for a project to be carried out by the Town of Dracut or on land owned by the Town of Dracut, all such funding sources for the project must be made known to the Town of Dracut Finance Department and Committee. These supplemental funds shall be used first before the CPA funds can be accessed.

The guidelines do not strictly apply where a CPA appropriation is made as a grant to a non-governmental entity. However, the CPC and the Town Manager or his/her designee, may require accounting and reporting measures that are appropriate in the context of the project and satisfy the Town's need to comply with municipal finance and procurement laws.

For questions about procurements and other financial requirements and procedures, the applicant should contact the Town Accountant or the Finance Director. General questions concerning the application process should be directed to Elizabeth Ware, Director of Community Development or their designee. The Town staff is available to assist in all aspects of the use of CPA funds.

The Committee may request project status updates from Fund recipients. The purpose of such updates is to aid the Committee in refining the Plan and to identify issues that may assist future applicants.

The Committee has signs that give funding credit to the Dracut CPA program. The signs are available upon request to the CPC and should be posted at the project sites.

CPA projects must commence within three (3) years from the date of the Town Meeting appropriation. The funding for any project not started within the said time is automatically rescinded unless the Town Meeting has expressly waived the time lapse

period or voted to renew the appropriation. Any funds that are unused and left over after the completion of a project are recaptured and returned to the CPA fund for future CPA project appropriations.

Submission Evaluation and Recommendation Criteria

In evaluating project proposals, the CPC will be considering a variety of factors in conjunction with the goals of the CPA and the annual Needs and Possibilities Plan:

Community Character:

- Promote/maintain a diverse housing stock.
- Encourage and preserve open space and agricultural lands.
- Preserve historic resources.
- Re-use existing structures
- Preserve/revitalize historic centers.
- Enhance social, economic, cultural, historical, and natural resources and their diversity.
- Acquire/preserve threatened resources.
- Be consistent with Town planning documents, such as the Affordable Housing Production Plan, the Master Plan (including the Dracut Open Space and Recreation Plan), the Dracut Economic Strategy, the Town of Dracut Preservation Plan, and other related documents.
- Be consistent with State and Federal planning documents, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the State Comprehensive Open Space Plan and other related documents.
- Promote sustainable development principles and a walkable community.

Community Impact/Needs:

- Provide for present and future uses.
- Increase/expand recreational facilities.
- Protect environmental resources, particularly watersheds and wetlands.
- Address community needs that fill a void within community.
- Maximize the number of people benefiting/affected.
- Meet the needs of underserved populations.
- Meet the needs of diverse age groups and populations.

Fiscal Impact:

- Initial cost

- Ongoing maintenance or programming costs
- Minimize financial impacts on taxpayers.
- Revenue generation to support the project.
- Multiple funding sources
- Town debt commitment of CPA funds
- Feasibility

Other Factors:

- Degree of Urgency
- Required Timeline/Deadline for funding.
- Complexity of Execution

Restrictions:

Applicants are reminded that all projects being funded by CPA monies shall be required to have a permanent restriction placed on the project in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 184, Sections 31-33.

- Affordable housing restrictions are to be reviewed by the Department of Housing and Community Development Housing Division or similar housing agency, with the affordable housing unit restriction being no more than 80% of area mean income (AMI) for the region and are to be units that are to be counted on the State Housing Inventory.
- Conservation restrictions are required to be reviewed by either the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) or the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).
- Restrictions on historic properties are to be prepared by a qualified preservation planner and/or architect specializing in preservation of historic structures and/or an architectural historian. The restriction is to be reviewed and approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and requires all proposed work on an historic structure funded with CPA funds to comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

All restrictions are to be monitored at a minimum annually (or on an as needed basis if construction or improvements are being made) by an agency or group who is well versed in their respective regulations (affordable housing, open space, and historic preservation). CPA funds may be used for the monitoring of restrictions.