

Community Preservation Plan for the Town of Hatfield

Adopted by the Hatfield Community Preservation Committee
April 28, 2021

The Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) was established in 2000. The act enables communities to raise local funds to be used for projects to preserve historic resources and open space, and to create community housing and recreation opportunities. If a community elects to participate in the program, the Commonwealth matches locally raised funds from a Community Preservation Trust Fund generated by a property transaction recording fee.

The CPA provides new funding sources to address three core community concerns: 1) acquisition and preservation of open space; 2) creation and support of community housing; and 3) acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes. A minimum of 10 percent of the annual revenues of the fund must be used or set aside for each of these core concerns, and up to 5 percent may be used for administrative expenses of the local Community Preservation Committee. The remaining funds can be allocated for any combination of the allowed uses, or for recreational projects.

The CPA requires that participating communities prepare a Community Preservation Plan to help guide the Community Preservation Committee in their review and consideration of proposed projects eligible for funding. This plan may reference existing studies, reports, and plans in the community as guidance for projects to be considered by the committee.

The Community Preservation Act was adopted in Hatfield in November 2006. CPA funds were first collected in the community during fiscal year 2008 and the first CPA projects were presented to Town Meeting in 2009. In its first two years, the Hatfield Community Preservation Committee looked primarily to *Hatfield's Master Plan for the Twenty-First Century* (2001), the *2008 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan*, and documents authenticating the town's historic districts for guidance in considering proposals for CPA funding.

In preparing its Community Preservation Plan, the committee reached out to various committees in town and the public to not only identify the studies and plans that will guide its deliberations but also to state broad goals sought by the committee for each of the four CPA project areas: Open Space, Historic Preservation, Community Housing, and Recreation.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee welcomes and seeks project proposals that meet the eligibility requirements of the Community Preservation Act and are consistent with the goals outlined in the Hatfield Community Preservation Plan. CPA application materials are available at Memorial Town Hall. Applications are accepted at any time of year. For projects intended to be presented at Annual Town Meeting in May, the deadline for receipt of an application is November 1 of the previous year.

OPEN SPACE

Open Space Resources

Hatfield enjoys a wealth of natural resources and open space lands. More than one-third of the town's 10,750 acres is agricultural land, with nearly 5,000 acres in forest and other undeveloped, open-land uses (Source: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission).

Open Space Resources Goals

The Community Preservation Act defines "open space" as including but not limited to "land to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers, and recharge areas; watershed land; agricultural land; grasslands, fields, and forest land; fresh and saltwater marshes and other wetlands; ocean, river, stream, lake, and pond frontage; beaches, dunes and other coastal lands; lands to protect scenic vistas; land for wildlife or nature preserve; and land for recreational use."

This expansive definition shows Hatfield to have a wealth of open space. But the trajectory of development in the Connecticut River Valley, which includes Hatfield, is putting pressure on many of these valuable resources.

The *2014 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan* lists the following "lands of conservation and recreation interest" in town: nearly 600 acres of town-owned reservoir watershed land in West Hatfield (officially designated the Terry Blunt Watershed and Conservation Area in 2013); approximately 2,800 acres of privately-owned lands enrolled in Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B, mainly east of Interstate 91, for the purpose of keeping these lands in agricultural, managed forest, or recreational use for varying periods of time; approximately 500 acres of farmland protected through the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program and Conservation Restrictions; approximately 71 acres in the federal Forest Legacy Program; and, 2.8 acres in the Cahillane Conservation Area, bordering the Northampton City line and the Connecticut River. These lands illustrate the breadth of interest of town residents in preserving the range of open space characteristics that define Hatfield's natural landscape.

Input to *Hatfield's Master Plan for the Twenty-First Century* (2001) and the *2014 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan* (OSRP) reveal that town inhabitants seek to preserve what they see as Hatfield's most valued features, namely:

- Rural character
- Open space
- Working farms

Maintaining these values and preserving the town's character depend on the protection of:

- Farmland
- Wetlands and floodplains
- Water supply
- Woodlands
- Adequate space for recreation

The *Hatfield Reconnaissance Report of 2009* (HRR), part of the Massachusetts Heritage Inventory Program, makes the point that landscapes are of particular value to a community, and that a “wealth of landscapes [are] central to each community’s character.” Some of these landscapes are agricultural, some industrial. Some show the impact of humans more than others. Landscapes change, of course, but the challenge is to keep the best of Hatfield as a public good, and not regret its passing when it is too late to do anything about it.

