

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
FY23 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN**



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Introduction

The Community Preservation Act, M.G.L. c. 44B, (“CPA”) is a Massachusetts state law that allows participating cities and towns to create a dedicated fund for important projects that can greatly impact a community’s character and quality of life. CPA funds support improvements in the program areas of Open Space & Outdoor Recreation, Affordable Housing, and Historic Preservation. CPA enables communities to raise money locally through a surcharge on property taxes (between 1% and 3%) which is partially matched by the state. Through the Community Preservation Act, the City of Somerville has established a steady funding source dedicated to preserving and improving the city’s character and quality of life.

Somerville adopted the Community Preservation Act by a vote in the General Election in November, 2012. Somerville elected a 1.5 percent property tax surcharge and exempts the first \$100,000 of residential and commercial property value from the surcharge. The CPA also offers an additional exemption for “low income households”, as defined by Section 2 of the Community Preservation Act.¹ Consistent with the terms of the CPA, a committee was established under a local ordinance that has the responsibility to oversee CPA funds.

¹ Those wishing to apply for an income-based exemption must apply annually through the City Assessor’s office.

The Community Preservation Committee

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) oversees the implementation of the CPA in Somerville. The Committee is responsible for establishing priorities for how CPA funding is spent and, based on those priorities, makes recommendations to the City Council on which projects should receive funds. As established in Somerville's [Community Preservation Committee Ordinance](#), the CPC has nine members, including five ex-officio members and four members of the general public, who may serve two consecutive three-year terms.

Current CPC Members (May 2022)

- Heather Heimarck, Chair - General Public
- Rose White, Vice-chair - General Public
- Alan Bingham- Historic Preservation Commission
- Laura Beresky - General Public
- Jahan Habib - Planning Board
- Rebecca McKeivitz - Public Spaces and Urban Forestry Division
- Tatiana Shannon - General Public
- David Turin - Conservation Commission
- Vacancy - Housing Authority

The CPC has two important functions:

1. The CPC is required to study the “needs, possibilities, and resources” for community preservation and establishes priorities for how CPA funding should be spent. The CPC makes efforts to communicate its mission and goals to the general public and aims to distribute the CPA funds equitably across all parts of the city.
2. The CPC makes recommendations to the City Council on which projects will receive CPA funding. CPA funds cannot be appropriated or spent without the recommendation of the CPC and subsequent approval by City Council. The CPC is a catalyst for projects, not an initiator. To determine which projects should be considered, the CPC established an application process whereby grants are distributed to projects that fulfill the goals and needs that the CPC has identified.

The Community Preservation Committee invites City departments, community organizations and individuals to [submit applications](#) for CPA funding annually. In FY22, the application process is starting in May with a new call for pre-applications for community proposed projects on City lands and requests for funds for feasibility studies. Following the pre-application step, applicants first submit an eligibility determination form to confirm the proposed project is eligible for CPA funding. Projects deemed eligible are invited to submit full applications and present their projects during a community meeting. CPC makes funding recommendations on projects to the City Council, which gives the final approval.

Since FY14, the CPC has empowered the [Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#) (a.k.a. the Trust or SAHTF) to serve as the housing arm of the CPC, leveraging the Trust's 25 years of experience supporting affordable housing. Under this arrangement, the CPC grants all community housing funds to the Trust, and the Trust allocates the funds to CPA-eligible projects and programs. Affordable housing CPA applications are submitted directly to the Trust and follow a separate review process than the CPC's process for open space/recreation land and historic resources applications.

The Community Preservation Plan

The Community Preservation Plan provides an overview of the CPA in Somerville and establishes the Committee's priorities for funding projects. The fiscal year 2023 (FY23) Plan builds on the previous Community Preservation Plans and is based on the City's existing planning documents, coordination with various City departments, and resident input. The CPC invited input to inform the FY22 Community Preservation Plan update at a public hearing on March 23, 2022, through a survey

