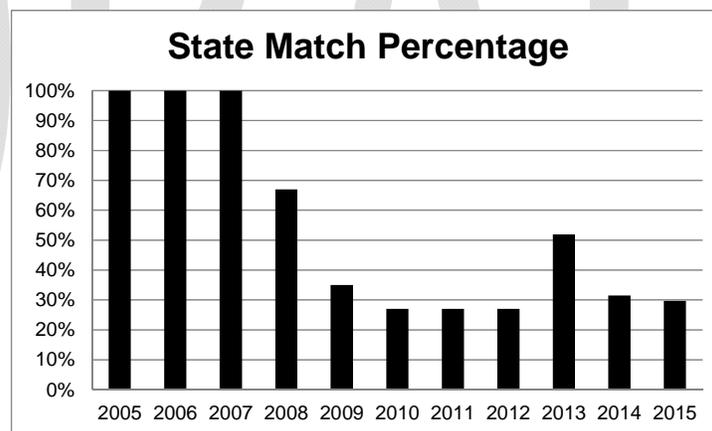


Community Preservation Committee 2015 Annual Report

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is responsible for the administration of the Community Preservation Fund, the selection of projects for recommendation to Town Meeting for funding, and the monitoring of the progress of funded community preservation projects. By statute, Community Preservation Funds may be allocated to those projects which support the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space, historic resources, community housing, and land for recreational use.

From the first funding round in 2004 through October 2007 the Town benefited from a 100% State match for all locally raised Community Preservation Funds. Caused by a revenue drop in the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund and an increasing number of cities and towns adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA, M.G.L. Ch. 44B), the State match has since dropped significantly as the chart below indicates. In 2013 Acton received an increase in the match due to an additional \$25 million that was deposited in the CPA Trust Fund from the State's FY13 budget surplus. However, in 2014, the state match was again reduced to \$263,941 (31.47%) as the state only deposited \$10 million into the CPA Trust Fund and again in 2015, the state match is just under 30%.



At the beginning of 2015, the Community Preservation Fund balance stood at \$1,199,016. In addition, there were \$1,658,572 in the Open Space Set-Aside Fund and \$33,034 in the Historic Preservation Set-Aside Fund.

In April, the Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$1,153,504 from the Community Preservation Fund for fourteen projects:

- \$300,000 transferred to the Open Space Set-Aside Fund
- \$30,327 transferred to the Historic Preservation Set Aside Fund to meet the required 10% spending
- \$2,708 transferred to the Historic Preservation Set Aside Fund to make-up for underspending of the 10% requirement in 2012
- \$35,000 to the Acton housing Authority for a project feasibility study

- \$150,000 to the Acton Community Housing Corporation's Community Housing Program fund
- \$10,000 for costs to nominate the Forest Cemetery on the National Historical Register
- \$70,000 to the Acton Woman's Club for Phase 2 work on preservation and accessibility of the building
- \$24,952 to construct the Fern boardwalk and associated tree removal in the Acton Arboretum
- \$36,000 for water chestnut removal over three years at Ice House Pond
- \$26,125 to put in an irrigation well at the Acton Arboretum
- \$120,000 to the Regional School system for the construction of Natures Play spaces at the elementary schools in Acton
- \$150,000 to the Discovery Museums for the Discovery Woods and Creativity Playscapes
- \$143,230 for easements to permit the construction of the Assabet River Rail Trail
- \$55,163 to cover the Town's direct and administrative costs for the CPA Program.

In addition, \$7,000 was appropriated from the Open Space Set Aside Fund to cover the interim borrowing on the debt portion of the 2014 purchase of the open space parcel at Wright Terrace in West Acton.

Due to the high level of demand for CPA funds and the number of valuable projects, the Committee made a cognizant decision to recommend and Town Meeting subsequently approved funding which left a \$45,512 balance in the unallocated Community Preservation Fund and \$33,035 in the Historic Preservation Set-Aside Fund, while the balance in the Open Space Set-Aside Fund stood at \$1,951,572.

To date, CPC funds have supported approximately 100 community preservation projects throughout the community. Some community preservation projects that were completed during 2015 were:

- The NARA Pavilion
- Wright Hill open space acquisition

In addition, community preservation monies funded ongoing projects and programs such as:

- The Open Space Acquisition and Preservation Fund to assist with appraisal, legal fees, and other costs related to the land acquisition process
- The Community Housing Program Fund administered primarily by the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC). Among other things, the fund pays for buy-down assistance, closing cost, and down payment assistance to first time income eligible homebuyers of deed restricted affordable community housing units, and
- Acton Housing Authority tenant support services.

- Acton's participation in the Regional Housing Services Program (<http://www.rhsohousing.org/>)

As of June 30, 2015, the Town had raised \$875,162 from the local CPA surcharge for FY2014 and in November received \$259,489 in State matching funds (29.65%). Total available funds at the end of calendar year 2015 are approximately \$1,200,782 plus the \$1,951,572 in Open Space Set-Aside Fund and \$33,035 in the Historic Preservation Set Aside Fund.

Over the summer of 2015 the CPC updated the annual Community Preservation Plan. This process included soliciting comments from community organizations and Town Committees, a public hearing in September to ascertain the needs, possibilities and resources of the Town regarding community preservation, comments and suggestions from Townspeople and representatives of interest groups eligible for CPC funding. As part of its hearing process on the annual plan, the CPC allows potential applicants to discuss their potential projects, ask questions about the application process, and gain a better sense about what constitutes a strong CPA funding application. The Final 2016 Plan was published in September 2015 and is posted on the Town website. It contains updated guidelines and information for applicants seeking community preservation funds.

In November, the Committee received fourteen applications for funding in 2016, for a total request of \$2,300,648. This is the third year in a row in which application requests far exceed available funding. The CPC reviews all project proposals and interviews each applicant. The CPC then deliberates and decides which projects and at which funding level to recommend to the 2016 Annual Town Meeting. In its deliberations, the CPC considers available funding, the applicants' proposals, legal opinions, applicant interviews, input from Town Boards, including the Selectmen and Finance Committee, and comments from the general public.

The Community Preservation Committee generally meets every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month in the Acton Memorial Library meeting room. All CPC meetings are open to the public and the Committee welcomes public participation throughout our annual process. Townspeople may e-mail the Committee at cpc@acton-ma.gov or contact the Town Planning office at (978) 929-6631 with questions, comments, and feedback. For additional information and to view the current Community Preservation proposals, citizens may visit the Community Preservation page on the Town website at www.acton-ma.gov. The CPC would like to thank the Planning Department which provides Town staff support to the Committee which is greatly appreciated!

2015 CPC Members:

Peter K. Ashton – At Large (Chair)
Paula Goodwin – Conservation Commission (Vice-Chair)
Joe Will – Recreation Commission (Clerk)
Victoria Beyer – Historical Commission
Peter Berry – Board of Selectmen
Walter Foster – At Large
Ken Sghia-Hughes – Acton Housing Authority

Susan Mitchell-Hardt – At Large
Jeff Clymer – Planning Board
Two associate member positions are currently vacant

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