

T O W N O F P L Y M P T O N
C O M M U N I T Y P R E S E R V A T I O N
C O M M I T T E E

PLYMPTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2023



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Introduction

About the Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a Massachusetts statute that allows participating cities and towns to adopt a real estate tax surcharge of up to 3% in order to create a local Community Preservation Fund for the four community preservation purposes of open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, and outdoor recreation. In addition to the local tax surcharge, the state provides matching funds that are not less than 5% and not more than 100% of the funds raised by the community. The actual percentage varies from year to year dependent on the health of the Commonwealth's community preservation trust fund, which is funded by a surcharge on Registry of Deeds transactions.

CPA in Plympton

The town of Plympton adopted both the CPA and a local bylaw at the May 2008 Annual Town Meeting. The Plympton bylaw included a rate of 1.5% for the property tax surcharge and established a Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Additionally, certain exemptions from the surcharge are available for any person who qualifies for low income housing or low to moderate income senior housing, as defined in Section 2 of the Community Preservation Act. Information about these exemptions is available at the Assessor's Office.

The CPC in Plympton is made up of nine members including a member of the Conservation Commission, a member of the Historical Commission, a member of the Planning Board, the Highway Surveyor or the Surveyor's designee, a member of the Council on Aging and four at-large members appointed by the Plympton Board of Selectmen.



Field, Main Street



Plympton Public Library



Soccer fields, Dennett School

Role of the Plympton Community Preservation Committee

The Community Preservation Committee has two main roles:

1. To regularly update the Community Preservation Plan (Plan) working closely with town committees, department heads and concerned citizens.
2. To make recommendations for the use of CPA funds. The Committee does not initiate projects; rather it collects and reviews proposals submitted by individuals or groups. The CPC then votes whether or not to recommend the proposed projects be included as articles on the town meeting warrant. Only town meeting can allocate and appropriate CPA funds.

Use of the Community Preservation Act Funds

How CPA Funds Can and Cannot Be Used

The CPA requires that communities spend, or set aside for future spending, a minimum of 10% of annual CPA receipts for each of the following: open space, historic preservation, and community housing. The remaining 70% of funds may be allocated to any one or a combination of the three main uses, including public recreational purposes, on the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee and subject to the approval of town meeting.

Committee Costs

Up to 5% of the annual CPA funds may be spent on the administrative costs of the CPC.

Incidental Project Costs

CPA funds may be used for site surveys, environmental assessments, historic or housing consultants, architectural and engineering fees, permit processing fees, construction consultants, financing consultants, legal and accounting fees, and similar costs associated with and incidental to the development of a CPA project.



Plympton Village Green



Cranberry bogs, Brook Street



Pond, Winnetuxet Road

Projects in Other Communities

CPA funds may be spent anywhere in Massachusetts, meaning communities are not confined to expending funds only within their jurisdiction. For example, this flexible provision allows a community to purchase land surrounding its water supply even if located in another city or town. CPA funding may also support inter-community cooperation on regional housing needs, allowing development that spans borders or shared development in one community that serves several towns. Another example is the coordinated efforts of several communities to establish a "heritage corridor" that celebrates the shared history of a region.

Leveraging CPA Funds

CPA funds may be used as a municipality's matching monies for state and federal grant programs that require a local match. CPA funds can also be used as matching or starting monies to acquire grants from private organizations or individuals such as the Nature Conservancy or the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts, among others.

Use of CPA Funds for Maintenance (Not Allowed)

CPA funds cannot be used for routine maintenance of existing facilities. For example, communities cannot use CPA funds to maintain a municipal park (such as mowing the lawn, emptying trash barrels or dumpsters, etc.) or to maintain a historic town hall (such as cleaning the common areas or paying for utilities, etc).

