



OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN 2019 UPDATE



OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

HISTORY



Westwood's Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) was adopted by the Planning Board and endorsed by Town Meeting in 2000.

An updated OSRP must be adopted and submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) in order for the town to become eligible for various open space and recreation grant programs.

The Select Board established the Open Space & Recreation Planning Committee in late 2017 to review the 2000 OSRP and recommend plan updates and revisions.

The Committee met throughout 2018 and worked closely with consultant Gino Carlucci of PGC Associates, LLC to prepare the draft OSRP Update.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

SURVEY



An Open Space & Recreation Survey was released in November and December 2017 and expanded to include responses from Westwood High School Students in February 2018.

The survey was completed by 809 respondents, with 641 responses in the initial release and 168 responses during the second offering.

The survey results are summarized in the OSRP Update and detailed in an appendix to the plan:

- The majority of responders rated Westwood's recreational facilities as Very Good or Excellent.
- Respondents identified Hale Reservation was the most used Open Space area followed by Lowell Woods.
- 81% rated Active Recreation as very important and 60% rated Wildlife Habitat as very important

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

WORKSHOP



An Open Space & Recreation Visioning Workshop was held on February 1, 2018.

The workshop was attended by approximately 60 residents, 43 of which signed in and actively participated in discussion sessions.

The workshop conclusions are summarized in the OSRP Update:

- Need for recreation opportunities for residents of all ages, such as a community recreation center.
- Need for continued and improved maintenance of fields and recreation spaces, and need for more fields, basketball and tennis courts.
- Walking paths, bike paths, and trails help foster a greater sense of community in the town.
- Conservation of open space and natural resources remains a priority, both for recreational use and environmental preservation.
- Better signage, maps, and public outreach and education regarding open space would benefit the town.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

GOALS



The OSRP Committee recommends goals and objectives, divided into three categories:

1. General Goals
2. Open Space Goals
3. Recreation Goals

Proposed goals and objectives are prioritized within each category.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

GOALS



General Goals

GOAL 1: Pursue Adoption of Community Preservation Act (CPA).

GOAL 2: Protect and enhance Westwood's community character.



Open Space Goals

- GOAL 1:** Improve management and condition of conservation areas.
- GOAL 2:** Increase awareness about Westwood's existing open space and conservation areas To Encourage Use and Protection.
- GOAL 3:** Identify, protect and acquire lands appropriate for open space and conservation that are contiguous to existing protected land, provide connectivity, have high natural resource and habitat value, or are in areas of Town with limited open space areas.



Recreation Goals

- GOAL 1:** Expand opportunities for extended use of existing recreation fields and facilities to meet demonstrated need.
- GOAL 2:** Develop a new indoor recreation community center to better serve the community's needs for recreation programming.
- GOAL 3:** Identify properties which might be available to serve unmet recreational needs.
- GOAL 4:** Develop new outdoor recreation facilities and programs.
- GOAL 5:** Develop new ice skating opportunities.
- GOAL 6:** Continue to provide quality recreational programming for all Westwood residents.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



The 2000 OSRP recommended that the Town “Support enabling legislation for a statewide local option real estate transfer tax to fund open space and housing goals.” Through the passage of M.G.L. Chapter 44B in 2000, the state enacted the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

The CPA allows municipalities to implement a local CPA property tax surcharge of up to 3%, and provides annual distributions from the state's Community Preservation Trust Fund, which combine to form a town's Community Preservation Fund.

