



+

Photo courtesy of the Newton History Museum

CPA Application for

**Newton Centre Playground Access Improvements  
Phase One**

to the Community Preservation Committee

by the City of Newton  
Parks and Recreation Department

October 2, 2006



David B. Cohen  
Mayor

# APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING

## Form CPA-1

Submit to:

Robert Ricchi, Community Preservation Planner  
Newton Planning and Development Department  
1000 Commonwealth Ave., Newton, MA 02459  
rricchi@newtonma.gov  
617-796-1144

Name of Applicant NEWTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Name of Co-Applicant, if applicable —

Contact Name CAROL SCHEIN

Mailing Address 70 CRESCENT ST. City NEWTON State MA Zip 02466

Daytime Phone 617.796.1507 Email cschein@newtonma.gov

Name of Proposal NEWTON CENTRE PLAYGROUND ACCESSIBILITY - PHASE ONE

Address of Proposal NEWTON CENTRE

CPA Category (circle all that apply): Open space  Historic preservation  Recreation  Community housing

CPA Funding Requested \$616,000 Total Cost of Proposed Project \$2,480,000

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Attach answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as incomplete if all requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials as necessary.

- Goals:** What are the goals of the proposed project?
- Community Need:** Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing City plans?
- Community Support:** What is the nature and level of support for this project? Include letters of support and any petitions.
- Timeline:** What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical milestones?
- Credentials:** How will the experience of the applicant contribute to the success of this project?
- Success Factors:** How will the success of this project will be measured? Be as specific as possible.
- Budget:** What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? All items of expenditure must be clearly identified. Distinguish between hard and soft costs and contingencies. (NOTE: CPA funds may NOT be used for maintenance.)
- Other Funding:** What additional funding sources are available, committed, or under consideration? Include commitment letters, if available, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.
- Maintenance:** If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how will it be funded?

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Provide the following additional information, as applicable.

- Documentation that you have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale Agreement, option, or deed.

<sup>1</sup> If the proposal is on City-owned land, either the applicant or the co-applicant must be the City Board, Commission, or Department that has custody of the land.

11. For projects that include construction or rehabilitation, include the existing and proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations, and any other drawings as necessary to visually describe the proposal.
12. Evidence that the project is in compliance with the zoning ordinance, Architectural Access Board Regulations, or any other laws or regulations. Or, if zoning relief is required, specify what relief is needed and when an application will be made to the City for zoning review.
13. Evidence that the appropriate City Boards and Commissions have approved the project (for example, proposed new uses on Parks & Recreation land requires approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission)
14. Evidence that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for remediation in place.
15. Evidence that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed.
16. Information indicating how this project can be used to achieve additional community benefits.

NOTE: If the requested funds are for a real estate acquisition, an independent appraisal will be required which the applicant will be required to fund initially. No funding decisions will be made without an independent appraisal.

Refer to the City web site ([ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPA](http://ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPA)) for further information.  
Form CPA-1 (Revised 9/11/03)

## **Introduction**

In 2005 using Community Preservation Act funds, the Department of Parks and Recreation enlisted the professional services of Walker-Kluesing Design Group, a landscape architectural firm with expertise in preservation planning, to develop an access plan for Newton Centre Playground one of the City's historic and active-use parks. The schematic design has been completed and the resultant plan is now in hand as a guide to short- and long-term improvements. With this CPA application, the Department is requesting funds for the design development, bid documents, and construction of Phase One improvements. The intent of this first phase is to initiate and improve accessibility to and within the park while enhancing its natural character in keeping with the historic design intent.

## **Historical Significance**

In 1890, when public interest was beginning to turn from parks for passive use to ones for active recreation, the City hired master landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted & Co. to design Newton Centre Playground, its first playground, and notably, one of the first in the country. Specifically because of its central location in the community and its natural character, the site was designed as both recreation grounds and an ornamental park. By the time "the Hut" was set at its current spot on Tyler Terrace in 1915, Newton's residents had been gathering year-round and enjoying healthful exercise in the park for over a decade. The park was of a rural character with natural brook, trees, and lawns sloping down to level meadow areas laid out with tennis courts, a ball field, track, basketball court, a "children's corner" with play equipment, and an outdoor gymnasium.

The site's history and its context within the community have now been thoroughly researched, revealing an under-recognized and valuable cultural resource. While much of the original detail is gone, the park's historic structure remains, exhibiting all the qualities of an Olmsted-designed park. The landscape is historically significant for a number of reasons and as is now documented, we believe should be eligible for listing on the National Historic Register. The historical aspects of the park have been presented and submitted to the Newton Historical Commission and their corroboration is included here in a letter of support.