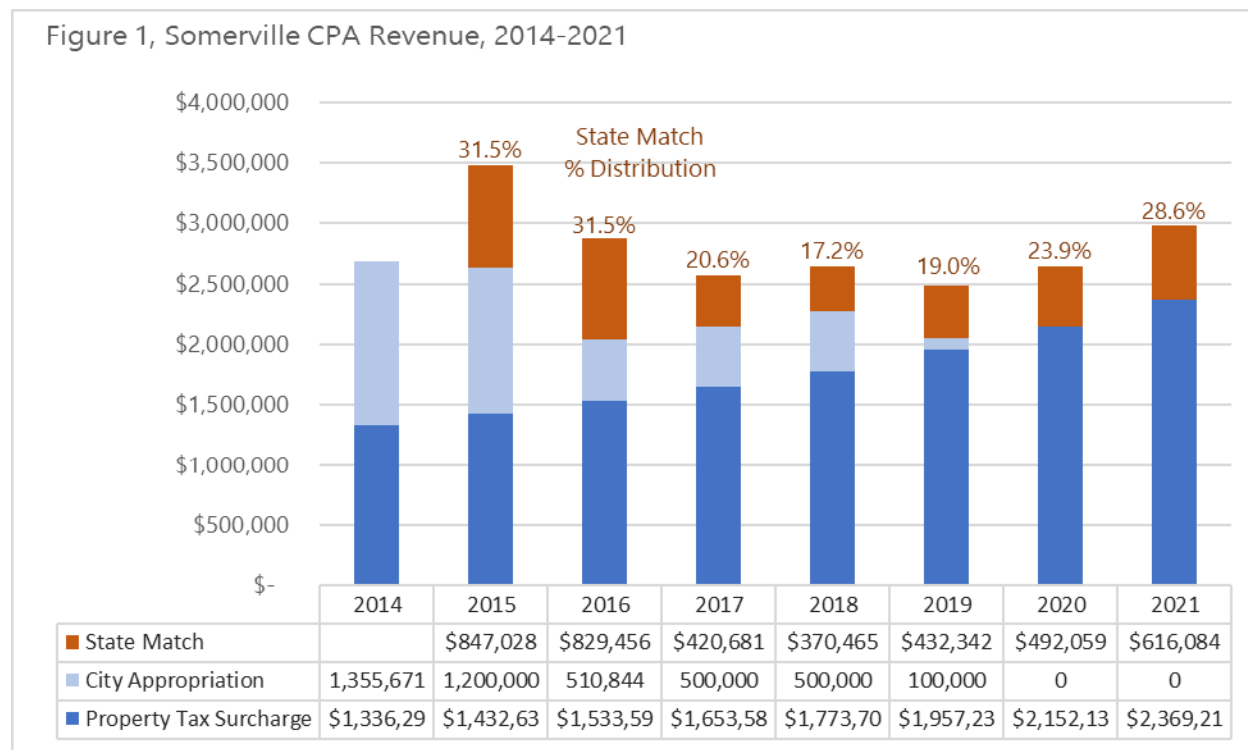
(conducted online with paper copies available in several locations), a SomerVoice page, and tabling events at each of the libraries and the Winter Farmer’s Market. Results of the public engagement are provided in Appendix 1.

Section 1. Somerville Community Preservation Act Funding

CPA funding comes from residents, through a 1.5% surcharge on local property taxes, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through distributions from its Community Preservation Trust Fund. Because Somerville adopted a “blended CPA” approach, the City also has the option – though it is not required – to appropriate additional municipal revenue into its Community Preservation Fund. Distributions from the state match are based on the total local CPA revenue, so the City appropriation represents an opportunity to leverage additional state resources to invest in the four CPA focus areas.

State funds used to match local CPA funds are collected through surcharges at the Registries of Deeds on transactions in all Massachusetts municipalities, which pay into the Commonwealth’s Community Preservation Trust Fund. The actual percentage of matching grants varies from year to year, depending on the availability of funds in relation to the local contributions of participating communities, and the number of communities participating in the CPA.

Between 2014-2021 the CPA program generated a total of \$22.4 million, including \$18.4 million in local revenue and \$4 million in state matching funds. In the first few years the City contributed a substantial appropriation in addition to the property tax surcharge, but then reduced or eliminated this contribution in recent years. Combined CPA revenue has averaged \$2.8 million over the years shown in Figure 1.