Supplanting Other Costs (Not Allowed)

CPA funds are intended to augment municipal funds, not replace existing funding. To this end, CPA funds may not be appropriated to pay for project costs that have already been appropriated from another source. Any CPA eligible costs for a project that are identified in a municipality's capital improvement program are eligible for funding under the Act, if the municipality has not made a prior funding commitment to pay for such costs.

Open Space

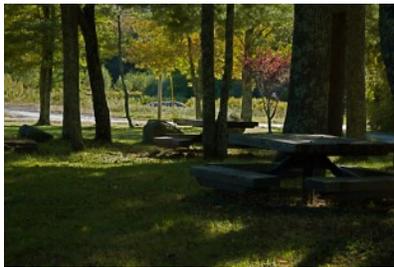
Land Resources

Total area in the town of Plympton is 9,644.4 acres according to the Old Colony Planning Council Data Book. As of 1999 only 1,346.9 acres or 14% were developed for housing, business, industry, or waste disposal; 2,107.9 acres were used for agriculture, recreation, mining, and urban open land, portions of which could be converted to other uses; and another 5,689 acres were in forest, both wooded swamp and buildable upland.

Major factors affecting present and future land uses are the 3,500 acres located in the local Floodplain and Watershed Protection zoning district, the (often-overlapping) land with significant limitations for on-site sewage disposal, and the areas in the more recent Groundwater Protection Districts. These protective restrictions against development are vital for a community with extensive flood plains, on-site waste disposal, and no municipal water service. They are discussed in the 2016 Plympton Open Space and Recreation Plan.



Farm equipment, Crescent Street



Picnic area at the former swimming hole, Winnetuxet Road



Jones River Brook, Cato's Ridge Park

Protected Land

The remaining undeveloped land in Plympton currently zoned for residential/agricultural or commercial use has differing degrees of protection. The town's fully protected holdings include:

- 17 acres of private land on West Street along the Winnetuxet River near the Halifax town line, is owned and maintained by the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts. This is a non-profit land conservation organization dedicated to preserving local open space and natural areas.
- A 3.5-acre riverside parcel near the intersection of Main Street and Winnetuxet Road purchased with state assistance..
- The long, narrow 2-acre Common and adjacent 14-acre cemetery along Main Street.
- The largely undeveloped 53.2 acre Harry Jason Jr. Park site south of Center Street near the Halifax line.
- The 42 acre Pearson Preserve on Oak Street.
- The 100 acre Cato's Ridge Park off Main Street
- The 10 acre Churchill Park on Main Street at Maple Street
- The 17 acre O'Neil Marsh on Ring Road

- The 17 acre restriction off Parsonage Road
- The 150 acre Two Books Preserve off Prospect Road
- The 82 acre parcel south of the Dennett School off Crescent Street was purchased with state assistance in 1973 by the Town for conservation purposes and now under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission.

Most of the remaining acreage is used for municipal purposes such as the elementary school soccer field, transfer station, town hall, fire station and cemetery, or is held for unpaid taxes. These are discussed in the Inventory of Land of Conservation Interest included in the 2016 Plympton Open Space and Recreation Plan.

In addition, much of the town is under Forestry, Agricultural, or Recreational use taxation under Chapters 61, 61A or 61B respectively. Under Ch. 61, Forestry, some 336 acres are under Forest Management Plans which are reviewed every ten years. Much of this is within the floodplain. However, the upland portions are available for development unless the town acts on its rights of first refusal. Given financial constraints this right is rarely exercised.

In contrast, there were 684 acres of cranberry bogs certified under 61A in 2022. This land is protected by its classification as a wetland resource area under M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40. Chapter 61A also covered 191 acres of field crops, 22 acres of necessary related land and 27 acres of tillable forage cropland as of 1999.