## **Topographic Survey/Schematic Design Phase – Work Completed To Date**

The scope of Walker-Kluesing's work was to provide a schematic plan for making the 17.9-acre park accessible while reinforcing the park's historic image and improving passive recreational opportunities. As is professional practice when interpreting historic resources, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* were followed. "Rehabilitation" the most flexible of the landscape treatments, was the approach used here as its intent is to preserve character and define important features while allowing for modifications that improve the use and function of the site for contemporary use and to meet applicable code.

Following the City surveyors' fieldwork and production of a full topographic survey in the fall of 2005, the consultant's design work proceeded systematically. The park's features—access, circulation and parking, recreational facilities, buildings, public safety and vandalism, site furnishings, memorials, landscape character, walls and fences, storm water management and infrastructure----were all assessed.

Using input from a series of three well-attended public meetings and numerous in-house meetings held over a five-month period, the final plan, molded by the designers' creativity, emerged. A phased and prioritized cost estimate was developed and recommendations made for short- and long-term improvements and, as well, a detailed maintenance and management plan was provided. All work has been compiled in written and graphic format in the final report entitled *Accessibility and Rehabilitation Plan, Newton Centre Playground*. It is available for review in hard copy from the Parks and Recreation office, the Newton History Museum, Newton Historical Commission or online at the Department's website <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Parks/RecreationNews/PDFs/ncpfinalscreen.pdf>.

## **1. Goals**

The basic goals of Phase One are to:

- initiate and improve access to the park by ensuring a continuous and unobstructed path connecting main entries with the park's accessible elements in keeping with the ADAAG (The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines);
- reinforce an image in keeping with the park's historic background; and
- increase passive recreation opportunities.

With the topographic survey and phased schematic implementation plan now complete, CPA funding would enable the project to move forward. The design development stage will pin down as many specifics as possible—materials, grades, dimensions, etc. and following that, construction documents (drawings, specifications and cost estimate) can be produced for bidding the actual construction work.

There is an Early Action component to this accessibility project that is current and ongoing. The Early Action phase design and construction is being performed by the City and proposed for completion in the spring of 2007, following installation of the privately donated universal play area.

### **A. Early Action: City of Newton, Ongoing**

The goal of the Early Action component is specifically intended to create the primary accessible route required to complete the new universal play area in the middle of the park. This proposed \$360,000 privately donated play area is to consist of equipment for

1-4 year olds and 5-12 year olds, site furniture, and trees. It is to be installed by private contractors and is scheduled to be completed spring 2007. While this accessible route is part of the bigger circulation picture, its installation is required sooner than later, in order to complete the play area. The Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities has agreed in principle to fund the route in its entirety (to be confirmed mid-October). The work--a paved ~900 linear foot pedestrian route is to run from an improved handicap parking area in the Mason-Rice lot, through the middle of the school's playground area, over the first bridge, and through to the new play area. The work is valued at \$30,000 if done in-house, a savings of roughly \$70,000 off the current project estimate. The City's Design Engineer developed the drawing necessary for submission and approval by the Conservation Commission and the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities. This straightforward construction work, to be performed by Public Works, includes demolition of inadequate existing paving, regrading, paving of the new route, and restoration of all disturbed lawn areas. In addition, this phase includes improvements around The Hut: a main pathway to the front door and removal and major repair of hazardous pedestrian elements. As some of this work falls on School Department-owned land, a very supportive letter from Mike Cronin, Director of Operations and Mark Springer, Principal, Mason-Rice School, is included here.

#### **B. Phase One: 2006 CPA Funding Request**

This CPA application is specifically intended for all work necessary to complete Phase One, proposed here to be outsourced and performed by an independent design consultant for public bid construction. The goal is to greatly improve access by interconnecting the park's major accessible facilities with the Homer Street and Centre Street entrances in addition to the Mason-Rice parking lot. Potentially dangerous conflicts that exist due to incompatible uses are to be eliminated by redesigning the maintenance/emergency vehicle route as one unified route with access to all the park's facilities from the existing Centre Street entrance. The maintenance route down from Tyler Terrace while it will continue to serve as a service/delivery route to the back of the school will no longer run down into the school's playfield and across the bridge cutting through the senior league outfield. The result will be a safer play area and the potential for a much needed and maximized baseball field could be realized in the future.

In addition, with this phase, a new pedestrian bridge is proposed to be built over Hammond Brook near the northeast corner of the school's parking lot. This will create an all new foot entrance and provide direct access to the park's north fields for use by the school as well as for the neighborhood, cut off 50 years earlier with the sale of the land to the school department. The addition of this bridge will greatly enhance movement and circulation throughout the park as well as set the stage for pathway connections in future phases.

