



Town of Sudbury

Community Preservation Committee

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RECEIVED
10/13/21

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PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

Applicant:

Submission Date:

Group or Committee Affiliation (if any):

Applicant Address:

Purpose (please select all that apply):

Open Space & Recreation

Community Housing

Historic Resource

Applicant Email & Phone Number:

Project Manager Email & Phone Number:

Project Name:

Project Description:

Costs:

Fiscal Year	Total Project Cost	CPC Funds Requested	Other Funding Sources (Amount and Source)
2023			
2024			
2025			
2026			
2027			
Total			

How does this project meet the General Criteria and Category Specific Criteria for Community Preservation Committee projects (see attached)?

Does this project fall within the jurisdiction or interest of other Town Boards, Committees, Commissions, or Departments? If so, please list the boards, committees, commissions, or departments, whether applications and/or presentations have been made, and what input or recommendations have been given.

For Community Preservation Committee Use:

Form Received On: _____

Project Presented to CPC On: _____

Reviewed By: _____

Determination: _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding application is a request for \$100,000 to update the Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan and the Athletic Fields Needs Assessment & Master Plan.

Open Space & Recreation Plans allow a municipality to maintain and enhance all the benefits of open space that together make up much of the character of the community and protect the "green infrastructure" of the community. Planning this "green infrastructure" of water supply, land, working farms and forests, viable wildlife habitats, parks, recreation areas, trails, and greenways is as important to the economic future of a community as planning for schools, roads, water, and wastewater infrastructure. The Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan expired in 2013 and the need for an updated version of this planning document is critical. It is woefully out of date and is also needed to make the Town eligible to apply for certain grants. The prior plan is also significantly lacking in recreational information. Development of a robust Open Space & Recreation Plan will help guide the Town for future acquisitions to be pro-active instead of reactive when lands/opportunities become available. The timeline for completion should be approximately one year.

Please see the attached excerpted pages from the state's Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook for more information about Open Space & Recreation Plans, and their requirements and benefits.

The original Athletic Fields Needs Assessment & Master Plan was a fields use survey. It was essentially a supply and demand analysis for field use and users, completed in 2012. The Needs Assessment described the current state of the athletic fields, and provided an assessment of unmet needs, demand from users, and expected future demand. In updating this document, we would also want to know about the trends of field users in general and what that would indicate for the Town's future athletic field needs.

As the Master Plan indicates, the Broadacres Farm property, Davis Field, and Feeley Fields are the biggest known issues. There are also other recreational properties around the community that are undeveloped. The hope is that this new planning initiative and product will help the Town, and the Park & Recreation Commission in particular, dive into these issues more deeply. The Broadacres Farm property has an opportunity to serve many constituents and the planning process to update the Athletic Fields Needs Assessment & Master Plan would help to make the best use of this important property.

ENDORSEMENT, SUPPORT, OR OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS BY OTHER TOWN BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, AND DEPARTMENTS

The following Committees, Boards, Commissions, Departments, and organizations all have a vested interest in updating the Open Space & Recreation Plan and Gale Report:

- Planning & Community Development Department
- Park & Recreation Department

- Conservation Office
- Park & Recreation Commission
- Conservation Commission

RELEVANCE TO GENERAL CPC CRITERIA

The proposal meets the following General Criteria for eligibility:

- Eligible for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding according to the requirements described in the CPA legislation;
- Consistent with the Town's Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, Land Use Priorities Committee Report, Town-wide Comprehensive Facility Study, Community Housing Plan, and other planning documents that have received wide scrutiny and input and have been adopted by the Town;
- Receive endorsement by other municipal boards, committees, commissions, or departments.
- Preserve the essential character of the town as described in the Master Plan;
- Save resources that would otherwise be threatened and/or serve a currently under-served population;
- Demonstrate practicality, feasibility, urgency;
- Demonstrate that the project can be implemented expeditiously and within budget;
- Produce an advantageous cost/benefit value;
- Preserve or utilize currently owned Town assets.

