

Town of Stow

Community Preservation Plan

December 2020

Community Preservation Committee Members

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Roger Zimmerman (Council on Aging), Vice Chairman
Barbara Clancy (Historical Commission)
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John Colonna-Romano (Planning Board)
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Mike Busch (Recreation Committee)
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Stow Community Preservation Plan

Background on the Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA), MGL 44B, was enacted on September 14, 2000. Under this legislation, municipalities may opt to participate in the CPA by adopting a property tax surcharge to create a locally controlled Community Preservation Fund. The state will provide a match, up to a maximum of 100%, depending on what percentage surcharge is adopted in that municipality, and the number of communities participating statewide. The Community Preservation Fund can be used to fund projects related to the acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes, the acquisition and preservation of open space, the acquisition and improvement of land for recreation, and the creation and support of affordable housing. All decisions on expenditures are made by the community at Town Meeting. The goal of the Community Preservation Act is to provide communities such as Stow with an alternative funding source and to expand their ability to pursue and implement projects in each of these three areas, to preserve or enhance the quality of life in those communities. Unlike other state and federal grants, Stow maintains strong local control of all decision making under the Community Preservation Act. There are no requirements to expend funds within any timeframe. The law requires that at least 10% of the funds in any given year be allocated - expended, or reserved for use in a future year - to each of the three project areas (historic preservation, affordable housing, and open space).

CPA History in Stow

Stow opted to participate in the Community Preservation Act (CPA) at the Town Meeting and Annual Town Election in May of 2001. At that Town Meeting, the Stow Community Preservation Committee was created, comprised of representatives from each of the following: Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Housing Authority, Finance Committee, Open Space Committee, Council on Aging, and the Board of Assessors, as described in Stow's general bylaws article 3, section 17. At the Annual Town Election in 2001, Stow voters opted to enact a surcharge of 3% to create the Stow Community Preservation Fund. State matching funds are distributed in up to three grant rounds per year. Only the communities that are participating at the 3% surcharge level are eligible for grants in the second and third grant round each year. Stow is one of 75 municipalities that participate at the maximum contribution level of 3%. This has resulted in \$899,247 of additional matching funds since 2002. Stow voters also opted to adopt the following exemptions to the surcharge: the first \$100,000 of assessed real property and those properties occupied by low income property owners. ***As a result, Stow is participating in a manner that maximizes the state matching funds. In 2019 the average household in Stow paid \$244.72 in CPA surcharge (average assessed value after the \$100k deduction is \$395,800). The state match collected in 2019 was \$179,076 or \$85.11 per household (based on a total of 2,104 single family homes).*** The first state matching grant for Stow was made in October 2003 and totaled \$241,692 (Figure1). Stow received 100% match that year and for the next five years.

In October of 2009 the percentage dropped to 89%. The matching percent continued to drop until 2014 when it started to increase again and was 75%. The match has continued to drop with 2018 being the lowest match ever, 24.4% and totaling \$138,961. In 2019 there was a slight increase to 29.9% as shown in figure one below (\$179,076). The match has now started to rise despite additional municipalities joining CPA. The State matching funds will be awarded each and every year that Stow participates, and deposited in a locally controlled interest-bearing account. As of December 2020, the state match distribution to Stow totals \$4,799,820. The CPA fund has generated \$1,357,211 in interest since inception bringing the grand total including local surcharges to \$14.4 million.