Community Preservation Funds may be spend for four purposes:

1. Open Space Acquisition
2. Development of Outdoor Recreation Facilities
3. Historic Preservation
4. Affordable Housing.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



Uses of CPA Funds

- Recreation
- Open Space
- Historic Preservation
- Community Housing

Recreation

- Athletic fields, parks, playgrounds
- Non-commercial youth and adult sports
- Trails
- Community gardens

Open Space

- Grasslands, fields, forest land
- Stream, lake, and pond frontage
- Protect scenic vistas
- Land wildlife or native preserve
- Agricultural land

Historic Preservation

- Acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration
- Determined by local Historical Commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture, or culture of the town

Community Housing

- Acquisition, creation, preservation and support of community housing and for the restoration of community housing

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



NORFOLK COUNTY REGISTRY OF DEEDS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA) SURCHARGES BY TOWN FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2017

TOWN	TOTAL
AVON	\$18,030
BELLINGHAM	\$68,890
BRAINTREE	\$124,580
BROOKLINE	\$166,930
CANTON	\$94,080
COHASSET	\$42,810
DEDHAM	\$90,580
DOVER	\$29,780
FOXBOROUGH	\$62,360
FRANKLIN	\$117,830
HOLBROOK	\$47,080
MEDFIELD	\$46,790
MEDWAY	\$48,810
MILLIS	\$34,740
MILTON	\$95,820
NEEDHAM	\$108,540
NORFOLK	\$40,180
NORWOOD	\$83,730
PLAINVILLE	\$35,410
QUINCY	\$273,240
RANDOLPH	\$110,070
SHARON	\$60,270
STOUGHTON	\$105,140
WALPOLE	\$94,180
WELLESLEY	\$103,680
WESTWOOD	\$54,980
WEYMOUTH	\$215,200
WRENTHAM	\$53,870

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



Communities may set the local CPA surcharge at any amount up to 3%.

Towns may adopt various exemptions to the local CPA surcharge:

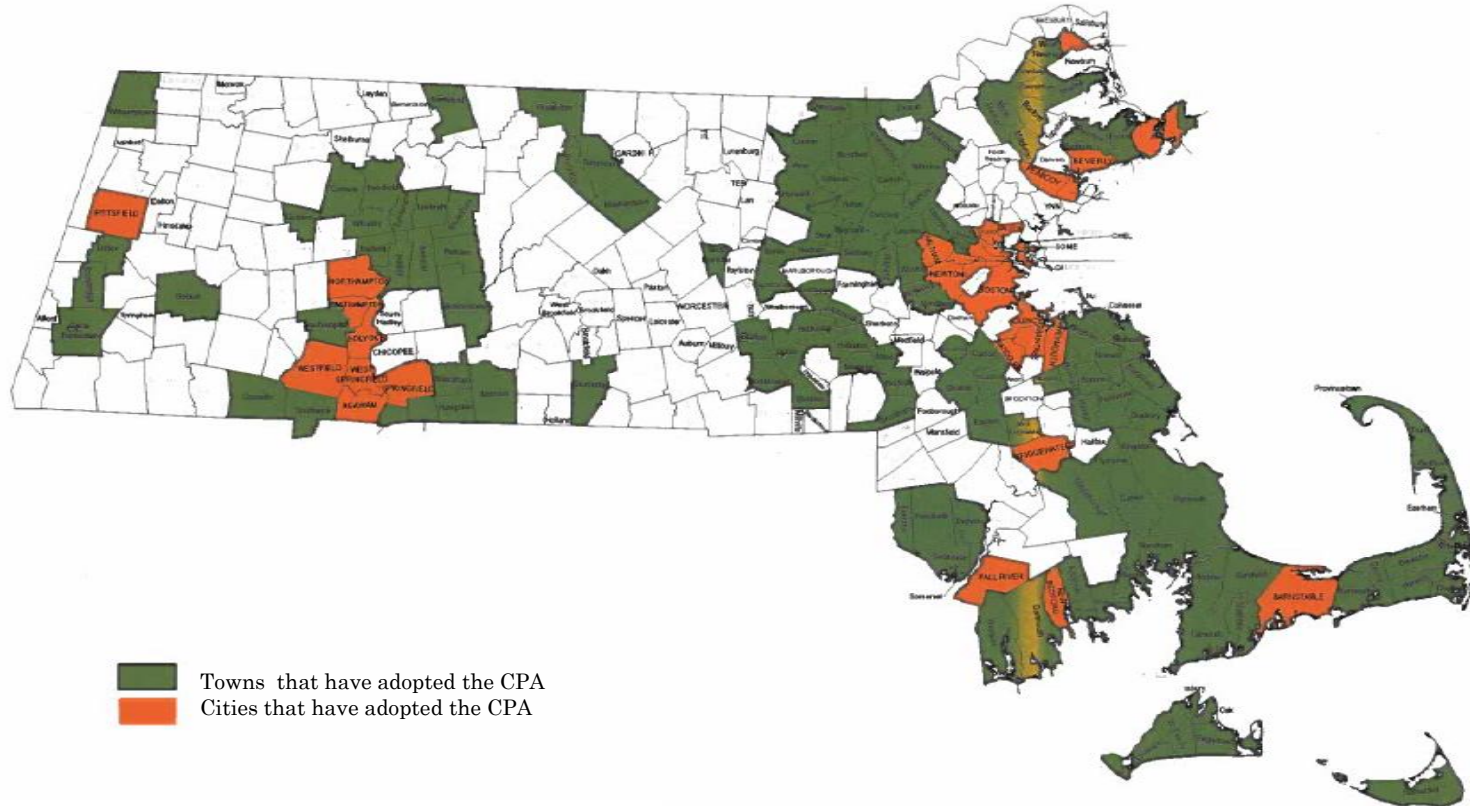
- Exemption for the first \$100,000 of assessed value
- Exemption for elderly and low income households
- Exemption for non-residential properties.