RELEVANCE TO SPECIFIC CPC CRITERIA

Open Space

This proposed project will assist in planning to:

- Permanently protect important wildlife habitat, including areas that:
 - are of local significance for biodiversity;
 - contain a variety of habitats, with a diversity of geologic features and types of vegetation;
 - contain a habitat type that is in danger of vanishing from Sudbury; or
 - preserve habitat for threatened or endangered species of plants or animals;
- Preserve Sudbury's rural and agricultural character;
- Provide opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education;
- Protect or enhance wildlife corridors, promote connectivity of habitat or prevent fragmentation of habitats;
- Provide connections with existing trails or potential trail linkages;
- Preserve scenic views;
- Protect drinking water quantity and quality;
- Provide flood control/storage;
- Preserve important surface water bodies, including wetlands, vernal pools or riparian zones; and

- Preserve a parcel identified in the 2009-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Recreation

This proposed project will assist in planning to:

- Support multiple recreation uses;
- Serve a significant number of residents;
- Expand the range of recreational opportunities available to Sudbury residents of all ages;
- Jointly benefit Conservation Commission and Park and Recreation Commission initiatives by promoting passive recreation, such as hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing, on town owned property;
- Maximize the utility of land already owned by Sudbury (e.g. school property); and
- Promote the creative use of railway and other corridors to create safe and healthful non-motorized transportation opportunities.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The revised Open Space & Recreation Plan needs to conform to the outline provided in the Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook, including the following items:

1. Updated population statistics based on the 2020 Census.
2. Updated growth and development to include large projects such as Cold Brook Crossing and impacts of climate change.
3. Updated inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interests, both public and private. The Town will need a consultant who can develop and provide updated GIS layers.
4. Detailed analysis of recreational holdings and needs.
5. Develop all required mapping including:
 - a. Infrastructure
 - b. Zoning
 - c. Land Use
 - d. Land Cover
 - e. Bedrock Geology
 - f. Agricultural Soils
 - g. Water Resources
 - h. Water Supply
 - i. Flood
 - j. Fauna and Flora Habitat
 - k. Unique/Scenic/Historical Assets
 - l. Environmental Challenges
 - m. Publicly Owned Open Space
 - n. Privately Owned Open Space
 - o. Lands of Conservation/Recreation Interest
 - p. Action Plan Map including suggested targeted acquisitions
 - q. Conservation and Recreation Accomplishments since the prior Open Space & Recreation Plan

6. Analyze properties for their present utilization and suggest improvements/needs for the community.
7. Hold at least two (2) public information sessions to shape Action Plan.
8. Analyze conservation and recreation holdings for ADA compliance and such improvements to make facilities more accessible.
9. Synthesize data collected and develop a 7-year Action Plan working in conjunction with Town departments.
10. Present the updated plan to the Conservation Commission, Park & Recreation Commission, Select Board, and as part of a Town Forum.
11. Obtain preliminary approval from the Division of Conservation Services.

Cost estimates for updating/creating Open Space & Recreation Plans were solicited from other communities and the following information was obtained:

- Town of Grafton (working with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission) – Approximately \$18,000
- Town of Stoneham – Approximately \$20,000
- Town of Groton – Approximately \$18,000 to \$30,000 (project had cost overruns and significant in-house work was required to complete the updated plan)

The Horsley Witten Group also responded to the inquiry and indicated they are finding it is costing between \$20,000 and \$40,000 to complete updates to Open Space & Recreation Plans, but this does not include the ADA Access Self-Evaluation component.

While the Town recently completed an ADA Access Self-Evaluation for all the Town's buildings, the Open Space & Recreation Plan requires an assessment to determine how accessible a community's conservation and recreation programs and properties are to people with disabilities. This would need to be completed in order for the updated Open Space & Recreation Plan to be approved by the state's Division of Conservation Services.

We are anticipating the Athletic Fields Needs Assessment & Master Plan would cost a similar amount as the updates to the Open Space & Recreation Plan, even though there would be some overlap and data collection sharing between the two documents. As such, we are roughly budgeting \$40,000 to update the Open Space & Recreation Plan, \$40,000 to update the Athletic Fields Needs Assessment & Master Plan, and approximately \$20,000 to complete the ADA Access Self-Evaluation of the Town's conservation and recreation programs and properties.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLANNER'S WORKBOOK

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

DEVAL PATRICK, GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY MURRAY, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

IAN BOWLES, SECRETARY

DIVISION OF CONSERVATION SERVICES

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INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

It is through thoughtful planning and active stewardship that Massachusetts' open spaces, critical plant and animal habitats, neighborhood parks, and quality outdoor recreation facilities remain a part of our communities' landscapes. Without planning, the appearance of a community, the lifestyle of its residents, and the condition of its natural resources can be dramatically altered in a short period of time due to ill-conceived changes in land use patterns.

