

## CPA ANNUAL PLAN UPDATE - FY23

Each year, the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is required to review and update the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Plan which establishes the city's priorities for funding projects in each of the CPA categories. The Plan serves as a guide for the allocation of CPA funds to projects which address the needs and goals of the city. As part of its annual assessment, the CPC requests input from municipal boards and committees.

The CPA application process is competitive, and the CPC has established evaluation criteria by which project applications are evaluated against the priorities established in the Community Preservation Plan and Primary criteria such as application quality, applicant capacity, and financial administration. Secondary criteria focus on the project's community impact. Primary and Secondary scoring is combined to form a project score. The Project Category Criteria provides points to a project but *does not* affect the overall project score. These separate Category Criteria points are utilized as a tool to evaluate comparative category specific projects.

Through review of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2021-2028*, the following Open Space needs and priorities were identified. The CPC requests the Conservation Commission review the following needs, goals, priorities, and criteria to ensure all are still relevant and will continue to provide the CPC with an understanding of the city's needs and priorities regarding the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open spaces. In addition, please recommend any additional needs, goals, or priorities.

### OPEN SPACE NEEDS

- Future needs include the restoration of degraded landscapes along the waterfront so these areas may continue to support industry and residential development but can also provide a greenway along the immediate waterfront for public access. The city is actively working to develop the Acushnet River Riverwalk, a public pedestrian walkway which will also restore upland coastal habitat.
- Clark's Cove has made much progress through the elimination of combined sewer outflows discharges. Future needs to protect this asset could involve the development of a comprehensive management plan.
- The northern portion of the city houses the Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation, a valuable and somewhat little-known resource in the city. This resource would benefit from the acquisition of private undeveloped land abutting the existing open space to expand the natural area.
- Sassaquin Pond has deteriorating water quality. In 2004, the pond was closed to swimming due to high bacteria levels. A watershed restoration plan was completed in 2014 which identified the major pollution inputs into the pond and determined a comprehensive plan was needed for this area to protect the pond's ecosystem and health. The Conservation Commission works with the community to educate and encourage better stewardship of the pond. The Department of Public Infrastructure has implemented some stormwater best management practices to help combat the polluted stormwater entering the pond. Lastly, the control of invasive plants is another important piece in the restoration of the pond.
- The Buttonwood Brook/Pond watershed is listed by the State as an impaired resource due to bacterial contamination from waterfowl and stormwater runoff from major roadways and parking areas surrounding the brook and pond. A stormwater management design has been created to address some issues however, funding for implementation of the plan is needed. In addition, the impact of the waterfowl and the nitrogen load on this resource needs to be mitigated.
- Brooklawn Park's Circulation and Master Plan (August 2020) identified the need to address stormwater management issues. A design has been created to address this issue by the duck pond, incorporating green infrastructure to retain and ecologically filter runoff before it infiltrates into the ground or overflows into the existing piped drainage infrastructure in the park. Funding for implementation is needed.

## OPEN SPACE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

- Develop and implement a green infrastructure strategy to address climate change and resiliency at city parks.
- Support preservation of open space in New Bedford.
- Improve, expand, and enhance the public's access to all open space including waterfront and public areas.
- Restore threatened and degraded landscapes throughout the city parks and along the waterfront.
- Protect natural resources, particularly Clark's Cove and Sassaquin Pond.
- Improve the Buttonwood Brook/Pond watershed.
- Improve stormwater management at Brooklawn Park.
- Create new greenways through urban New Bedford.
- Acquire private undeveloped land abutting existing open space and expand the natural area around the Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation.

*\*Note: Not all goals and priorities listed may be eligible for CPA funding.*

## Open Space Category Specific Criteria

- Project protects drinking water quantity and quality;
- Project preserves and/or protects the city's variety of water resources;
- Project preserves and/or expands the city's network of parks, open spaces, and trails;
- Project improves and/or protects the waterfront for recreational use, improves access to and/or enhances the aesthetic experience of the waterfront;
- Project provides opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education, including waterfront amenities;
- Project preserves strategic tracts of undeveloped land and parcels adjacent to existing permanently protected open space; and/or
- Project restores filled wetlands or otherwise degraded wetlands.

---

## ABOUT THE CPA AND CPC

**The Community Preservation Act (CPA)** is a Massachusetts state law (MGL Ch. 44B) designed to help Massachusetts towns and cities plan for sustainable growth and provide funds to achieve their community preservation goals. The act was passed in 2000 enabling cities and towns to raise funds and create a local dedicated fund to:

- Preserve open space
- Preserve historic sites
- Create community housing
- Develop outdoor recreation facilities

**The Community Preservation Committee (CPC)** oversees the implementation of the CPA in New Bedford and has four main responsibilities:

- **Assess Community Preservation needs of New Bedford** by soliciting input from city boards and commissions and holding an annual public hearing to gain public input;
- **Develop and maintain a community preservation plan** establishing the CPC's priorities for recommending projects to the City Council to receive CPA funding;
- **Prepare an annual budget for the City Council**, establishing how the Committee intends to allocate annual CPA revenue;
- **Make project recommendations to the City Council** presenting the allocation of CPA funding following a competitive application process.

**The Community Preservation Plan** identifies and establishes the city's priorities in each of the categories CPA funding supports. The Plan guides the allocation of funds to projects that improve and benefit the community. In addition, the Plan establishes the application process and the criteria for evaluation of applications while providing City Council with the background information needed to review the CPC's recommendations.

The Plan is revised annually to ensure the City's current preservation needs are being met. As part of the annual update, the CPC does the following:

- Reviews existing planning documents such as the Master Plan and Open Space Plan
- Consults with other municipal boards and committees
- Hosts an annual public hearing to gain public input relative to the CPA goals and priorities