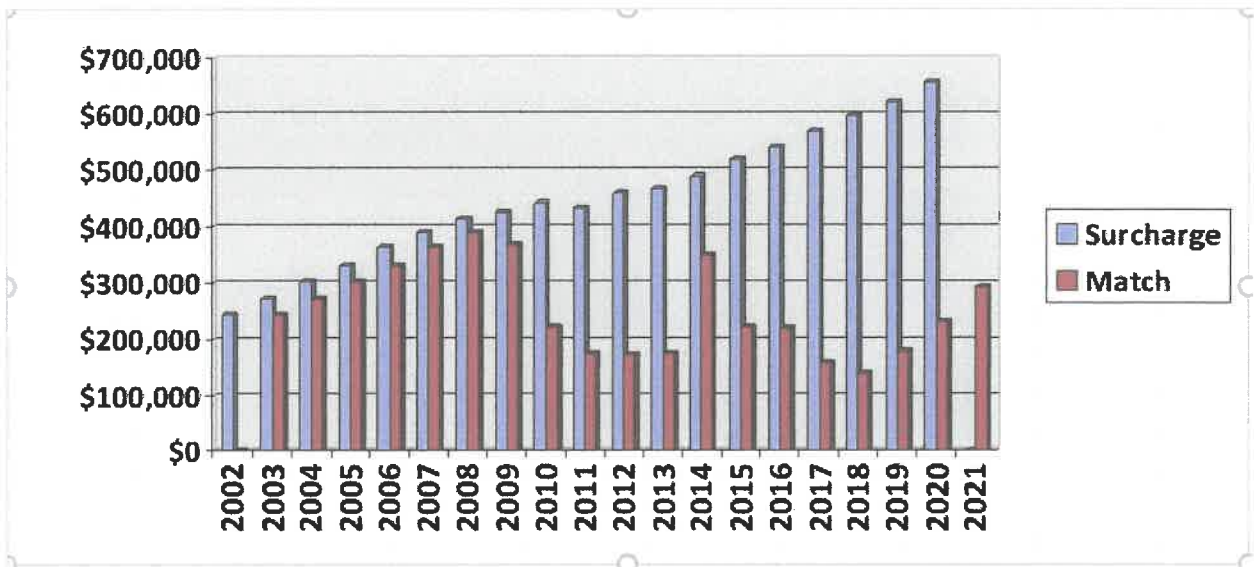


Figure 1. Illustrates contributions by Stow residents since adopting the CPA along with state matching.

Stow Community Preservation Committee

Pursuant to the adoption of the CPA in May 2001, the Community Preservation Committee was formed to develop a Community Preservation Plan to facilitate implementation of the CPA in Stow. The Committee has met regularly since September 2001. The Committee's role is to study the existing resources of the town, identify critical needs, evaluate various options for addressing those needs, and to recommend specific projects for Town Meeting consideration. **All projects recommended by the Committee must also be approved by a vote at Town Meeting before expenditures can be made from Stow's Community Preservation Fund.** Town Meeting may not, however, increase any recommended appropriation or set-aside, nor appropriate or set aside any fund monies on its own initiative without a prior favorable recommendation by the Committee.

For additional information on the CPA statute and how it is being applied in towns across the State, visit the Community Preservation Coalition website at www.communitypreservation.org.

For information on Stow's Community Preservation activity, visit the Town website at <https://www.stow-ma.gov/community-preservation-committee>.

Community Preservation Plan for Stow

As required by the legislation, the Committee prepares and annually updates a Community Preservation Plan for Stow. This Plan will serve as a guide to the types of projects that are eligible for CPA funding and that are in keeping with the unique needs and priorities that have been identified by the citizens of Stow.

The general purposes of the Plan are as follows:

- To establish clear criteria that forms the basis of the Committee's evaluation of applications for funding
- To establish the processes and timelines that the committee will use in its review of applications
- To provide application forms and background information for applicants
- To inform both applicants and the public of the CPC's goals and of its commitment to an open and transparent approach to reaching its recommendations
- To provide the **Stow Town Meeting voters** with the background information they need in reviewing the committee's recommendations

Community Preservation Act funds must be used for public community preservation purposes, as indicated in Table 1. Projects eligible for CPA funding must meet at least one of the requirements outlined in the legislation; specifically:

- o The acquisition, creation and preservation of open space;
- o The acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings or landscapes;
- o The acquisition, creation and preservation of land for recreational use;
- o The acquisition, creation and support of affordable housing;
- o The rehabilitation and restoration of:
 - open space, and affordable housing that is acquired or created using the monies from the CPA fund
 - land for recreational use, and historical resources.

CPA funds can NOT be used to support:

- Routine maintenance of existing facilities.
- Replace funds already allocated to a project.

Table 1. Guide to determining project eligibility

Determining Project Eligibility				
	Open Space	Historic	Recreation	Housing
Acquire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Create	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Preserve	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support	-	-	-	Yes
Rehabilitate and/or Restore	Yes – if acquired or created with CP Funds	Yes	Yes	Yes – if acquired or created with CP Funds

The same table with more detail can be viewed at:

<http://www.communitypreservation.org/allowable-uses>

In table 2 a summary as of 12/21/20 for funds available, committed and spent for each category. More detailed information on what projects the CPA funds have been allocated since the inception is in table 3.

Table 2. Summary of CPA funds allocations

	Historical Preservation	Open space/ Recreation	Affordable housing	Unreserved	Fund Totals
Unencumbered Funds	\$192,188	\$244,930	\$696,687	\$4,276,861	\$5,410,666
Funds Spent (Complete Projects)	\$779,144	\$4,937,051	\$356,163	N/A	\$6,072,358
Spending approved	\$1,342,419	\$5,242,975	\$3,002,200	N/A	\$9,587,594

Table 3a-c. Detailed information of completed and ongoing projects in Stow from 2001 to present funded by CPA.