Historic preservation of the park's character is central to this project; all proposed access improvements have been designed to balance with the constraints imposed by the natural qualities of the land.

## 2. Community Need

Access needs are real and contemporary for all constituents. The removal of access barriers is for the benefit of all--the disabled, the young, the middle-aged and the elderly. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act it is the responsibility of any agency overseeing public facilities to have a plan that provides for access to its programs and facilities. The mission of the Parks and Recreation Department and a goal of both the Community Preservation Committee and the City's Open Space Plan is to provide as many recreational opportunities as possible to the greatest number of people. For a public space to be successful it needs to work for all potential users. The "rehabilitation" landscape treatment allows for contemporary access improvements of historic resources.

This centrally located park is well used and needed by the Mason-Rice population, the surrounding residential neighborhood and by people frequenting the nearby Newton Centre business district. These 17.9 acres serve a number of other stakeholders including the City's special needs camps, Centre Acres day camp, the Mason-Rice and Bowen School afterschool programs, Newton East Little League, Senior and Babe Ruth Leagues, Newton Schools' soccer, and two area nursery schools. In addition to a number of planned cultural events, the annual July 4<sup>th</sup> all-city "Kids Morning" is a city tradition.

## 3. Community Support

The Parks and Recreation Commission, the Newton Historic Commission, The Newton History Museum, The Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, the Mason-Rice School, the Newton School Department, and the Mason-Rice and Bowen School Afterschool programs located in the Hut are all supporters of the plan. A number of long-time abutters and neighborhood users provided invaluable input throughout the schematic design phase of this project. There is a neighborhood group that came together this past spring to help maintain the park by participating in a substantial clean-up for Newton Serves day and they are open to continuing their efforts.

## 4. Timeline

The design team of Walker-Kluesing Group is ready to begin if and when funds are made available, assumed here to be the summer of 2007. A five-month design development and bid document production phase is anticipated, ending December 2007. The work would be put out to bid and the contract awarded during the winter of 2008 with a six-month construction period to follow beginning in April 2008 and ending fall 2008.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Time/Duration</b>
Project Start:	Summer 2007
Design development/Construction Documents:	Summer 2007 - Fall 2007 (5 months)
Bid and Contract Award:	Winter 2008
Construction:	Spring 2008 – Fall 2008 (6 months)
Project End:	Fall 2008

## **5. Credentials**

The Parks and Recreation Department has the ability to coordinate and manage this park design and construction project. Carol Schein, the City's Open Space Coordinator and the current project manager, will continue to oversee the project. The Engineering Department would assist by reviewing all drawings, specifications and costs as well as acting as clerk-of-the-works during construction.

## **6. Success Factors**

With the completion of Phase One, success would be measured by the presence of an accessible route interconnecting all the park's accessible facilities with the hc parking spaces in the Mason-Rice parking lot and the entrances at Centre Street and Homer Street. With the elimination of the lower portion of the service road down from Tyler Terrace that now runs through the school's playfield and through the senior league outfield, incompatible and dangerous uses would be eliminated and the use of the playfield and the ballfield maximized. A new paved pedestrian route wide enough for authorized service and emergency vehicles from Centre Street to all of the major facilities inside the park will exist via a new and structurally sound bridge over the Homer Street brook. The intent is to keep maintenance vehicles from driving all over the park, rutting out and compacting the turf, as is current practice. In addition, a pedestrian bridge near the northeast corner of the Mason-Rice parking lot spanning Hammond Brook will provide improved access to the fields for both the school population and that of the neighborhood. These improvements and the addition of trees and shrubs will all enhance the park's natural character. While developed to meet contemporary need, all improvements in the proposed plan have been designed in light of the historic design intent. Success would also be measured by the enhancement and protection of the distinctive character of this park.

## **7. Budget**

The proposed site improvements were prioritized by the Department and then the work was phased into the following components: Early Action, Phase One, Phase Two and Phase Three. The estimated budget for the entire project is \$2,480,000 (\$2,555,000-\$76,000 saved by the City's work during Early Action). This application is a funding request for Phase One design and construction: \$616,000. Refer to the complete cost estimate included with this application. Following is a breakdown of the hard vs. soft costs:

**Hard costs:**

Construction .....	\$386,247
General Conditions (15%).....	57,953
<i>(contractor's add'l costs for bonds, insurance, temporary cond.)</i>	
Contingency (10%).....	44,400
Inflation, 1 year @ 5%.....	24,400

