



David B. Cohen
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts Community Preservation Committee

CPC RECOMMENDATION for CPA Funding



DATE: 19 February 2003, REVISED 4/7/03

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen

FROM: Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

ABOUT: **FLOWED MEADOW IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

CPA CATEGORY: Open Space & Recreation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicants, Conservation Commission, and the Parks & Recreation Department, are requesting \$74,250 to create new and improved access to both the unimproved portion of Auburndale Park and the new Flowed Meadow Conservation Area. The project includes new pathways, signage, benches, and the closure of a former pathway to protect wetland resource areas and wildlife habitat.

FINDINGS

Community Preservation Act

This proposal meets the criteria established under MGL c.44B for the following reasons:

1. The subject land meets the definition of open space since it is forest land and contains wetland. In addition, the land's use complies with the definition for recreational use, which includes passive recreational use. The land was transferred to the Conservation Commission specifically for passive recreational use.
2. In accordance with §5(b)(2), the project will preserve open space and land for recreational use. Open space will be preserved by removing an existing trail to further protect wetland and wildlife habitat. Passive recreation opportunities are created through the proposed new pathways and benches.
3. Since the proposal does not include any acquisition of real property or real property interest, no permanent deed restrictions are required. However, this land is subject to Article 97 since it is City-owned conservation land and would therefore require an Act of Legislature to change its use.

Newton Community Preservation Plan

Overarching Goals

1. Contribute to the preservation of Newton's unique character, boost the vitality of the community and enhance the quality of life for its residents. Yes
2. Serve more than one CPA category. Yes
3. Demonstrate the highest cost/benefit value relative to other proposals. See below
4. Leverage other public and/or private funds. Yes, see below
5. Preserve a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost. No

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6. Create incentives for other private projects to occur. No
7. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective. Yes, see below
8. Demonstrate strong community support. Yes, see below
9. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City. See below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #3: Projects received during this funding round include a high CPA cost of \$850,000 and a low CPA cost of \$24,780. This CPA cost for this project is \$74,250. The relative benefit for this project is improving access to this open space and passive recreation amenity for the Auburndale neighborhoods and West Newton community.

Goal #4: Although this proposal does not include other public or private funds, it includes sweat equity derived from a volunteer base, which is a beneficial in-kind contribution to the project.

Goal #7: The objective of this project is to improve access and linkages to these open space areas. Since this project would implement the Flowed Meadow Planning Group's recommendations, which were derived through discussions with numerous stakeholder groups, this is a reasonable option to achieve the project's objectives.

Goal #8: The project has strong community support as detailed and documented in the application. No opposition has been voiced.

Goal #9: As presented at a recent CPC meeting, this round of applications is geographically distributed throughout the City; this project is located in Auburndale.

Open Space Goals

1. Provide protection for land listed in the Recreation & Open Space Plan. No, see below
2. Expand existing open space. No
3. Enhance biodiversity or wildlife habitat and reclaim natural resources. Yes, see below
4. Protect wetlands, mitigate flooding and improve groundwater recharge. Yes, see below
5. Create small pocket parks. No
6. Enable the development of passive recreation opportunities. Yes
7. Serve as suitable sites for nature-related education, scientific study, or observation and enjoyment of nature. Yes, see below
8. Protect a natural feature of special interest. No
9. Enhance public access (where access does not seriously threaten habitat). Yes
10. Provide linkages and wildlife corridors between open spaces. Yes, see below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #1: This land is already protected since it consists of City-owned conservation land.

Goals #3 & 4: The project includes the closure of a former pathway which will further preserve and protect wetland resource areas and wildlife habitat.

Goal #7: In particular, the application states that nature study by school children at the Burr School will be possible in the future.

Goal #10: The project will provide pedestrian linkages to the adjacent open spaces, including Auburndale Park, Lyond Field, Purgatory Cove and the MDC's Forest Grove Reservation.

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Recreation Goals

1. Address the needs targeted in the Recreation and Open Space Plan and take advantage of other opportunities to meet the recreation needs of the residents of the City. Yes, see below
2. Meet the recreation needs of the greatest number of residents possible. No
3. Meet the greatest variety of recreation needs possible. No
4. Serve passive as well as active uses. Finding ways to balance the range of recreational opportunities and serve the diverse recreation needs of the community is a priority of the CPC. Yes
5. Preserve sight lines consistent with open space. . . . Decisions about scale and placement should be made with the objective of enhancing or enabling open views. NA
6. Access for disabled residents should be included in plans wherever possible. See below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #1: Enhancing linkages of Flowed Meadow is a stated Passive Use Recreation Need in the Plan. Therefore, this project would work to address this need by connecting Auburndale neighborhoods to the West Newton community, Purgatory Cove, and the MDC's Forest Grove Reservation through improved access. In addition, this project complements the current improvements to the MDC land along the Charles River, in accordance with the MDC River Walk.

Goal #6: The design and materials of the new pathways will comply with the ADA accessibility requirements to the maximum extent practicable taking into consideration the terrain and water conditions.

CPC RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is consistent with the CPA criteria and many of the Plan's goals, as described above. Therefore, the Community Preservation Committee, in a 7-0 vote, recommends funding this application for preservation of open space and creation of new passive recreational opportunities at Flowed Meadow Conservation Area by appropriating and transferring the requested \$74,250 to be expended under the direction and control of the Director of Planning and Development, in consultation with the Conservation Commission, for purposes of funding costs for the Flowed Meadow Improvement Project as detailed in the application's Work List (submitted 1 November 2002 with additional information dated 12 February 2003), subject to the following conditions:

1. Work shall commence no later than 31 December 2003 and shall be completed no later than 31 December 2004 or such other date(s) as may be approved in writing by the Director of Planning and Development. In the event of failure to meet the project start or completion dates as stated herein or as approved by the Director of Planning and Development, any remaining funds in the project account shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.
2. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.