Many town's elect to assess a 1% or 1.5% surcharge.

Bonus matches are provided to municipalities with 3% surcharges.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



To date, 173 towns and cities have adopted the CPA. Those 173 municipalities receive the benefit of the state's Community Preservation Trust Fund, including funds collected for transactions in all 351 cities and towns.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



Community Preservation Act Coalition

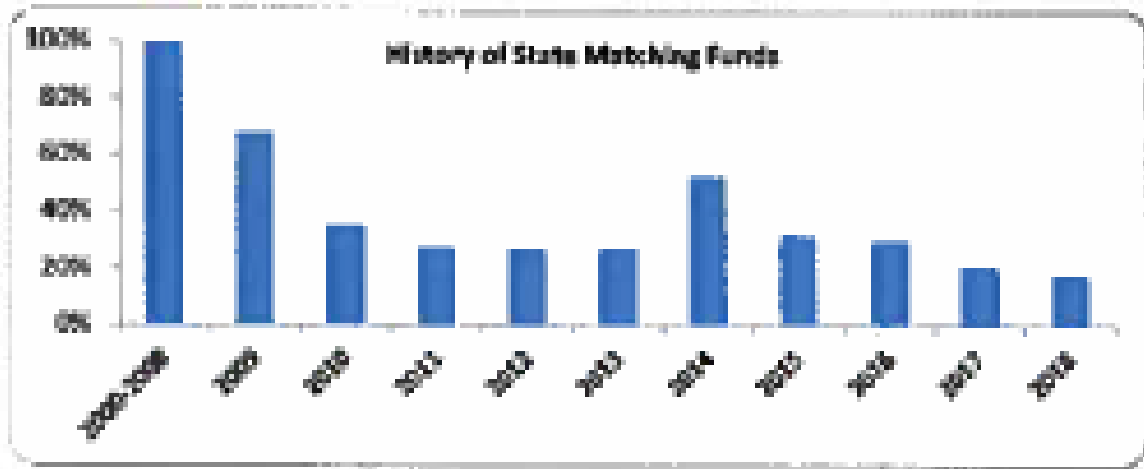
Community	Exemptions	Community	Exemptions
Concord	1.5/LI/100/R	Boston	1/LI/100/RC
Newton	1/None	Norwood	1/LI/100/RC
Needham	2/LI/100/R	Canton	1/LI/100/RC
Lincoln	3/LI/100/R	Braintree	1/LI/100/R
Concord	1.5/LI/100/R	Fall River	1.5/LI/100/R
Lexington	3/LI/100/R	New Bedford	1.5/LP/100/R
Acton	1.5/LI/100/R	Quincy	1/LP/100/R
Duxbury	1/LI/100/R	Springfield	1.5/100/RC
Cohasset	1.5/LI/100/R	Waltham	2%/LI/100/R
Hingham	1.5/LI/100/R	Weymouth	1/LI/100/R
Wellesley	1/LI/100/R	<p>1.5 – 3% of taxes LI – Low Income Exemptions 100-100,000 Exemptions R - Only on residential C – On commercial also</p>	
Weston	3/LI/100/RC		
Wayland	1.5/LI/100/R		
Sharon	1/LI/100/R		
Belmont	1.5%/LI/100/R		
Carlisle	2%/LI/100/R		
Holliston	1.5/LI/100/R		
Hopkinton	2/LI/100/R		
Medway	3/LI/100/R		
Millis	1/LI		