Most recently, the OSRP and the HRR have identified a series of preservation goals. Some are more specific than others, and many will require cooperation among town boards if they are to succeed.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee seeks projects that will:

- Promote the preservation of Hatfield’s rural character;
- Acquire land in fee or conservation restrictions to protect the town’s water supply;
- Contribute to the acquisition of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions or Conservation Restrictions to protect farmland;
- Acquire land in fee or conservation restrictions to protect woodlands, wetlands, and floodplains; and
- Encourage and support efforts to acquire, create, preserve, and/or rehabilitate open space resources that provide recreational opportunities for Hatfield residents.

Project Evaluation

Proposals should be consistent with the town’s Master Plan, the OSRP, the HRR, and any other relevant town documents pertaining to open space resources and the preservation of Hatfield’s rural character, such as the *2010 Town of Hatfield Town Center Study* and the *2011 Hatfield Greenway Plan*. Consideration will be given to the project’s urgency; the potential to complete land transactions; circumstances where resources are threatened; affordability; the existence of multiple funding sources; and projects that serve multiple needs and populations. Applicants submitting an Open Space Resources proposal should seek the advice and endorsement of the Hatfield Open Space Committee and, where applicable, the Department of Public Works, Recreation Committee, or Agricultural Advisory Commission. Any project requiring the purchase of an open space resource in fee, or a conservation or agricultural preservation restriction to be held by the town, must be reviewed by the Hatfield Select Board.

CPA Grant Activity to Date

Projects receiving funding under the Open Space category include:

- Preservation of 55 acres of woodland in the town’s reservoir watershed (2010 and 2014)

- Contributions to the acquisition of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions protecting 38 acres of farmland (2013)
- Acquisition of the Horse Mountain Conservation Area, approximately 94 acres abutting the town of Williamsburg (2017)
- Acquisition of a Conservation Restriction to protect 22 acres of farmland as part of Chapter 61A Right of First of Refusal transaction (2019)

COMMUNITY HOUSING

Community Housing Resources

Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws requires that each community meet a minimum threshold of 10 percent of its housing inventory to provide housing subject to long-term deed restrictions for individuals and families earning less than 80 percent of the area median income. If a community does not meet this threshold, Sections 20-23 of Chapter 40B provide an alternate zoning approval process for select housing developments, with at least 25 percent of housing units affordable to those earning less than 80 percent of area median income, or at least 20 percent of units affordable to those earning less than 50 percent of area median income. (Reference: *Economic Contributions of Housing Permitted through Chapter 40B: Economic and Employment Linkages in the Massachusetts Economy from 2000-2010*, Koshgarian et al, September 2010, University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute).

The *Town of Hatfield Housing Production Plan* (2015) reported that as of December 2014, of the 1,549 year-round homes in town only 47 (3 percent) met the Chapter 40B threshold. To meet the 10 percent target set by the Commonwealth, an additional 123 affordable units need to be created. In addition to meeting the expectations of the Commonwealth and Chapter 40B, community housing needs in Hatfield include providing opportunities for its senior citizens, town employees, and young people to have access to affordable housing options.

Community Housing Goals

The Community Preservation Act defines “community housing” as housing that serves households at or below 100 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Median Family Income for Hatfield for FY2015 was \$65,800 for a family of four, or \$46,100 (80 percent of AMI) for a single-person household.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee seeks projects that:

- Support the creation and funding of a municipal affordable housing trust (MAHT)* for Hatfield as authorized by the 2005 Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund Law (MGL c.44 s.55C);

- Encourage diversity in Hatfield's population by achieving a mix of homes and housing that enhances and preserves Hatfield's character and provides needed choices for its residents;
- Encourage community housing that promotes age and income diversity;
- Promote the creation of new community housing that is well designed and maintained, energy-efficient, of high quality, and based on sound planning principles;
- Ensure the affordability in perpetuity of any community housing created, acquired, supported, or rehabilitated with CPA funds;
- Encourage the creation of new and preservation of existing housing that contribute to the state's mandated target of 10 percent of the town's housing stock affordable to households with incomes at or below 80 percent of the area's median income;
- Acquire land through sale and/or gift to create affordable housing units in collaboration with local housing nonprofits;
- Support the creation of programs and opportunities to provide rental and first-time homebuyer assistance to qualified seniors and households of town residents or their immediate relatives, employed in town, or families of students enrolled in the town's public schools;
- Promote the rehabilitation and restoration for sale or rent for community housing of town-owned buildings, previously developed or town-owned development sites, or properties taken for failure to pay back taxes; and
- Provide community housing opportunities in town, leveraging other public and private resources to the greatest extent possible.