3a. Open Space/Recreation	Approved Project Amount	Final Project Cost
Conservation Comm Acquisition of Open Space (Dunn/Shepherd CR, Tyler APR, W. Acton Road and small farm Appraisals)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Con Comm Additional Open Space Funds (small farm Appraisals and Kunelius Asbestos & Lead Screening – spent \$6,656.64 so far)	\$ 50,000.00	In Progress
Hale Woodlands	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Lake Boon Preservation Project (Weed Control)	\$ 77,000.00	\$ 33,299.89
Assabet Rail Trail Easement (Track Rd.)	\$ 227,000.00	\$ 135,949.50

3a. Open Space/Recreation	Approved Project Amount	Final Project Cost
Moseley APR	\$ 23,600.00	\$ 23,600.00
Maple Street CR for SCT (Corzine Property)	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
Snow Property Acquisition (Stow Comm Park)	\$ 673,000.00	\$ 658,899.46
Stow Community Park Construction	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 999,595.93
Fitzpatrick Property Acquisition (323 Great Rd.)	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 89,676.19
Design Funds for Pine Bluffs	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 39,730.50
Improvements at Pine Bluffs	\$ 39,500.00	\$ 39,500.00
Creation of Rec Facilities at Pine Bluffs	\$ 242,000.00	\$ 242,000.00
Tuttle Lane Land Acquisition (Brewer Property)	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 140,000.00
Invasive Species Mapping/Control (Capt. Sargent)	\$ 25,000.00	In progress
Funds spent thus far \$17,975.60		
Boon Road APR (Honey Pot Hill Orchard)	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 140,000.00
Creation of 323 Great Rd. (Town Center Park)	\$ 275,000.00	\$ 275,000.00
Carver Hill CR (Carver Hill Orchard)	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ 1,400,000.00
small farm CR (Gleasondale Rd.)	\$ 275,000.00	\$ 275,000.00
Final Phase at Pine Bluffs	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 19,889.21
Purchase of Kunelius Property	\$ 215,875.00	\$ 214,910.81
Pre-Engineering Services for Track Road	\$ 70,000.00	In Progress
Funds spent thus far \$48,377.00		
Town Center Park Playground (to be closed)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 49,999.20
Totals	\$ 5,242,975.00	\$ 4,937,050.69

3b. Historical Preservation	Approved Project Amount	Final Project Cost
West School Parking/Access (to be closed)	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 6,932.66
Secure Blacksmith School	\$ 929.00	\$ 745.00
Lower Village Cemetery Wall Restoration	\$ 9,990.00	\$ 9,918.28
Lower Village Cemetery Wall Restoration #2	\$ 19,500.00	\$ 14,199.08
Lower Village Cemetery Wall Restoration #3	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 17,500.00
Rehab Monuments & Headstones	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 46,300.00
Historic Document Preservation Project	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Town wide Inventory of Historic Properties	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Historic Document Preservation, Phase II	\$ 85,000.00	In Progress
Funds spent thus far \$0.00		
Brookside/Hillside Cemetery Wall Restoration	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 56,000.00
Design Funds for Randall Library	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Additional Design Funds for the Library	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 19,755.11
Library 2nd Floor Restoration	\$ 380,000.00	\$ 380,000.00

3b. Historical Preservation	Approved Project Amount	Final Project Cost
Mapping of Lower Village/Hillside Cemeteries	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 24,000.00
Additional Funds for Cemetery Mapping	\$ 5,000.00	In Progress
Funds spent thus far \$207.00		
Stow Town Hall Improvements	\$ 175,000.00	In Progress
Funds spent thus far \$79,468.26		
Library Restoration Additional Funds	\$ 65,000.00	In Progress
Funds spent thus far \$20,666.15		
Town Hall Roof	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 28,794.00
Plans and Bid Docs for Town Hall Restoration	\$ 200,000.00	In Progress
Funds spent thus far \$0.00		
Totals for Historical Preservation	\$ 1,342,419.00	\$ 779,144.13

3c. Affordable housing	Approved Project Amount	Final Project Cost
Pilot Grove Perpetual Deed Restrictions	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 350,000.00
Consultant SMAHT	\$ 7,200.00	\$ 6,163.00
Affordability Safeguard Program	\$ 220,000.00	In progress
Funds spent thus far \$0.00		
Affordability Safeguard Program Ext.	\$ 200,000.00	In progress
Funds spent thus far \$0.00		
Habitat for Humanity Units (Pine Pt. Rd.)	\$ 150,000.00	In progress
Funds spent thus far \$0.00		
Covid – 19 Emergency Rental Assistance	\$ 300,000.00	In progress
Funds spent thus far \$0.00		
Red Acre Affordable Housing Designs	\$ 25,000.00	In progress
Funds spent thus far \$0.00		
Pilot Grove and Plantation Expansions	\$ 1,750,000.00	In progress
Pilot Grove is Complete \$825,000 & Spent \$100,000 on Plantation		
Totals for Affordable Housing	\$ 3,002,200.00	\$ 356,163.00

Needs Assessment

Stow's initial Community Preservation Plan was completed just after adoption of the Community Preservation Act. The most recent update of this plan was completed in December of 2020 by the members of the Community Preservation Committee. **A public hearing was held in July of 2021 to receive public comment on the plan.**

Stow's Community Preservation Goals

Historically, Stow has demonstrated a strong commitment to protecting and enhancing the key aspects of the community that combine to make Stow such a special place. The town has a solid track record in each of the three activities identified in the Community Preservation Act – conservation of open space and provisions of opportunities for recreation, the preservation of historic resources, and the creation and retention of affordable housing. Some communities have chosen to appropriate funds without specific projects (e.g. to the Conservation Fund, or to the Affordable Housing Trust); Stow has decided not to do this. We have also made a conscious decision to maximize the contribution to the unreserved bucket to maintain flexibility and encourage joint projects.