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



State matching funds have declined significantly as more cities and town have adopted the CPA.



The Community Preservation Trust Fund initially provided 100% matching funds to cities and towns. The current match rate is closer to 20%.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



Westwood voters considered and rejected the adoption of the CPA in 2001 and 2008.

- In 2001, a formal CPA Coalition was formed
 - Adoption of the CPA was brought before residents at the Town Election at which time the question was defeated by a vote of 1,111 in favor and 1,492 opposed.
 - At that time the surcharge level put to voters was 3%, and the exemptions were low income and the first \$100,000 of residential property.
 - Some reasons for the failure.....
 - The Business Development Advisory Board opposed the CPA because they felt it was a disproportionate tax on business.
 - Proposition 2 ½ override and potential tax increase for the high school project was pending.
- In 2008, adoption of the CPA was brought before Town Meeting. The Finance Commission recommended Indefinite Postponement which was supported by a vote of 137 in favor and 69 opposed.
 - Some Fincom reasons for the failure....
 - School \$2.8M operational override the year prior.
 - Westwood Station efforts underway to increase tax revenues.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



A sampling of other communities which have voted against adoption of the CPA:

"No" Communities To Date

	<u>Year Voted</u>		<u>Year Voted</u>
Andover	2002	Foxborough	
Attleboro		Franklin	
Avon		Lynnfield	
Bellingham		Mansfield	
Brookline	2006, 2018	Medfield	Current CPA Study Committee
Burlington		Milton	
Danvers	2016	Stoneham	2013
Dedham	2017	Walpole	
Dover		Winchester	

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



A sampling of communities which have voted to adopt the CPA:

"Yes Communities"				
Town	Year Adopted	% Adopted	Exemptions	Some Projects
Needham	2006	2%	Low income, first \$100K – residential.	Town Hall preservation study/design/actual preservation (approx \$14M); trails plan, purchase of recreation land, High Rock homes.
Norwood	2018	1%	Low income, first \$100K – residential and commercial.	Chapel at Highland Cemetery – rehab and restoration (\$400K).
Wayland	2002	1.5%	Low income, first \$100K – residential.	Repair historic gravestones, affordable housing demo and site prep; artificial turf field; consolidation of historical records; athletic field design.
Wellesley	2003	1%	Low income, first \$100K – residential.	Land purchase for open space, restore historical street sign, preservation of historical materials, clock tower, park rehab, purchase/rehab group home.
Weston	2002	3%	Low income, first \$100K – residential.	Historic resource rehab, recreation land rehab, creation of recreation land, support of community housing.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



The draft 2019 OSRP recommended that the Town again “Pursue Adoption of Community Preservation Act.”