Open Space Goals

1. To preserve the rural character and traditional New England atmosphere of Plympton.
2. To protect and preserve Plympton's natural resources including water and unique wildlife habitats, for the benefit of present and future generations.
3. To promote and preserve the role of agriculture and agricultural lands in Plympton.
4. To ensure that future residential and commercial development in Plympton progresses in a manner that effectively balances growth with natural resource preservation.
5. To explore opportunities for land conservation and to recommend parcels to be designated conservation status when doing so would be a net benefit to the town of Plympton.
6. To provide public access to parcels that are designated by the town of Plympton for passive recreational use.
7. To promote public awareness, use of, and knowledge of Plympton's historic and natural resources, as well as promoting public awareness of land conservation and recreational goals.

Historic Preservation

History

Plympton was established as a town in 1707. It was originally a western precinct of Plymouth. A part was ceded to create Kingston in 1726, and another part was annexed by Middleborough in 1734. Further land was ceded to establish Carver in 1790. Halifax annexed some Plympton lands in 1831, and bounds were established with an exchange of territory between Plympton and Halifax in 1863.

Plympton Village and Green has served as a focal point for the town since its earliest days. Plympton Green was established in 1702, five years before Plympton's incorporation as a town. The Green first served as a burying place, training ground and location of the first meeting house (ca 1695-1698). Throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, religious, civic, commercial and residential properties were constructed around the Green. In 2007, the Plympton Village Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Plympton's rural quality has preserved many historic landscapes and historic landmarks. At least four houses date to the late First Period (1675-1725) making them over 250 years old. In addition, some 125 Plympton houses pre-date the Civil War. The Plympton Historical Commission has completed the two phases of the Plympton Historical Asset Survey (October 2013).



Harrub's Corner Historic District, North Plympton



Hillcrest Cemetery, Plympton Village



Plympton Historical Society, Main Street

Historic Resources

Plympton has a significant number of historic resources both publicly and privately held. A partial list is noted below. Additional detail regarding historic resources can be found in the Plympton Open Space and Recreation Plan (2016) with a geographic location number for these resources.

1. Historic Districts

- Harrub's Corner Historic District - The town's only local historic district and site of the oldest (1689) house and two other pre-1725 colonial structures. County Road (Route 106) is considered an early Native American trail, with Lake Street the native route to Silver Lake and the Pembroke ponds. This is archaeologically significant because of the late 17th century settlement and relatively undisturbed landscape. According to the Historic Asset Survey, completed in May 2013, seven properties, at or near the County Road - Lake Street intersection, plus a historic bridge over the Jones River Brook are located within the district boundaries.

- Plympton Village Historic District - The town's only National Register Historic District is located along a stretch of Main Street between Parsonage and Palmer Roads. The Plympton Village area is a linear village that includes approximately twenty buildings surrounding the Plympton Green. Though primarily residential, the district includes the Plympton Town House (1935), the Plympton Public Library (1905), the First Congregational Church (1830), and the Country Store (1893). The Village Green lies adjacent to the 1702 Hillcrest Cemetery and across from the c. 1850 First Congregational Church Cemetery. Additional details regarding the historic district can be found at the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System site at <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=PLM.B>

2. Other Historic Structures of Note:

- Town owned: Old Town House (1850) now housing the Plympton Historical Society
- Privately owned: Deborah Sampson House (c. 1720); Round House (c. 1857)

3. Other Landscapes of Note:

- Dennett's Mill Pond on Ring Road - the site of Bradford House in 1700, the now-breached dam provided power for the Hayward Sawmill in 1800.
- Bonney Pond off of Center Street - the site of a boxmill and sawmill
- Turkey Swamp between Maple Street and County Road
- Cato's Ridge Conservation Area - A series of relatively high hills north of Ring Road that contain a reputed Native American burial ground and possibly an Afro-American cemetery prior to 1830. The Native American tradition of the hills and surrounding neighborhood is somewhat confirmed by the many arrowheads and stone implements found there. Cato was the servant of Dr. Caleb Loring, who came from Hull to Harrub's Corner in 1703.
- Two Brooks Preserve of Prospect Road - Formerly cranberry bogs, this 150 acre preserve is home to several endangered species of wildlife.