During the development boom of recent decades, many small and moderately-sized Massachusetts communities saw their populations increase dramatically, straining infrastructure and local resources and degrading the quality of life that originally attracted many people to the Commonwealth. As a result, open space resources diminished and recreational facilities were overused.

Planning provides the opportunity to assess where you are, where you would like to go, and how you might get there. Planning now to protect important open space and recreational facilities can greatly enhance the attractiveness of your community and encourage compatible growth in the future.

To obtain the benefits of development without losing valued environmental assets, you must plan *how* your community uses its land. Planning allows you to confront and manage many aspects of the community's growth and development in a way that preserves, protects, and enhances the environment. Many communities are embracing the concept of smart growth, which protects critical natural resources while encouraging high quality development in places where development should go. Smart growth means

identifying areas that should be protected as well as areas that can accommodate new development, such as in and around existing neighborhoods, on underutilized parcels, and other places where infrastructure exists. On the site-scale, development can be compatible with natural resource conservation. Open Space Residential Developments provide new homes on smaller lots than conventional subdivisions while also permanently protecting valuable open space. Development can also utilize ecologically-appropriate techniques such as Low Impact Development water management and green buildings that minimize environmental impacts.

Open Space and Recreation Plans allow a municipality to maintain and enhance all the benefits of open space that together make up much of the character of the community and protect the "green infrastructure" of the community. Planning this "green infrastructure" of water supply, land, working farms and forests, viable wildlife habitats, parks, recreation areas, trails, and greenways is as important to the economic future of a community as planning for schools, roads, water, and wastewater infrastructure.

One of the potential tools available to Massachusetts municipalities to fund a "green infrastructure" plan is the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The CPA, which must be adopted by referendum, allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund by raising money through a surcharge of up to 3% of the real estate tax levy on real property. This revenue can then be used for open space protection, recreation, historic preservation and the provision of affordable housing. The Act also creates a significant state matching fund, which serves as an incentive to communities to pass the CPA. The Department of Revenue has distributed matching funds to CPA cities and towns of more than \$17 million in FY'03, \$27 million in FY'04, \$30 million in FY'05, \$46 million in FY'06, and \$58 million in FY'07. To date, one hundred and nineteen (119) cities and towns have adopted the Community Preservation Act and are

appropriating fund revenues and matching state funds to thousands of community-based projects and needs.

Once adopted locally, the Act requires at least 10% of annual fund revenues for acquisitions or initiatives in each of the following three categories of allowable community preservation purposes: open space (excluding recreational uses), historic resources, and community housing. This allows the community flexibility in distributing the majority of the money for any of the three categories as determined by the community. When producing Open Space and Recreation Plans communities should consider that CPA funds may be used to purchase land, easements, or restrictions to protect existing and future water supply areas; agricultural, forest, or coastal lands; frontage to water bodies; wildlife habitat; nature preserves; and scenic vistas. Also, land can be purchased for active and passive recreational uses; community gardens; trails; non-commercial youth and adult sports; and use of land as a park, playground, or athletic field. In addition, funds may be used for park equipment and other capital improvements, but not ongoing maintenance of park lands.

Along with enhancing quality of life, protecting open space can provide significant economic benefits. It can help a community avoid the costly mistakes of misusing or overwhelming available resources. Protected open space usually raises the taxable value of adjacent properties and is less costly to maintain than the infrastructure and services required by residential development. Even taking into account the increased tax base that results from development, open space usually proves easier on the municipal budget in the long-run. A publication by the River and Trail Assistance Program of the National Park Service, *Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors*, presents many studies on this subject, including chapters on property values near open space and costs of municipal services for developed land, and is a valuable reference book for use in defending open space protection. Similarly, the Southern New England Forestry Consortium's study, *Cost of*

Community Services in Southern New England, illustrates the net fiscal benefit of open space on local tax bases, when compared to residential development. Additional resources on this issue include the Trust for Public Land's study on open space and taxes and the American Farmland Trust that developed the methodology used in the Southern New England study.

Protecting your community's open space is not necessarily synonymous with costly acquisitions. Many municipalities and private nonprofit conservation organizations (often land trusts) hold partial ownership interests in land, such as conservation restrictions or agricultural preservation restrictions. These restrictions may be acquired through gift, purchases, or regulations and are designed to preserve natural resources from adverse future use. An Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs publication entitled *The Massachusetts Conservation Restriction Handbook* explains all of the steps involved in drafting a conservation restriction and gaining state approval. The Handbook can be found online at www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/pdf/restrictions.pdf. In addition, certain zoning techniques, such as conservation subdivision design, can help a community achieve its open space objectives.