If Westwood adopted the CPA in FY19 and instituted a 1% surcharge on residential and commercial properties, with exemptions for the first \$100,000 of assessed value and for low income and elderly homeowners, estimated amounts would be:

- Average residential property owner surcharge = **\$92**
- Average commercial property owner = **\$282**
- Total annual surcharge = **\$744,000**

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



The Long Range Financial Planning Committee (LRFPC) reviewed the draft OSRP recommendation to pursue adoption of the CPA.

The LRFPC recommended against sponsoring a CPA warrant article at the May 2019 Town Meeting. Principle concerns included:

- Uncertainty with the state matching funds
- Uncertainty/timing with the new federal tax laws limiting local tax deductions

The LRFPC recommended that the Select Board remain open to considering the CPA again at a future Town Meeting.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

PROCESS



Planning Board holds public hearing to consider draft OSRP Update.

Planning Board receives comments from the Select Board, Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, MAPC, and all interested residents and organizations.

Planning Board revises and adopts the final OSRP Update.

Planning Board sponsors warrant article for Town Meeting endorsement of OSRP update.

Town submits the adopted OSRP Update to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for approval.

Town becomes eligible to apply for open space and recreation grants.



Questions and Comments?

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



Examples of CPA Funded Projects in Needham:

(28 projects since 2013)

- Preschool playground
- Athletic fields
- All purpose trail and improvements
- Pedestrian paths
- Town common
- Improve Mills field
- New pool
- Newman athletic fields
- Rosemary Recreation Complex
- Outdoor pool facilities
- All-person trail
- Outdoor classroom for new elementary school
- Two natural turf athletic fields
- Open space plan
- Part-time housing specialist

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



Examples of CPA Funded Projects in Bedford:

(50 total projects since 2002)

- Create skateboard park
- Purchase 6,000 square feet next to existing ball park
- Tennis court construction
- Swing set for playground
- Improve bike path
- Feasibility study bike path extension
- Feasibility study forest boardwalk
- Increase accessibility to existing walks
- Modern play structure
- Design study town athletic fields
- Improvement Spring Brook Park
- Improve accessibility to town trails
- Creation of a sprinkler park
- Purchase 16-acre lot next to wildlife refuge
- Purchase 5 acres for Fawn Lake
- Appropriation long acquisitions
- Acquisition land for open spaces
- Land purchases
- Renovation of old town hall
- Repair work 1720 house
- Renovations town center building
- Archaeological survey
- Replace Job Land house roof
- Restore gravestones in Old Burying Ground
- Restoration of old mill
- Preservation of Old Burying Ground
- Create Historic Properties Preservation Fund
- Predevelopment work for housing
- Current condo with affordable housing
- Fund affordable housing rental development
- Bedford Housing Trust for moderate income

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



Examples of CPA Funded Projects in Concord:

(50 projects since 2013)

- Water bottle filling capacity at playing fields
- Seating area at fields
- Rail trail
- Field renovations
- New equipment for children's playground
- Reconstruction of football, baseball fields
- Nature-based play area
- Walking paths
- Construction of children's center
- New playground at Ripley School
- Purchase 80 acres of open land
- Preserve open space at Warner Pond
- Front steps of church
- Replace roof, masonry of historic structure
- Repairs to cemetery
- Restore windows at former high school
- Pilot archeology program
- Restore windows at First Parish Church
- Restore cast iron fountain
- Restore exterior facades of 1851 building
- Restore cupola on colonial style building
- Roof and dormer on 1767 building
- Restore and reconstruct stone wall
- Replace mechanical and electrical systems in 1930 Little building
- Preserve affordable housing
- Create new affordable housing
- Four additional senior housing units
- Assisted living development
- Replace roof 1983 affordable housing
- Consultants monitoring affordable housing units

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

CPA



Examples of CPA Funded Projects in Canton:

(8 projects since 2012)

- Paul Revere Copper business 1801
- Copper rolling mill preservation
- Preserve Olde English Burying Ground
- Preserve David Tilden House constructed in 1709
- Replace Hockey Rink
- Public Access to Reservoir Pond
- Eliminate Traffic Snarls
- Private golf entertainment center