

Community Preservation Plan for the Town of Hatfield

Adopted by the Hatfield Community Preservation Committee
May 25, 2011

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 will match 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: acquisition and preservation of open space; creation and support of community housing; and, acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes. A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues of the fund must be used or set aside for each of these core concerns, and up to 5% 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 project proposals for CPA funding.

In preparing its Community Preservation Plan, the committee reached out to various committees in town and the general 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 throughout the year. However, for any project intended to be presented at Annual Town Meeting in May, the deadline for receipt of an application is December 1 of the previous year.

OPEN SPACE

Open Space Resources

Hatfield enjoys a wealth of natural resources and open space lands. More than a third of the town's 10,750 acres is agricultural land with close to another 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, forest land, fresh and salt water 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. However, the trajectory of development in the Connecticut River Valley, from which Hatfield is not exempt, is putting pressure on many of these valuable resources.

The *2008 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan* listed the following "lands of conservation and recreation interest" in town: 529 acres of town-owned watershed land in West Hatfield (an additional 36.5 acres were purchased with CPA funding in 2010); approximately 2,800 acres of privately-owned lands enrolled in Chapters 61, 61A and 61B, mainly east of I-91, for the purpose of keeping these lands in agricultural, managed forest or recreational use for varying periods of time; approximately 310 acres of land held under Agricultural Preservation Restriction; 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 particular 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 *2008 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan* (OSRP) reveal that town inhabitants seek to preserve what they see as the most valued features of Hatfield, namely:

- Rural character,
- Open space, and
- Working farms.

And, they see that achieving these objectives entails the preservation of the town's community character, built on the protection of:

- Farmland,
- Wetlands and floodplains,
- The Water supply,
- Woodlands, and
- 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 those landscapes are agricultural, some industrial. Some show the hand of human beings more than others. Landscapes change, of course, but the question is how to keep the best of what the town has 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 more specific than others, and many of which will require co-operation among town boards, if they are to have a good chance of implementation.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee seeks projects that will:

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

Project Evaluation

Project 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 the rural character of Hatfield, such as the *2010 Town of Hatfield Town Center Study* and the *2011 Hatfield Greenway Plan*. Consideration will be given to: the urgency of the project; in the case of land transactions, the potential opportunity to complete the transaction; if the resource is threatened; affordability; the existence of multiple sources of funding; and, whether the project serves 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 the Agricultural Advisory Commission for their project. 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 with the Hatfield Select Board.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

Community Housing Resources

Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws requires that each community meet a minimum threshold of 10% of its housing inventory provide housing subject to long-term deed restrictions for individuals and families earning less than 80% 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.). In a Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory released in December, 2010 by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development of the housing units in Hatfield reported in the 2000 Census only 3.3% met the Chapter 40B threshold. 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 FY2010 was \$67,400 for a family of four, or \$47,180 (70% of AMI) for a single-person household.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee seeks projects that will:

- 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 town 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 and the preservation of existing housing that will contribute to the state's mandated target of having 10% of the town's housing stock affordable to households with incomes at or below 80% of the area's median income.
- Support the creation of programs and opportunities to provide rental and first-time homebuyer assistance to qualified seniors and households that are 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 community housing of town-owned buildings or previously developed or town-owned development sites.
- In providing for community housing opportunities in town, leverage other public and private resources and funding to the greatest extent possible and as allowed.

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 in the crafting of project proposals. Any project requiring the purchase of an interest in a building or land to be held by the town must be reviewed with the Hatfield Select Board.

*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.).

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic Preservation Resources

Hatfield is a very old town. After millennia of use by Native American Indians, Hatfield was settled by English colonists in 1660 and was set off from Hadley as a separate town 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. Its mill district around the dam on the Mill River was a center of small scale industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and 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 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 erected from as early as the mid-eighteenth century remain standing and in use today; the records of the Town of Hatfield stored in the Memorial Town Hall are remarkably complete from its 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 written 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 which have been altered by residents of the town and have played an important part in its history; and detailed information about the seven historic districts in Hatfield (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) listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places are available in the Town Clerk’s office and the Hatfield Historical Museum as well as on line at the Massachusetts Historical Commission website. The Hatfield Historical Commission has developed plans to encourage historic preservation as well as knowledge and appreciation of the history of Hatfield in particular and history in general.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee seeks projects that will:

- 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 listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

- 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, work space 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
- Leverage other public and private resources and funding to the greatest extent possible as allowed.

Project Evaluation

Historic preservation project proposals should explain how they will help preserve historic resources and make them available to the public. Projects concerning resources that are publically owned or would become publically owned as a result of the project will have preference over proposals concerning resources that are privately owned. If a proposal concerns a resource located within one or more of the existing historic districts, applicants are encouraged to read (and if appropriate make reference to) the report on the relevant district. Applicants are also encouraged to seek the advice and the 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 with the Hatfield Select Board.

RECREATIONAL USE

Recreation Resources

The Town of Hatfield is blessed with a wealth of passive and active recreational resources. The town's location all the Connecticut River, its open and forested areas, paths and unimproved roads connecting rural areas, the riverfront and the center of town, 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 bike trails.

Currently, the primary concentration of landscaped, formal recreational areas in town are associated with the town's high school and elementary school 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), the *2008 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan*, the *Hatfield Reconnaissance Report of 2009*, the *2010 Town of Hatfield Town Center Study*, and the *2011 Hatfield Greenway Plan*.

The Hatfield Community Preservation Committee seeks projects that will:

- 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 by-ways, trails and paths, and appropriate signage.
- 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 and open to as many town residents as possible. Projects should be consistent with the objectives and goals of the *2008 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 with the Hatfield Select Board.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

General

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

Open Space

Hatfield's Master Plan for the Twenty-First Century (2001)
2008 Hatfield Open Space and Recreation Plan
Hatfield Reconnaissance Report of 2009
2010 Town of Hatfield Town Center Study
2011 Hatfield Greenway Plan

Each of the above documents may help with preparing an application consistent with the Hatfield Community Preservation Plan. A copy of each document is 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

This publication is available in the CPC library in Town Hall and will shortly be available on the town's website. Also, this book and other useful information are 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 will shortly 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."