The town recently approved projects including the COVID – 19 Emergency Rental Assistance Fund which temporarily helped residents with rental payments (affordable housing), Pre-Engineering Funds for Track Road to create an existing conditions survey and conceptual design plan (open space/recreation), and approved Design Funds for the Town Hall Restoration (historical).

Stow continues to be a scenic, semi-rural, community with good schools, extensive open space and recreational facilities, a small-town feel, a viable agricultural base, and an active and involved citizenry. With the passage of time, Stow is increasingly unique in these collective qualities, relative to many of the other communities located inside of the Route 495 corridor.

Despite Stow's history of taking actions necessary to protect key aspects of the community, increasing competition for limited financial resources make that trend more challenging to sustain. Stow's desirability and proximity to Boston will continue to bring residential growth that could change the character of the community.

The overall goal of the Stow Community Preservation Committee is to identify and preserve essential elements of Stow so that our "sense of place" is maintained even as inevitable growth and change occurs.

Historic Preservation

Introduction and Needs Assessment

The town of Stow's unique story is told through its architecture, artifacts, and documents. Many of these historical treasures are in danger of being lost through development or inattention. Stow needs to protect, preserve, and share its history for the benefit of our current and future residents.

As the Stow Historical Commission (SHC) evaluates the health of our historical preservation, we see several areas of concern. Stow Town Center is threatened by increasing automobile traffic. Lower Village's historical past has been eclipsed by commercial development, bad signage regulation and inadequate traffic planning. Mansionization threatens the scale of residential neighborhoods and more open land is

being developed. As result of these developments, pre-historical and historical treasures are lost.

However, there are areas where historical Stow can still be seen. Numerous buildings in Stow are noteworthy including the Stow Town Hall, Tenney House, Hosmer House, Boaz Brown House, Minster's House, Pilot Grove Farm, and Gleason House. These are just a sampling of the many buildings which contribute to the sense of history in Stow. Gleasondale is one of the treasures of Stow; one of very few well-preserved mill villages in the state. Gleasondale residents have, without regulation, managed to retain much of its character, and make it a truly lovely place to visit. It, however, is also threatened by traffic and the potential of future development.

Likewise, sections of Lake Boon still have the charm of the summer "camp" settlement that it once was. However, the historic look of the lake is under threat by mansionization, which can quickly change the waterfront's unique charm to a crowded and boring suburban sprawl. For both neighborhoods, the preservation of the view scape is vital, and if certain key properties leave the hands of the current owners who now protect them, much stands to be lost.

The commission is also very concerned with the long-term preservation of historical items. The town and the Stow Historical Society (SHS) own historical items, which are stored in various locations in town. These items could be lost, damaged or just forgotten.

Project Selection Criteria

The Historical Commission considers a number of factors when considering how to invest in preserving, protecting and showcasing the town's history, including

Value to town:

Does the item under consideration have any of the following?

- a. Significant age and/or connection with historical event or figure
- b. Reflection of socio-economic history of town
- c. Reflection of industrial or agricultural history of Stow
- d. Uniqueness in area: archetype or prime example, in whole or in part and value to future scholarship.
- e. Documentation of history that will otherwise be lost
- f. Value to historical context: is this a part of a whole, such as the value of an out building to the understanding of a farm or factory which helps us understand how the whole would function
- g. Importance to the viewscape in illustrating Stow's past. As an example, the view of the Assabet River is important to the understanding of the mill in Gleasondale.
- h. Importance to historical appearance of site to maintain or complete historic accuracy.
- i. In the case of private restoration, the expenditure must maintain historical appearance of site and/or stabilize and maintain historical structure. In addition, site should either be visible to wider community or otherwise accessible to it.

- j. Good visibility and/or access
- k. Memorial value, such as our cemeteries.
- l. Educational value: helps explain history, such as the construction of historical markers.
- m. Site serves as an attraction that will bring people to Stow and educate them.
- n. Site meets qualification for other areas of Community Preservation Act's agenda as well as those for historical preservation.

Cost Factors:

- a. How feasible is adaptive reuse if current use cannot be supported?
- b. What is the current condition, and how much will it cost to preserve?

