

Community Preservation Act

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the mission of the Community Preservation Act (CPA)?

A: The CPA raises additional (otherwise unavailable) funding dedicated to purposes such as acquisition, protection, and preservation of open space & parks, historic features, and community housing.

Q: What is the status of the CPA in Brookline?

A: In the fall of 2020, the Town Meeting passed a Warrant Article to ask Brookline's voters to approve adoption of the CPA in Brookline.

Q: What will happen once the funds start flowing?

A: CPA revenue will be managed by a Select Board appointed CPA committee. The committee will review proposals and recommend Town Meeting appropriations within the scope of Community Preservation Act conditions and requirements.

Q: What is the required membership for this committee?

A: The Committee must have ex-officio members from the planning board, housing authority, conservation commission, parks and recreation commission, the historic commission and the Housing Advisory Board. There may be up to three at-large members, a total membership of up to nine.

Q: What has been the to-date statewide impact of the CPA?

A:

1. The CPA is already at work in 186 communities.
2. Expenditure has totaled more than \$2.35 billion.
3. There have been over 12,000 projects.
4. These include creation of 6,800 affordable housing units;
5. Support of 10,700 affordable housing units;
6. Acquisition of 30,894 acres of open space;
7. Preservation of 5,500 historic features; and
8. Funding for 2,500 outdoor recreation projects.

Q: What sort of preservation projects would CPA fund?

A: Preservation projects may include:

1. Major repairs of Brookline Housing Authority and other Community Housing properties, and
2. The protection from harm, injury, and destruction of historic, open space, & recreational properties.

Q: What is Community Housing?

A: Community Housing applies for two household eligibility categories:

1. Households with low-income, defined as less than 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) income, or
2. Households with low- or moderate- income in senior households, defined as less than 100% AMI.

Q: What sort of support could the CPA provide for Community Housing?

A: Rental assistance programs and staffing to plan, advocate for, and coordinate Community Housing.

Q: What sort of creation or acquisition could CPA fund?

A: Funding for construction (No historic properties, however) or purchase of open space, recreation, historic, or Community Housing properties.

Q: What sort of rehabilitation projects could CPA fund?

A: Capital improvement, repair, & upgrades to make recreational, historic, some open space (CPA acquired or created only) properties functional for intended use, and some (CPA acquired or created only) Community Housing projects.

Q: Can CPA commit funds to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund?

A: The CPA can transfer funds to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund only for CPA permitted purposes.

Q: Could the CPA provide additional support and reduce the stress on Free Cash & Capital Budget Priorities?

A: The 2012 amendment to the CPA allows more flexibility, particularly for upgrading and rehabilitating parks.

Q: If Brookline had adopted the CPA in 2006 would Brookline have needed to pass a debt exclusion override to purchase Newbury?

A: Possibly not, or possibly for a lower amount. It would depend on whether a portion of the acquisition would be for a CPA eligible purpose. If part of the land were to qualify as open space, then any open space reserve, plus allocation and borrowing, could be available. Similarly, any land qualified for recreation or Community Housing could also be acquired through CPA funds.

Q: Will the surcharge affect every Brookline property tax payer?

A: No. Brookline property owners:

1. In households that would qualify for low-income housing or low- and moderate-income senior housing are
2. eligible to apply for an exemption, and
3. Owners granted Chapter 59 Section 5 statutory exemptions, may apply for an exemption.

(Between an estimated 100 to 150 property owners may qualify for these exemptions.)

Q: Have other municipalities recently adopted the CPA?

A: On November 3, 2020 voters in 9 communities voted to adopt the CPA. The vote was 70% in Lee, 62% in Milton, 61% in Franklin, 63% in Framingham, 66% in Hopedale, 61% in Greenfield, 57% in Lancaster, 57% in Whitman, and 63% in Shrewsbury. In 2021 Brookline approved the question CPA, 77% in favor.

Q: If, in 2006, when the voters rejected a 3% surcharge, instead the currently proposed 1% surcharge had been approved, how much would CPA funding have been to date?

A: \$38 million, based on the total of year-to-year Brookline total property assessed value, year to year tax rates, and year to year CPA matching rate from 2006 to the present. CPA funds can effectively leverage additional funding from other sources. In this way, the actual benefit of the CPA for Brookline could be more than doubled.

Q: Based on current information, how much would the CPA fund likely receive in FY 23?

A: Based on the current 35% match, the fund would receive a total of approximately \$2.7 million in FY 22, \$2.8 million in FY 23 from the surcharge, and \$945k from the state match, a total of approximately \$6.4 million by the end of FY 23.

Q: How much will the CPA surcharge increase property taxes?

A: The surcharge, for example, would add \$80 to a property tax bill of \$8,000.

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