4. Sites of Historic Interest:

- Adam Wright's Second Grist Mill Site - This is on the north side of the Winnetuxet River, and an 1813 cotton mill known as the Queen Mills, was on the south side of the Winnetuxet River. The latter is now a recreation area renovated through a 2014 CPC project initiated by the Town of Plympton Recreation Commission.
- California Mills - Located opposite from Soule Street near the Middleborough town line, it was built in 1849, the year of the gold rush, and operated as a grist, saw, and box mill until struck by lightning and burned in 1941
- Silver Lake Grove - A pleasure park in the 1860s and 1870s built on the shore of the renamed Jones River Pond. Following the sinking of the vessel, Lady of the Lake, the Park closed and the dance pavilion was moved to become the Silver Lake Chapel. Earlier, the arrival of the railroad in 1845 allowed profitable ice cutting and storage with huge icehouses between the street and lake, now the Brockton Reservoir.
- Trout Brook Tack Factory Site - Near the source of the Jones River; brook trout pools are now found nearby.

Historic Preservation Goals

1. Recognize, inventory, preserve, and enhance the historic heritage of the Town of Plympton in its entirety.
2. Preserve natural and man-made features that contribute to Plympton's character such as open fields, cranberry bogs, country roads, scenic vistas, and stone walls.
3. Restore those natural and man-made features that have been degraded or impaired.

Affordable Housing

Background

Plympton's housing inventory according to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development's Subsidized Housing Inventory (updated 12/05/2014) is as follows:

- There is a total of 1039 housing units within the town

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has established a goal that all 351 cities and towns should strive to have at least 10% of their housing stock priced (including principal, interest, taxes and insurance using a 5% down payment) in the affordable range. Plympton presently has approximately 51 units deemed as affordable, meaning we need to develop an additional 53 new units to meet the Commonwealth's goal.



Cranberry Knoll, Lake Street



The Woodlands, County Road



Cranberry Knoll, Lake Street

Affordable Housing Goals

1. Promote a variety of community housing options for those with modest means, while preserving the natural, historic, and rural character of our town; and nurture our sense of a diverse, yet integrated community.
2. Ensure that new affordable housing is harmonious with the existing community by making sure that proposed projects are in line with the Plympton Open Space and Recreation Plan and with existing zoning laws.
3. Meet or exceed the 10% State standard for affordable housing so that Plympton is no longer vulnerable to Chapter 40B housing developments.

Recreation

Resources

Plympton’s recreational needs are now served by a two-ballfield complex for 12 year olds and younger next to the Town Hall; a basketball/ tennis court on Parsonage Road; a soccer and softball field, two playgrounds and a walking track at the Dennett School; and the land along Winnnetuxet Road newly renovated into a recreational area. Using 2014 CPA funds, the cleared, treeless portion of Harry Jason Jr. Park was prepared for a variety of potential recreational uses. It might also have potential for in-town camping and natural areas.

In 2019, the Annual Town Meeting approved CPA funding to provide safety, accessibility and modernization upgrades to the main playground at the Dennett Elementary School.

Meeting the needs for future recreational land ranked high on the survey completed by residents in the late 1990s. Other specialized recreation opportunities are the town’s many horse farms and riding stables (which now may be taxed as recreation facilities under the current use taxation law Ch. 61B).

Recreation Goals

1. To provide varied recreational facilities and programs appropriate for all demographic groups of Plympton residents.
2. To develop a linked system of conservation and recreation areas for human and wildlife use.
3. To promote public awareness, use, and education regarding Plympton’s historic and natural resources, and conservation and recreation goals.
4. To increase opportunities to achieve the above goals and subsequent objectives through regional or multi-community efforts in cooperation with adjacent towns, the regional planning agency and non-governmental organizations.