Urgency:

- a. Is this bit of history going to be irretrievably lost unless action is taken?
- b. If something is to be lost, can it at least be studied and documented?

Specific Historic Preservation Projects Completed or In Progress

1. Updated Inventory of Stow Historical Buildings and Sites

- a. The Commission has completed an extensive study of the historical sites in town. This project was undertaken with CPC funds to
 - i. add scholarly information on the historical sites in town,
 - ii. provide up-to-date information on ownership and alterations,
 - iii. include sites omitted in the last study done in the early 1980's, and
 - iv. correct errors made in the original information.
- b. This information can provide information necessary for certifying properties for the Historical Register, and possibly for Historical Preservation Restrictions of historically important properties. This survey also provides a good basis for prioritizing properties for preservation or further documentation should they become threatened.

2. Stow Cemeteries

- a. Stow's three town-owned cemeteries are of significant value to historians and genealogists. In addition, these are places of beauty with park-like qualities. The SHC wants to see these places preserved and improved. As part of this process, the Commission, with the CPC and the Cemetery Commission, fixed the stone walls around the Lower Village, Hillside and Brookside cemeteries and have refurbished several headstones.
- b. In addition, the Historical Commission, again with the CPC and the Cemetery Commission, hired a firm to use ground penetrating radar to locate and map unmarked gravesites in the Lower Village and Hillside Cemeteries. The mapping of the cemeteries has resulted in the discovery of approximately 275 unmarked sites in the two cemeteries.

- c. The Commission is currently editing the maps. The next step in this project is to publish maps of the cemeteries which include the unmarked gravesites and add these maps to each cemetery for the use of visitors to the cemeteries. Maps and photos of headstones can also be published online.

3. The Whitney Historical Room

- a. The Whitney Room is currently the only location in town where some of Stow's historical items are readily available five days a week for viewing by Stow residents. The Whitney Room and its historical items have been carefully maintained by the SHS.
- b. The restoration of historical Library section and the Whitney Room is almost completed. The last project to add picture rails to the walls so the historical pictures can be rehung. This project is on hold until a new library director is hired. The Commission will work with the Library and the SHS to ensure this is completed as quickly as possible.
- c. We will also work with the Library Trustees and the SHS to make the Whitney Room exhibits engaging and educational to Stow residents and visitors.

4. The Town Hall

The Stow Town Hall is currently completing the second part of a design phase of a restoration project. The Commission is participating in this project and has a Commission member on the Town Hall Restoration Committee. The Commission strongly supports the restoration of the town hall as a historic town building while ensuring that the building continues to serve the needs of the town. We have supported incorporating display space for historical items into the restoration and are excited to have this new exhibition venue to share Stow history with residents and visitors. The Town Hall is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. We support pursuing an application as part of the restoration process.

5. Gleasondale Historical District

The Historical Commissions supports and is participating in the efforts of the Gleasondale Neighborhood Area Subcommittee to preserve Gleasondale. The Commission continues to work with the Subcommittee as it evaluates a potential historical district for Gleasondale.

Future Historic Preservation Projects

Preserving Stow's history is an ongoing effort. The Stow Historical Commission works with CPC, other town committees, SHS, town residents and businesses to ensure that Stow's history is not lost. To that end, the SHC has identified several opportunities to preserve and enhance Stow's historical treasures including:

1. The Stow West School

- a. The Stow West School, constructed in 1825, is one of Stow's five districts, one-room schoolhouses established in the early nineteenth century. It was remodeled in mid-19th century to the dictates of the reform movement lead by Horace Mann and continued in operation until 1903. Owned by the town

since 1974, the selectman placed the West School under the care of the SHC in 1999. The schoolhouse has great potential for teaching Stow history. Currently the school is used for school tours, special historical programs and concerts. It could also be a site for public events, since the property includes a beautiful glen and some small woods. Like the Town Hall, the West School is eligible for listing on the National Registry of Historic Places.

- b. The building needs to be repaired. The SHC has begun a project to preserve and restore the building. The first step is to conduct a survey of the building to create a comprehensive list of repairs and improvements necessary to preserve and restore the building and the historical items within the building, while making the building more accessible to all Stow residents.

2. Archeological Survey of Pre-Historic Sites in Stow

Stow has several sites that may hold information on the life of the early peoples who used the Stow area for an estimated ten thousand years before European settlement. If these sites are developed, this information might be lost if this study is not done. Also, some known sites are on town land. The state requires that the town complete an archeological survey before that land can be disturbed.

3. Taylor Bridge on Box Mill Road

The State is replacing the Taylor Bridge. The commission is working with the town and state to preserve the historical view of the bridge and pond.

In addition to the above list of projects, the Stow Historical Commission continues to look for opportunities to work with other organizations and individuals in Stow to protect and preserve Stow's history.