NOTE: This list includes recommendations from the *Town of Hatfield Housing Production Plan* (2015).

** A Municipal Affordable Housing Trust as authorized by MGL c.44 s.55C allows a municipality to collect funds for affordable housing, segregate those funds out of the general municipal budget into a trust fund, and use the funds for local initiatives to create and preserve affordable housing (Reference: Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Guidebook, November 2009, Massachusetts Housing Partnership).*

Project Evaluation

Applicants submitting a Community Housing Resources proposal should seek the advice and counsel of the Housing Allowance Project, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and refer to the *Town of*

Hatfield Housing Production Plan (2015). Any project requiring the purchase of an interest in a building or land to be held by the town must be reviewed by the Hatfield Select Board.

CPA Community Housing Grant Activity to Date

Projects receiving funding under the Community Housing category include:

- Preservation of the Capawonk Housing for the Elderly with replacement windows (2014)

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HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic Preservation Resources

Hatfield has a rich history. After millennia of use by Native American Indians, Hatfield was settled by English colonists in 1660 and became a separate town from Hadley in 1670. From its founding to the present, Hatfield has been primarily an agricultural town thriving on the rich alluvial soil of the Connecticut River Valley, although most residents today commute to jobs in neighboring towns. Hatfield's mill district around the Mill River dam was a center of small-scale industry during the late-19th and early 20th centuries. West Hatfield has been a major north-south transportation route since the building of the railroad in the 1840s; a pattern that continues today with U. S. Route 5 and Interstate 91.

Historic Preservation Goals

The Community Preservation Act defines "historic resource" as a "building, structure, vessel, real property, document, or artifact that is listed on or eligible for listing on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture, or culture of a city or town."

Hatfield is extremely rich in historic resources. Many buildings dating back to the mid-18th century remain in use today. Records stored in the Memorial Town Hall are remarkably complete from Hatfield's founding to the present. The life of the natives residing here when the English arrived can be approximated by means of archaeological surveys recorded by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. A *History of Hatfield* from its founding to about 1900, by Daniel and Reuben Wells, is available in the Hatfield Library and the Hatfield Historical Museum. Many records and artifacts related to the history of Hatfield are collected and exhibited in the Hatfield Historical Museum and the Mary Lou and Robert J. Cutter Hatfield Farm Museum.

The *Hatfield Reconnaissance Report of 2009* (resulting from the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Program) describes several landscapes in Hatfield that have played an important part in its history. Detailed information about the seven historic districts in Hatfield listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places (Lower Main Street and Maple Street; Upper Main Street and North Street; Bradstreet; North Hatfield; West Hatfield; Elm Street; and the Mill District and Prospect Street) are available in the Town Clerk's office and Hatfield Historical Museum as well as on the Massachusetts Historical Commission website. The Hatfield Historical Commission embraces preservation as well as knowledge and appreciation of Hatfield's and the region's rich history.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee seeks projects that:

- Encourage and support efforts by the Town of Hatfield to acquire, preserve, and/or restore buildings, land, features, and structures that define the historic character of the Town's historic districts;

- Encourage and support efforts to rehabilitate and restore town-owned historic buildings to preserve their usefulness and service to the citizens of Hatfield;
- Encourage and support efforts to acquire, preserve, and/or restore artifacts, items, and documents important to the history of Hatfield;
- Promote the safe, climate-controlled, fireproof, floodproof storage space, workspace, and display space for Hatfield's historic documents, records, and artifacts;
- Promote the study, understanding, and appreciation of events, people, features, and documents important in Hatfield's history; and
- Leverage other public and private resources and funding to the fullest extent possible.

Project Evaluation

Historic preservation proposals should explain how they will help preserve historic resources and make them available to the public. Projects concerning publicly owned resources, or that would become publicly owned as a result of the project will have preference over proposals concerning privately owned resources. If a proposal concerns a resource located within one or more of the existing historic districts, applicants are encouraged to read and, if appropriate, refer to the report on the relevant district. Applicants are required to seek the advice and approval of the Hatfield Historical Commission. Any project involving the purchase of an interest in a historic resource or building to be held by the town must be reviewed by the Hatfield Select Board.