Completing an Open Space and Recreation Plan also allows you to take the next step: planning a greenway network for your region. The Department of Conservation and Recreation has prepared *Creating Greenways: A Citizen's Guide*, which is online at www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/creatinggreenways.htm. This guide can help you to take the valuable information gathered through the open space and recreation planning process and expand it to the planning of a greenway. An additional resource from the Department is the statewide greenway plan entitled *Commonwealth Connections: A Greenway Vision for Massachusetts*. This plan calls for the completion of a coordinated network of trails and greenways in Massachusetts. It can be found online at www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/connections.htm. Greenways provide a way to weave open space, cultural and

historic resources, and recreation areas into a fascinating system that enhances the experience of living in your community. Moreover, municipal greenways can lead to regional greenways, which reach out to include the green space of nearby communities. The ultimate goal is to begin to think about open space on a regional basis, not only to create these types of greenways, but also to promote resource conservation on a watershed level.

Regional and watershed based planning of open spaces is occurring in several coastal communities where continuous public access to and along the shoreline of developed harbors is actively being pursued by the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management office. Greenways along rivers have also been successfully accomplished in several watersheds such as the Charles, Neponset, Nashua, Connecticut, and Deerfield. CZM is also providing technical assistance to help communities reclaim rights-of-way to the sea, such as public landings and foot paths, through an extensive reference document, *Preserving Historic Rights of Way to the Sea: A Practical Handbook for Reclaiming Public Access in Massachusetts*.

Once completed, an Open Space and Recreation Plan is a powerful instrument to effect community goals. It establishes the community's aspirations and recommends patterns of development that will support them. Having this document available can help you advocate for the open space and recreation needs of your community.

Finally, a Massachusetts community with an approved Open Space and Recreation Plan becomes eligible to apply for Self-Help, Urban Self-Help, Land and Water Conservation Funds, and other grant programs administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services. Open Space and Recreation Plans also help to coordinate with ongoing acquisition efforts of state environmental agencies and local and regional land trusts.

WHAT IS “OPEN SPACE”

The term "open space" is often used to refer to conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways or any open area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation. However, the term can also refer to undeveloped land with particular conservation or recreation interest. This includes vacant lots and brownfields that can be redeveloped into recreation areas. Some open space can be used for passive activities such as walking, hiking, and nature study while others are used for more active recreational uses including soccer, tennis, or baseball. Throughout this document, the term is used with this broader definition in mind.

Although open space itself is a simple concept, the factors that affect it, and that it affects, are complex. Through an Open Space and Recreation Plan, you identify and examine these factors and lay out strategies your community can use to protect and enjoy its character, natural resources, and open spaces.

THE ROLE OF THE OPEN SPACE PLANNER’S WORKBOOK

The purpose of this workbook is to help guide you, your planning committee, and your community through the process of writing an Open Space and Recreation Plan without absolutely requiring a professional consultant. This approach hopefully will keep the planning process more affordable and make local “ownership” and implementation of the action items more likely.

Please note that this workbook is presented in the same order as your final Open Space and Recreation Plan. However, this order is not the best way to proceed as you organize your committee and get down to work. Some suggestions on a logical sequence of events are given on the section about organizing an Open Space and Recreation Committee. Don't overlook it – it's a very important distinction.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Since 2002, EOEEA has been implementing an **Environmental Justice Policy**¹ to help ensure that all Massachusetts residents experience equal protection and meaningful involvement with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits. This policy was instituted recognizing that communities across the Commonwealth, particularly those densely populated urban neighborhoods in and around the state's older industrial areas, are facing many environmental challenges associated with Massachusetts' industrial legacy. Residents in these predominantly low-income and minority communities – nearly 29% of the state population – lack open space and recreational resources and often live side-by-side numerous existing large and small sources of pollution and old abandoned, contaminated sites, which can pose risks to public health and the environment.

Critical to advancing environmental justice (EJ) in the Commonwealth is the equitable distribution of environmental assets such as parks, open space, and recreation. Toward this end, and where applicable, municipalities shall identify and prioritize open space sites in their Open Space and Recreation Plans that are socially, recreationally, and ecologically important to EJ populations within the community.