Conservation of Open Space and Land for Recreation

Introduction and Needs Assessment

Over the years, Stow has done a good job of protecting key parcels of land. At present, there are approximately 1600 acres of Town-owned conservation land and another 1400 acres of state and federal conservation land. Approximately 430 acres are owned by local and regional nonprofit conservation organizations like the Stow Conservation Trust and Sudbury Valley Trustees. Additionally, about 960 acres of land are privately owned but protected with permanent conservation or agricultural restrictions. The citizens of the Town have generally endorsed compelling open space acquisition proposals while addressing other community priorities as well. The Town is fortunate to have an active private land trust, the Stow Conservation Trust, and many environmentally conscious residents and town officials. Despite these successes, Stow is under increasing pressure from development and there is still much work to be done.

Goals and priorities for continued land protection are spelled out in the most recent Open Space and Recreation Plan (2016). In this plan a goal is stated of continuing the rate of land protection at pace or ahead of the rate of land development. Currently about one-third of Stow's land area is Protected Open Space, about one-third is developed, and about one-third is still undeveloped but not protected. This final one-third is expected to be under increasing pressure from development. Continuing efforts to

protect land will be necessary to save Stow's remaining important resources and maintain its community character.

The Open Space Plan prioritizes properties based on nine resource criteria:

- Agricultural preservation
- Active recreation
- Water resource protection
- Historic and cultural preservation
- Scenic protection
- The "underserved" quadrant of Southwest Stow
- Linkages existing protected lands and trails
- Linkages for wildlife habitat
- Large parcels important for maintaining small town character

Parcels are identified and ranked in the Open Space and Recreation Plan based on these criteria. This ranking system was developed to be responsive to issues and landscapes specific to Stow, and was developed using accepted references including: the water resource study done by IEP consultants, the Commonwealth's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program Atlas and BioMap, the Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan, soils maps from the Soil Conservation Service, and other sources. This ranking system is also used to evaluate Right of First Refusal opportunities that arise from properties being taken out of the Chapter 61 tax program. While this ranking system only addresses Open Space protection priorities, the Town has a Chapter 61 Policy that sets forth an inclusive process that takes into account other community needs and goals.

There are many ways that land can be protected using CPA funds. Different methods will reflect the type of land being protected, the reason for its protection, and costs and benefits of that protection. These methods include:

- Outright purchase of the land by the town
- Assistance with a purchase by a nonprofit conservation organization
- Acquisition of a restriction on private property, either as a Conservation Restriction or Agricultural Preservation Restriction.

Section 12A of the Community Preservation Act states that any land acquired with CPA funds for Open Space purposes is required to have a separately recorded Conservation Restriction to be held by a third party, such as a non-profit land trust. Some recent examples of Open Space protection through CPA include:

- Purchase of the Kunelius property off Red Acre Road
- Acquisition of a Conservation Restriction on Carver Hill Orchards
- Acquisition of a Conservation Restriction on "small farm"

CPA funds can also be used to acquire land for active recreation and develop recreational facilities such as the Stow Community Park. Recent amendments in the law have broadened the use of funds for recreation and allow CPA funds to be used on community recreation facilities that were not originally acquired with CPA monies, such as the recent improvements at Pine Bluffs and Town Center Park. CPA funds can also be used to support appraisal, legal and other due diligence work associated with protecting land for open space and recreation purposes.

Future Open Space projects that may require CPA funding (Needs and Goals):

- With potential changes in the golf industry, protect the most important portions of Stow's five golf course properties with a focus on stream corridors, connections to existing conservation land, important scenic vistas, and new linkages into neighborhoods.
- Continued efforts to protect Stow's agricultural land base and maintain its viability for the long-term.
- Protection of priority parcels identified in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Additional measures to increase all-persons accessibility at town conservation areas for Stow's aging population.
- Extension of the Assabet River Rail Trail by improving pedestrian and cycling opportunities on the Track Road and "bridging the gap" between Maynard and Hudson.
- Completion of Stow's Emerald Necklace walking path network connecting public and private conservation lands and extension of this network into southwest Stow through a combination of acquisition of land and creation of new trails.
- Enhancing opportunities for water-based recreation on the Assabet River and Lake Boon including put-ins and a "blue trail" along the river.

Recreational Resources, Needs and Goals

The CPA statute defines recreational use as "active or passive recreational use including, but not limited to, the use of land for community gardens, trails, and noncommercial youth and adult sports, and the use of land as a park, playground or athletic field." The Town's priorities for recreational opportunities and facilities are documented in the 2016 Town of Stow Open Space and Recreation Plan (the OSRP). A key goal in that document is to improve Stow's recreational opportunities, recognizing the importance of adequate passive and active recreational areas as critical to preserving the character of the Town and the quality of life for its citizens.