Robert G. Holt Memorial Field, Plympton Village



Harry Jason Jr Park, Center Street



Playground, Dennett School

The Funding Process

Applications for CPA Projects

- Application forms will be available at the town hall, library, and on line at the town’s website.
- Starting in early September, the CPC will advertise on the town’s web site and in a local publication the fact that it will be accepting applications for proposed projects through October 15th.
- Submitted applications will be for consideration at the following spring annual town meeting.

Time Sensitive Applications

- At the discretion of the CPC, applications for time sensitive projects which cannot wait for the usual autumn submission window may be submitted and reviewed by the CPC at any time of year.
- These applications will be considered as described below (“CPC Consideration”), and if deemed appropriate and necessary, considered for possible referral to the annual town meeting or a special town meeting for approval.



Forest on Cato’s Ridge, Cato’s Ridge Park



Hillcrest Cemetery, Plympton Village



Vegetable fields, Center Street

CPC Consideration

- After the close of the application period, the CPC will review all proposed projects with substantially complete applications and determine which applications should be declined and which ones should go on for more extensive review.
- For those proposals that have been chosen for further review, the CPC will invite the applicant to come to a public meeting and present their case as to how the project benefits the town and why it should be funded as well as provide further information requested by the CPC.
- The CPC will then solicit input from any appropriate town committee or department regarding a specific proposal.
- The CPC will then hold a public hearing for further input on the proposed project.
- After the extended review process is completed, the CPC will vote in open session on which proposals it will include on the town meeting warrant.
- The accepted proposals will be included in town meeting articles that will be presented to the Board of Selectmen prior to the close of the warrant for inclusion on the Town Meeting Warrant.

Town Meeting

- At the annual or special town meeting as well as public hearings, it is the responsibility of the proposal’s applicant to present and defend their proposal to the Town residents.
- The CPC will present its reasons for referring the proposals to town meeting.
- Town meeting can choose to approve or reject the proposal. By state law, town meeting can choose to reduce the amount of CPA funds to be appropriated, but it may not increase the amount.

Project Submission Guidelines

Submission Requirements

Applications **must** be received by **October 15th** and must be substantially complete to be considered for recommendation at the spring annual town meeting. Applicants need to complete the Project Submission Cover Sheet and attach a detailed narrative that addresses the general guidelines and applicable project specific guidelines outlined below.

General Guidelines

1. Each project must be submitted to the Community Preservation Committee using the Project Submission Form as a cover sheet. Requests must include a statement of need and be documented with appropriate support information.
2. Applicants are encouraged to include any maps, diagrams, and/or photographs pertaining to the project. Letters of support for the project from community organizations or other sources may also be submitted.
3. The Community Preservation Committee may require additional (or more detailed) information to further clarify a submitted application.
4. Applicants should obtain quotes for project costs whenever possible. If not available, estimates may be used, provided the basis of the estimate is fully explained.
5. If the request is part of a multi-year project the total project costs and allocations should be detailed.
6. Applicants that have multiple project requests should prioritize projects.
7. Applicants should describe matching or supplemental funds from state, federal and/or private sources when appropriate and available.
8. Applicants should detail who will be responsible for project implementation and management. Their relevant experience should be included in the narrative. Please be sure that project management costs have been included in the overall project budget.
9. Applicants should include an adequate and appropriate contingency funding in the overall project budget.
10. Incomplete applications risk limited consideration or outright rejection.
11. Whenever possible, applications in electronic format are highly encouraged. When printed materials are used, nine (9) copies should be submitted.



Bonney Pond, Center Street



Overflow channel at the former swimming hole,
Winnetuxet Road



Llama, Main Street

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals submitted to the CPC will be evaluated under two sets of criteria. The first will be general criteria and the second will be project-type specific.