Therefore, if your city or town includes EJ populations, you must include the data/information specified in Sections 2, 3, and 5. If your city or town does not have identified EJ populations, in Section 5C., consider and describe park and recreation inequities within the community as well as strategies to address those inequities. (Note: EJ populations have been mapped by MassGIS, maps.mass.gov/mgis/ej.htm).

¹ Full text of Environmental Justice Policy at: <http://www.mass.gov/envir/ej/>

THE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

Creating an Open Space and Recreation Plan, whether completely undertaken by volunteers or supervised by municipal staff, will likely require a Planning Committee. Be sure to spend time at the beginning of the planning process to decide what process will help you to develop the most meaningful plan in your community.

By having an inclusive planning process, you will help ensure public buy-in to your Open Space and Recreation Plan. By opening the process to a wide variety of stakeholders, you will have a built-in group of supporters for the plan when it is completed. For ideas on how to have an effective public participation process for your Plan, please see Section 2 – Introduction.

Whether the community decides to hire a consultant, utilizes a professional planner, or a volunteer writes the plan, it is important that an Open Space and Recreation Plan committee be established. Ideally the committee should be involved in all facets of the planning process, including public participation, research, and writing. You want to avoid a situation where very few people have actually read the Plan, resulting in recommendations that are solely those of the author. The recommendations made here are applicable regardless of how your community wishes to proceed.

Committee Leader

Getting the most out of the committee means choosing an effective leader. Keep in mind that the most effective leader may not be the person with the most knowledge about open space, recreation, or the environment. The most important role for the committee leader is to coordinate the work of the committee, motivate the volunteers, and ensure timely completion of the plan before committee members lose interest.

It is important that the person leading this effort have many of the following traits:

- dedication to the project;
- ability and willingness to delegate important tasks to others;
- ability to recognize the (sometimes hidden) strengths of others;
- be a “people person” someone who genuinely likes working in a group;
- ability to keep group discussions focused;
- ability to interpret and translate good ideas of others;
- be organized; and
- be able to keep the group's progress on schedule.

Committee Membership

The membership should be representative of the population in your community. To ensure that the plan has broad based support, involve as many citizens and board representatives as possible. To the extent that they are available, staff from municipal departments should be asked to participate. Some of these people may participate only on the subcommittee dealing with the subject of their interest, others may participate in every aspect of the project. Typically, an Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee will include the following:

- Conservation Commission member;
- Planning Board member;
- Recreation Commission member;
- Historical Commission or Society member;
- members of Board of Public Health, Water Commission, or Public Works Department;

- Community Preservation Committee member;
- landowners;
- real estate, development, or business interests;
- citizens interested in community character and landscape preservation;
- citizens interested in the environment and natural resource conservation;
- citizens interested in playgrounds and recreation;
- citizens interested in trail development and use;
- citizens interested in rare and endangered species; and
- others you determine to be important.

Forming Subcommittees

Among the objectives of your first meeting should be to review the purpose and tasks involved in the project you are beginning, and to divide the Committee into subcommittees, each of which will be responsible for contributing to specific portions of the plan. You might consider giving everyone a copy of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements* so that they understand how everything fits together. Since you will ultimately need information on many subjects, encourage interested Committee members to chair subcommittees on these major topics. Then, give the subcommittees appropriate sections of this workbook to guide their work. Although the subcommittees (topics) can be organized in any way, this is one suggestion:

- Regional Context, Community History, Landscape Character, and Population Data
- Growth and Development Issues and Environmental Problems
- Geology, Soils, Topography and Water Resources
- Vegetation, Fisheries and Wildlife, and Scenic Resources

- Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest
- Conservation and Recreation Needs Assessment and Inventory of Resource Protection Measures
- Community Goals and Five-Year Action Plan

The leaders of each subcommittee are responsible for recruiting others to work with them and following the guidelines given in this Workbook. After everyone agrees on a timetable for completing their research and writing, the leader of the whole Committee is responsible for keeping the sub-committee leaders on schedule.

One or two people should be assigned to write the final plan. They will collect draft versions of all the required sections of the Plan from the various subcommittees and edit them into a document with a consistent style.

Suggested Timetable

As mentioned earlier, the order of the final Open Space and Recreation Plan document is not the order in which the open space planning process occurs. There is no hard and fast first-step-next-step order that must be followed, many of the “steps” happen concurrently. However, the following chart gives a general idea of one approach to scheduling the process. It assumes that the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee has been formed, that it is largely a volunteer process, and that it will take approximately 12 months to complete the plan.