



Ruthanne Fuller,
Mayor

Newton, Massachusetts
Community Preservation Committee
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN
 Revised December 14, 2021

Telephone
 (617) 796-1120
 Telefax
 (617) 796-1142
 TDD/TTY
 (617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath
 Director of Planning
 & Development

Massachusetts' [Community Preservation Act](#) (CPA) provides local and state funds for projects in community housing (affordable housing), historic resources, open space, and recreation, within certain constraints:

ALLOWABLE SPENDING PURPOSES under the Community Preservation Act				
	COMMUNITY HOUSING	HISTORIC RESOURCES	OPEN SPACE	RECREATION
ACQUIRE	YES	YES	YES	YES
CREATE	YES	NO	YES	YES
PRESERVE	YES	YES	YES	YES
SUPPORT	YES	NO	NO	NO
REHABILITATE / RESTORE	YES, IF acquired or created with CPA funds	YES	YES, IF acquired or created with CPA funds	YES

The [About the CPA](#) page in Newton's CPA program website includes a more detailed [Allowable Uses of Funds](#) chart, including the full definition of each eligible resource and its CPA fundable activities. On the website's [CPA Funding Process and Materials](#) page there is Newton-specific information on the project proposal process, proposal instructions and upcoming deadlines. The CPC regularly works with CPA funding applicants to ensure that their proposals meet the requirements and goals of Newton's CPA program.

Like most CPA communities, Newton will not always have enough CPA funding for all of its current and anticipated funding proposals. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) relies on the following guidelines in determining which project proposals to recommend to the City Council for funding.

1. Project is drawn from or guided by Newton's regularly updated community-wide plans

The CPC relies on Newton's *Comprehensive Plan* and other regularly updated community-wide plans to prioritize Newton's CPA-eligible needs. Each funding proposal must cite at least two of these plans, most of which can be found on the [CPA Funding Process and Materials](#) page on the City of Newton's website.

2. Project helps to balance funding across all of the eligible CPA funding categories

The CPA legislation allows funding to be used for projects in Community Housing, Historic Resources, Open Space, and Recreation. It also requires communities to spend at least 10% of each year's new funds on each of three of those categories – Community Housing, Historic Resources, and Open Space. Funds may be allocated in the year they are received or retained for future projects. Unless exceptional needs require otherwise, Newton's CPC aims to end each year with approximately one year's worth of funds (currently about \$4.5 million) in reserve so that the program can respond quickly to unanticipated future opportunities. Unusually expensive projects, such as land acquisition or major capital

website www.newtonma.gov/cpa
 contact Lara Kritzer, Community Preservation Program Manager
 email lkritzer@newtonma.gov phone 617.796.1144

improvements to public buildings or parks, may also be funded by selling bonds that will be repaid from future local CPA revenue.

Newton's allocation targets for CPA funding in each eligible project category are intended to be flexible guidelines, not rigid quotas. These targets reflect Newton's past funding patterns, available information about possible future proposals, and feedback on the City's priorities received through community surveys and public hearings.

Newton CPA Allocation Targets: Balancing Funds Across Resources	
Community Housing (statutory minimum 10%)	35%
Historic Resources (statutory minimum 10%)	20%
Open Space (statutory minimum 10%)	20%
Recreation	20%
CPA Program Administration	5%

The final two pages of this *Plan* compare the allocation of current and future funding requests to these targets.

3. Projects leverage non-CPA funds to achieve community goals

The CPC prioritizes projects that are not only eligible for CPA funding but which also leverage their CPA funding to achieve the maximum possible funding from other sources. The CPC also recognizes that a project may need a relatively high share of CPA funding in its initial phases (such as design) in order to raise funds primarily from non-CPA sources for its later phases (such as construction). In reviewing the CPA fund's financial contribution to a project, the CPC may choose to look at individual project phases or the project as a whole. The CPC prefers to see a minimum of 50% funding match for all CPA projects whenever possible, but may allow for a lower percentage match depending on the project and its overall benefits to the community. Municipal projects will be given more flexibility and have a lower preferred target match of 30%.

4. Extent to which the Project benefits the Community

The CPC will take into consideration the location of the project and its impact both on its surrounding neighborhood and the City as a whole. Projects which involve publicly (municipal) or privately owned assets that benefit all Newton residents and neighborhoods may be given more weight than projects which will have a more limited impact on the community. Community Housing is generally considered as having a wide public benefit to the City as a whole when it is both deed-restricted to ensure permanent affordability and proactively marketed to all eligible households.

When existing municipal assets, whether it be buildings or landscapes, are considered for CPA funding, the CPC must be careful to distinguish between projects which might be considered general maintenance, and therefore are not eligible for CPA funding, and projects which are capital improvements to the site and may be funded. There is no set definition of general maintenance vs. capital improvement, and the CPC will make decisions on the eligibility of projects on a case by case basis. When appropriate, the CPC may recommend dividing the cost of an improvement so that the CPA funding is used to provide an additional benefit which the City might otherwise not be able to fund. For example, CPA funding could be used to pay the difference between replacing an historically significant slate roof with the more appropriate but more expensive slate rather than a less costly asphalt shingle alternative.

Projects which have a limited or no public benefit to the community are generally considered to not be eligible for CPA funding.

5. Extent to which the Project includes Sustainable Development Design Elements

The CPC supports the City's goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 and encourages all applicants to incorporate sustainability into their projects through design decisions such as: eliminating or reducing fossil fuel use; reducing embodied carbon, especially by reusing existing resources, prioritizing energy efficiency through methods like the Passive House standard, incorporating EV charging stations and/or solar panels, etc. CPA funding applicants should also consider that any projects over 20,000 sq. ft of new construction or substantial reconstruction will be expected to meet the City's Sustainable Development Design requirements as outlined in Section 5.13 of the Zoning Ordinance as the project goes through the Special Permit process. Additional information on these requirements is available on the City's website at: <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=29553>

The CPC feels strongly that new CPA funded projects should move the City forward in meeting its sustainable energy goals and is aware that by adding in energy-saving measures a project may have higher upfront costs, particularly for renovations. The CPC encourages projects to incorporate all relevant energy efficiency and electrification measures into their proposals to be included in their discussions with the CPC. Any project which does not include these elements will be expected to provide a written explanation as to why they cannot be incorporated into the project with their funding proposal.

6. Project managers have a proven capacity for project management and long-term maintenance

Newton's CPC requires each proposal to identify both a qualified, available project manager and a reliable source of non-CPA funding for future maintenance. The CPC also considers each proposal sponsor's past record of project management and maintenance when reviewing new proposals from that sponsor.

These requirements help Newton to avoid repeating past experiences with projects that took far more time or public funding to complete than originally anticipated or promised, and to comply with the state CPA statute's prohibition on using CPA funds for maintenance and operations.

7. Evaluate completed projects to ensure accountability and improve future projects

Once a project is funded, the CPC requires regular progress reports. For all non-City projects, the final release of CPA funds is contingent on a final in-person presentation and written report to the CPC. City project managers are also expected to provide final reports to the CPC on CPA-funded City projects.

The CPC monitors completed projects indefinitely, to evaluate the community's long-term returns on its CPA investments, and to learn how well – and why – different projects are maintained with non-CPA funds.