**Soft costs:**

Other Project Costs (~20% of hard costs).....	<u>103,000</u>
<i>(design fees, permitting, structural engineering fees, add'l survey, testing during construction)</i>	

**Total:     \$616,000**

**8.     Other Funding**

Other funding sources exist for this project. The universal play equipment area in the middle of the park is being designed and constructed using \$350,000 of privately donated monies plus an additional \$12,500 of Boston Marathon money. Following installation of the play equipment the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities will fund the construction of the Early Action accessible route from the Mason-Rice parking lot to the play area, as this is required to complete it. This straightforward work is estimated at \$30,000, a savings of \$76,000 off the estimated cost for the Early Action phase. The City is also performing the removal, major repair and repaving of existing hazardous pedestrian elements related to the Hut. The Department has an additional \$17,500 of Boston Marathon money to be put toward accessible routes to the play area.

**9.     Maintenance**

The work of the schematic phase includes a clearly written, detailed and implementable maintenance plan for use by the Department and their outsourced landscape contractor. Volunteers will continued to be encouraged and utilized for major seasonable clean-ups whenever possible. Phase One improvements will not create any additional maintenance work for the Department.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

10.     The Parks and Recreation Department has jurisdiction over all of the Newton Centre Playground.

11.     The existing plan, the schematic design plan and the phasing plan for this project are included here with this application. All other written and graphic material can be found in the Walker-Kluesing report.

12.     All proposed improvements will be in accordance with all applicable codes, laws and regulations.

13. The Parks and Recreation Commission voted to approve Phase One of the Newton Centre Playground Access Improvements project unanimously 6-0 on September 18, 2006. The Historic Commission voted to support this project in the summer of 2006 and their support letter attesting to the park's historic significance and the value of Phase One is included here with this application.

14. To date no hazardous materials have been found on the site. It is free of any hazardous materials to the best of the City's knowledge.

15. The designers, engineers, and contractors utilized for this project will all follow appropriate professional standards in their work.

16. Additional community benefits could be achieved through the public's raised awareness of the Community Preservation Act's value in preserving this unique cultural landscape. Another benefit would be the added beauty and value brought to the area by the park's renewal and the potential for linkage to the Cochituate Aqueduct trail.

Parks and Recreation Department CPA Project  
Newton Centre Playground Accessibility and Rehabilitation Plan  
November 29, 2006

Hard Costs and Soft Costs

**Hard Costs**

Construction (labor + materials)	\$ 386,247	
General Conditions (15%)	<u>\$ 57,937</u>	
<i>[contractor's add'l costs - bonds, insurance, etc.]</i>		\$ 444,184
Contingency (10%)		<u>\$ 44,418</u>
	subtotal:	<u>\$ 488,602</u>
Inflation, 1st year @5%		\$ 24,430
Inflation, 2nd year @5%		<u>\$ 24,430</u>
total hard costs:		<u><u>\$ 537,463</u></u>

**Soft Costs (based on \$540,000 probable construction cost)**

Preliminary Design	\$ 36,322	
Permitting	\$ 15,838	
Construction Documents	\$ 31,964	
Bid Administration	\$ 5,214	
Construction Administration	\$ 18,058	
Project Closeout	<u>\$ 1,449</u>	
total soft costs:		<u><u>\$ 108,845</u></u>

total hard + soft costs: \$ 646,308

Parks and Recreation Department CPA Project  
 Newton Centre Playground Accessibility and Rehabilitation Plan  
 November 29, 2006

Project Funding Sources  
 (by phase)

**Private + City funds:**

**Universal Play Area Improvements**

(private design + private construction)

Apr - May 2007 (construction phase)	
Private donations	\$ 350,000
Boston Marathon monies	<u>\$ 12,500</u>
	<b>\$ 362,500</b>

**Phase I: Early Action**

(City design + City construction)

Jun - Jul 2007 (construction phase)	
Mayor's Committee for People w/Disabilities	\$ 30,000
Boston Marathon monies	<u>\$ 17,500</u>
	<b>\$ 47,500</b> <i>(savings of \$60,000 off of probable construction cost)</i>

---

**Community Preservation Act funds:**

**Phase I: Completion**

(design consultant + low-bid construction contractor)

Aug 2007 - Jan 2008 (design phase)	
Preliminary design	\$ 36,322
Permitting	\$ 15,838
Construction documents	\$ 31,964
Jan 2008 - Mar 2008 (bid phase)	
Bid administration	\$ 5,214
Apr 2008 - Nov 2008 (construction phase)	
Construction (labor + materials)	\$ 537,463
Construction administration	\$ 18,058
Project close-out	<u>\$ 1,449</u>
	<b><u><u>\$ 646,308</u></u></b>