Recreation Resources

Active recreation is a very high priority among Stow's adults and youth, many of whom participate in the Town's athletic leagues. Stow's active recreation fields not on school property include:

- Stow Community Park on Old Bolton Road (Irrigated and has a playground)
- Pine Buff Fields and Beach Facility on Sudbury Road (irrigated and has a playground)
- Memorial Field on Bradley Lane (not irrigated)
- Pompositticut Field behind the Fire Station and Community Center (not irrigated)

These four fields make up about 42 acres, not including fields on school campuses. CPA funds have helped to improve and expand opportunities for active recreation.

Ongoing and recently completed CPA-funded recreation projects are:

The creation of Town Center Park on Minister's Pond was primarily achieved through Community Preservation funds. This park is designed for a less rugged experience than

found in many of the towns existing open space lands. With a gazebo, play area, and accessible walking path, it provides a space especially suitable for seniors and families. Improvements to the Pine Bluff Beach area have also been completed in the past year with support from the Community Preservation funds.

Future Recreation projects that may request CPA funding (Needs and Goals):

- Field and access improvements including irrigation at the Pompositticut field
- Replace playground that was removed behind Fire Station/Community Center
- Field improvements and irrigation at Memorial Field
- Rehabilitation of the Marble Hill "Headway Life Course" behind Pompo
- Two additional tennis courts to replace the ones lost with Center School construction
- Addition of irrigation at Town Center Park
- Irrigation zone addition to complete irrigation of grass around the basketball courts at Stow Community Park
- A running/walking track around an athletic field
- An area for dogs to roam (Dog Park)
- Town pool and splash pad
- Pickleball courts
- Skateboard park
- An area for frisbee golf

Housing For All

Introduction

Community Preservation funds may be used for the acquisition, creation, preservation and support of affordable housing and for the rehabilitation or restoration of open space and affordable housing that is acquired or created as provided in this section; provided, however, that funds expended pursuant to this chapter shall not be used for maintenance. With respect to affordable housing, the community preservation committee shall recommend, whenever possible, the reuse of existing buildings or construction of new buildings on previously developed sites.

<https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/parti/titlevii/chapter44b/section5>

Affordable housing, referred to as "community housing" or "low and moderate income housing" by the Act, is defined therein as housing for individuals and families making less than 100% of a region's Area-wide Median Income (AMI) as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Specifically, per the 2020 HUD site (<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2020/2020summary.odn>), a family of 4 in Stow is considered to meet affordability requirements if it earns \$96,250 or less per year. It is a main focus of CPA, and represents an additional much-needed funding source for affordable housing within a community.

FY 2020 Income Limit Area	Median Family Income Explanation	FY 2020 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area	\$119,000	Very Low (50%) Income Limits (\$) Explanation	44,800	51,200	57,600	63,950	69,100	74,200	79,300	84,450
		Extremely Low Income Limits (\$)* Explanation	26,850	30,700	34,550	38,350	41,450	44,500	47,600	50,650
		Low (80%) Income Limits (\$) Explanation	67,400	77,000	86,650	96,250	103,950	111,650	119,350	127,050

NOTE: Stow town is part of the **Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area**, so all information presented here applies to all of the **Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area**. HUD generally uses the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) area definitions in the calculation of income limit program parameters. However, to ensure that program parameters do not vary significantly due to area definition changes, HUD has used custom geographic definitions for the **Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area**.

More specifically, under the State's affordable housing law, M.G.L. Chapter 40B, 10% of the town's housing inventory should be "affordable". Since the town does not currently meet this requirement, there is little zoning control over residential development that includes sufficient affordable housing to be considered a Chapter 40B project. Helping the Town meet the 10% goal of Chapter 40B is one goal of the CPC's housing program, but not the only goal.

The Community Preservation Act requires the Committee to recommend, *wherever possible, the adaptive reuse of existing buildings or construction of new buildings on previously developed sites*. Although the Community Preservation Act provides numerous approaches for the creation of affordable housing and community housing, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has had a policy of encouraging the building of new units of affordable housing, and viable projects often must be done in a larger scale, requiring the use of formerly undeveloped land. Since DHCD prefers new housing and not refurbished existing housing, some of Stow's existing modest housing will not easily qualify to be listed on the SHI. Even modest houses cost more than an affordable price. Such housing may very well qualify, however, as affordable housing that can benefit from investment with Affordable housing funds. Additionally, over the past several years, the Town has voted down opportunities to build affordable housing on new and previously developed housing sites. There is a continued need for affordable housing in Stow with an estimate that 20% of Stow households would qualify for low-income housing.

Historically the Town of Stow has demonstrated some support for affordable housing and community housing. The most recent addition to the subsidized housing inventory in Stow resulted in a current percentage of "affordable housing" in Stow at 7.4% (165 units on SHI) of the total year-round housing stock of 2,500 units.