CPA Grant Activity to Date

Projects receiving funding under the Historic Preservation category include:

- Restoration of the front columns and steeple of the Main Street Congregational Church (2009)
- Preservation of historic Town Clerk vital records (2009, 2020)
- Restoration of tombstones, tablets, roadways, and pathways in the Hill and Main Street cemeteries (2011, 2015, 2019)
- Various projects to preserve the public use of Memorial Town Hall, including complying with American for Disabilities Act (2010-2020)
- Various projects to preserve and restore the Hatfield Historical Museum collection (2012-2020)

RECREATIONAL USE

Recreation Resources

The Town of Hatfield is blessed with a wealth of passive and active recreational resources. The town's location along the Connecticut River; its open and forested areas; paths and unimproved roads connecting rural areas; and riverfront and town center offer numerous potential recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. The relatively flat topography east of Route 5 is well-suited for bicycling, horseback riding, jogging, walking, and playing fields. West of Route 5, the area around the town's drinking water reservoir offers opportunities for hunting and hiking, horseback, and mountain bike trails.

Currently, the primary concentration of landscaped, formal recreational areas in town are associated with the town's elementary and high schools and former school buildings; all within about a half mile of each other in the vicinity of town center. There are two established public access points to the Connecticut River: a state boat ramp, and an unimproved beach area owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Recreation Resources Goals

The Community Preservation Act 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. 'Recreational use' shall not include horse or dog racing or the use of land for a stadium, gymnasium, or similar structure." At the present time, CPA funds may not be used to restore or rehabilitate existing recreational resources or areas not acquired with CPA funds.

Recreational needs and opportunities in Hatfield are described and catalogued in a variety of documents and plans, including *Hatfield's Master Plan for the Twenty-First Century* (2001); *2014 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan*; *Hatfield Reconnaissance Report of 2009*; *2010 Town of Hatfield Town Center Study*; and *2011 Hatfield Greenway Plan*.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee seeks projects that:

- Encourage and support efforts to acquire, create, preserve, and/or restore (as allowed by current law) recreational resources to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for town residents, including, but not limited to: access and use of the Connecticut and Mill rivers and Great Pond; community gardens; parks and gathering places; compatible uses of the drinking-water reservoir area; playing fields; tennis and basketball courts;
- Promote opportunities for walking, biking, and hiking through the study and development of accessible byways, trails, and paths, and appropriate signage; and
- Promote the development of recreational uses of appropriate and accessible town-owned lands not currently devoted to recreation.

Project Evaluation

Recreational Resource projects should promote opportunities that are accessible to as many town residents as possible. Projects should be consistent with the objectives and goals of the *2014 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan* and, if applicable, the *2011 Hatfield Greenway Plan*. Applicants submitting a Recreational Resources proposal should seek the advice and endorsement of both the Hatfield Recreation Committee and the Hatfield Open Space Committee. Any project requiring the purchase of land in fee or a conservation restriction to be held by the town must be reviewed by the Hatfield Select Board.

CPA Grant Activity to Date

Projects receiving funding under the Recreation category include:

- Creation of School Street Basketball Courts and Playground (2012)
- Design and creation of Smith Academy Park (2013-2018)
- Design and creation of Three Bridges and White Rocks Trails in West Hatfield (2013, 2019)
- Creation of a Community Garden on Billings Way (2018)
- Creation of a Field Hockey Field at Smith Academy (2019)

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

General

The Community Preservation Coalition's website, www.communitypreservation.org, provides a wealth of information on the Community Preservation Act, articles on CPA projects around the state, and sample documents to help with crafting an application.

Open Space

Hatfield's Master Plan for the Twenty-First Century (2001)
2014 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan
Hatfield Reconnaissance Report of 2009
2010 Town of Hatfield Town Center Study
2011 Hatfield Greenway Plan

Each of these documents may help with preparing an application consistent with the Hatfield Community Preservation Plan. Copies are available in the CPC library in Town Hall, and will shortly be available on the town's website.

Community Housing

CPA and Affordable Housing: A guidebook on how cities and towns can use Community Preservation Act funds to support local housing efforts
Town of Hatfield Housing Production Plan (2015)

This publication is available in the CPC library in Town Hall and will shortly be available on the town's website. This and other useful information are also available from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, www.mhp.net.

Historic Resources

History of Hatfield. Available in the Hatfield Library and the Hatfield Historical Museum. Detailed information about the seven historic districts in Hatfield is available in the Town Clerk's office and the Hatfield Historical Museum.
Hatfield Reconnaissance Report of 2009. Available in the CPC library in Town Hall, and soon to be available on the town's website.
Other useful information is available from the Massachusetts Historical Commission's website, www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcidx.htm

Recreational Use

See resources listed under "Open Space."