General Criteria

- Does the project fit the criteria and spirit of the Community Preservation Act?
- Is the project consistent with Plympton’s Open Space and Recreation Plan, and other planning documents that have received wide input and scrutiny?
- Is the project feasible?
- Does the project require urgent attention?
- Is the project affordable?
- Does the project serve a currently under-served population?
- Does the project serve multiple needs and populations?
- Is the project consistent with recent town meeting actions?
- Does the project help with the preservation of currently owned town assets?
- Does the project involve the acquisition of threatened resources?
- Does the project have multiple sources of funding?
- Does the project promote the use of local contractors when possible?
- Does the project comply with current or proposed zoning regulations?
- Does the project have a means of support for maintenance and upkeep?
- Does the project have community support and provide a positive impact to the community?
- Does the project have sufficient supporting documentation?
- Does the project have support from another Plympton town board or committee?
- Does the project have the support of the majority of immediate abutters?
- Is the project in the best interest of the town of Plympton?



Fall color on the Green, Plympton Village

Specific Criteria for Open Space Projects

- Does the project permanently protect important wildlife habitat including areas that are of local significance for biodiversity?
- Does the project provide opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education?
- Does the project protect or enhance wildlife corridors (i.e., promote connectivity of habitat and/or prevent fragmentation of habitats)?
- Does the project provide connections between existing trails or create trail linkages?
- Does the project preserve scenic views that border a scenic road?
- Does the project protect drinking water quantity and quality?
- Does the project provide flood control/water storage?
- Does the project preserve important surface water bodies including wetlands, vernal pools, or riparian zones?
- Does the project preserve primary or secondary priority parcels listed in the Plympton Open Space and Recreation Plan?
- Does the property have historic significance such as old foundations, stone walls, old roads, trails, cart paths, or scenic vistas?

Specific Criteria for Historic Preservation Projects

- What is the historical/ cultural significance to the Town of the proposed project?
- What is the public benefit?
- What is the appropriateness and professionalism of proposed work? (Rehabilitation work is expected to comply with Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.)
- What is the additional financial or in-kind services beyond CPA funds committed to the project?
- What are the administrative and financial management capabilities of the applicant in order to ensure that the project is carried out in a timely manner and that the historic resource can be maintained for continued public benefit?
- What is the potential loss or destruction of the resource if proposed action is not taken?
- Does the project protect, preserve, enhance, restore and/or rehabilitate Town-owned properties, features, artifacts, documents, or resources of historical significance?
- Does the project protect, preserve, enhance, restore and/or rehabilitate the historic function of a property or site?

Specific Criteria for Affordable Housing Projects

- Does the project promote the goal of having 10 percent of Plympton’s housing stock considered affordable?
- Does the project ensure long-term affordability?
- Does the project promote the use of existing buildings or construction on town-owned land?
- Does the project attract matching funds or grant opportunities to complete construction?
- Does the project convert market-rate housing to affordable housing?
- Does the project intermingle affordable and market-rate housing?
- Does the project require limited management by the Town of Plympton?
- Does the project have less impact on town or natural resources than market-rate housing on the same site?
- Does the project provide housing that is harmonious in design and style with the surrounding neighborhood?
- Does the project promote a socioeconomic environment that encourages a diversity of income, ethnicity, religion and age?
- Does the project give priority to local residents, Town employees, and employees of local businesses?

Specific Criteria for Recreation Projects

- Does the project support multiple active and passive recreation uses?
- Does the project serve a significant number of residents of all ages, gender, and ability?
- Does the project expand the range of both active and passive recreational opportunities available to Plympton residents through acquisition of appropriate parcels, acquisition of permanent conservation easements, or development of recreational resources on existing Town-owned land, including trail connections, playing fields and play area, open space, and parks?
- Does the project jointly benefit Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission initiatives by promoting a variety of recreational activities?
- Does the project maximize the utility of land already owned by Plympton?
- Does the project further broaden the diversity of Recreation Commission-administered programs to include activities beyond traditional “sports and games”?
- Does the project promote the creative use of railway and other corridors to create safe and healthful non-motorized transportation opportunities?