In light of these objectives and challenges, the CPC has developed the following affordable housing goals and possibilities through careful consideration of Stow's affordable housing needs and other overall town goals, particularly as identified through the Town's Housing Production Plan.

https://www.stow-ma.gov/sites/stowma/files/uploads/stow_hpp_final_8.2.162.pdf

The goals, as described below coupled with the examples listed, are intended to guide potential applicants for CPA community housing or affordable housing funding and will help guide the Committee's consideration of funding requests.

Goals for CPC supported affordable housing

- To create and/or preserve affordable housing in Stow.
- To meet the 10% threshold set by M.G.L. chapter 40B, or achieve in any given year the "safe harbor" growth necessary to suspend the application of chapter 40B.
- Decide which of Stow's affordable housing needs is met for a given proposal.
- To help our seniors stay in their own homes through financial assistance and /or tax relief.

Potential Use of CPA Funds

- Site improvements such as water/sewer connections, well installation, septic installation/repair, etc. associated with the production of affordable housing.
- Acquisition of real property or property interests (land, easements, and buildings) for affordable housing.
- Acquisition and rehabilitation of an existing building to provide affordable housing as either ownership or rental units.
- Clearance of contaminants on sites that will become affordable housing.
- Construction of new affordable housing.
- Rehabilitation or restoration of public or private property to create affordable housing.
- Conversion of non-residential properties to residential properties (schools, mills, warehouses, etc.) with required income restrictions.
- Conversions of expiring use properties which are at risk of going to market rate.
- Home modifications, including accessibility, to existing homes to allow seniors to stay in their homes (with required income and value restrictions).
- Rental assistance in accordance with Massachusetts General Law.
- Provision of assistance to meet housing costs including, grants or "soft second" loans to reduce mortgage interest rates, provide a down payment, assist with closing costs, rent, security deposits or utility assistance or to subsidize interest rates.

General Criteria for Project Proposals from All Categories

These criteria will be used to more fully evaluate the highest priority projects from each of the three categories, particularly when there are not sufficient funds for all. ***All projects recommended by the Community Preservation Committee must be approved by Town Meeting prior to implementation.***

In determining which projects should receive CPA funding, the CPC will give preference to projects that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- CPA projects for Historic Preservation, Affordable Housing, and Open Space/Recreation shall benefit the public. Applications that demonstrate how the project will benefit the public, such as by providing public access or incorporating educational components into their project, will be preferred.
- Preserve or utilize currently owned Town Assets which would otherwise have to be funded through the capital budget will be viewed favorably. For example, repairs to a town-owned historic building for community benefit would be preferred over repairs to a historic building that is not publicly owned or used.
- Preservation of private historical assets requires that the public has a benefit from the asset and that appropriate restriction is placed in perpetuity.
- Preserve the essential character of the Town.
- Projects shall clearly demonstrate how they are consistent with this Plan and, when appropriate, consistent with other town and state plans such as the Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, or Housing Production Plan.
- Receive endorsement from other municipal boards or departments.
- Projects that can demonstrate that they have been developed through a participatory process in which the public has had the opportunity to provide input will be viewed more favorably than those that have not had public input. Demonstration of public support (i.e., with letters) will be viewed favorably.
- Projects have notified and gained support by abutters, if that has not occurred it should be explained with appropriate documentation.
- Save resources that would otherwise be threatened.
- Benefit a currently under-served population.
- Serve more than one CPA purpose (especially those that link open space/ recreation and affordable housing).
- Demonstrate practicality and feasibility (especially those that can be expeditiously implemented within budget).
- Produce an advantageous cost/benefit value.
- Leverage additional public and/or private funds.
- Provide long-term contributions to the Town.
- Private and not-for-profit applicants must demonstrate that they have the staff and other resources necessary to see the proposed project successfully through to completion.

Preliminary Recommendations

A high priority for expenditure of Stow's Community Preservation Funds is to leverage additional funds using Stow's Community Preservation Funds. The Committee strongly encourages projects that advance more than one CPA purpose.

Schedule and Review Process

In a typical year, the Community Preservation Committee will conduct one funding round each year as follows:

Project application deadline	December 1 st
Draft article prepared	One month prior to warrant closing
Committee vote to recommend article to ATM	Two weeks prior to warrant closing
Estimated project award (post Town meeting)	July 1 st

The committee may vote to accept applications that, because of market opportunities or other deadlines, require consideration outside of the normal funding cycles. Potential applicants who believe that their circumstances call for such unusual action may contact the committee chair to discuss the possible submission of an off-cycle submission.

The committee also recognizes that, in some cases, preliminary work must be undertaken in order to complete a viable application. When this is the case, the CPC will consider applications for study grants that can be used to test feasibility and develop work plans that would result in a stronger CPA project.

SOLICITATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

The Community Preservation Committee welcomes new project proposals that may contribute to community preservation in Stow. Please submit such proposals to the Committee using the initial application that can be found on our web page.

https://www.stow-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1286/f/uploads/project_application_for_cpa_funding_-_2021_0.pdf