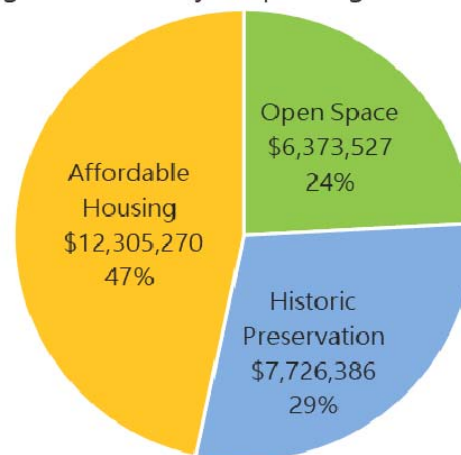
The CPA legislation allows communities to leverage their CPA revenue by borrowing for eligible projects and using future CPA revenue to pay the resulting debt service. As such, applicants may apply for funding beyond the amount of revenue currently available. Bonded projects require the approval of two-thirds of the City Council.

To date, Somerville's CPC has approved the bonding of CPA funds to support three projects: the historic rehabilitation of the West Branch Library, with a \$2.5 million appropriation in FY16; a bond of \$6 million for the Somerville Community Corporation's 100 Homes project in 2018, and a bond of \$4 million for the Clarendon Hill housing redevelopment project, which is pending Council approval in 2022. Total annual debt service for all of the bonded projects including Clarendon will be \$728,000.

Table 1, Bonded Projects			
Bonded Projects	Year	Amount of Bond	Approx. Annual Debt Service
West Branch Library	2016	\$2,500,000	\$131,000
100 Homes Project	2018	\$6,000,000	\$314,000
Clarendon Hill Redevelopment (pending)	2022	\$4,000,000	(projected) \$283,000

Including the projects that have been bonded, Somerville spent or committed a total of \$28.3 million in CPA funds between FY15 and FY21. Figure 2 shows the proportion of funds spent in each program area. A few projects have combined funds for multiple program areas, such as the Mystic Waterworks development which used Historic Preservation funds to support an affordable housing development, and restoration of the historic tower at Prospect Hill Park. Projects have been funded in every ward of the City, as illustrated in Map 1. Note that most of the affordable housing projects are not shown on the map because they are city-wide programs or scattered site affordable housing projects where the location of individual units is not shared as public information. A comprehensive list of the projects funded to date and status of completion is shown in Appendix 2.

Figure 2: CPA Project Spending FY15-FY21



Map 2 illustrates the locations of CPA projects in relation to neighborhoods with vulnerable populations. "Environmental Justice Populations", are defined by the federal government as census tracts that meet one or more of the following criteria: (1) the annual median household income is not more than 65 percent of the statewide annual median household income; (2) minorities comprise 40 percent or more of the population; (3) 25 percent or more of households lack English language proficiency, or (4) minorities comprise 25 percent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the City in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 50 percent of the statewide annual median income.

Each year the CPC makes recommendations based on the amount of funds raised in the previous fiscal year. In FY22 the CPC awarded \$3.2 million out of \$3.6 million CPA revenue received in FY21. This includes a funding commitment to the SAHT, six projects as shown in Table 2, as well as debt service payments for the West Branch Library and the 100 Homes Initiative.

Funds that are not spent each year are retained in Somerville's CPA Trust Fund, and may be available to spend in future years. These funds are held in reserve and may be used for eligible opportunities that arise outside of the regular funding cycle. As of May, 2022, approximately \$1,534,000 has been carried over, mostly in the Undesignated Fund Balance. A small amount of funds remain in the Open Space/Recreation and Historic Resources reserve, mostly due to previously-funded projects which came in under budget, resulting in funds returned to the reserves from which they were originally rewarded.

Figure 3: CPA Project Spending FY22

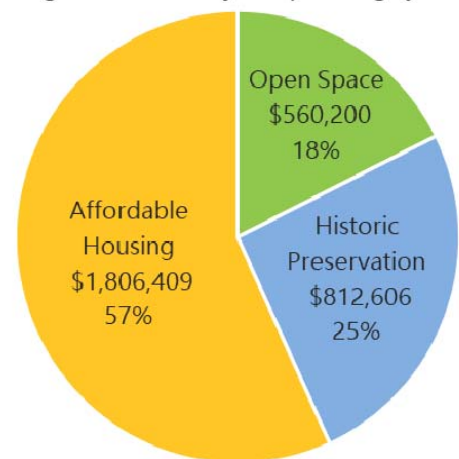


Table 2 FY22 Funding Summary			
FY21 Revenue (Available in FY22)		FY22 Funding Commitments	
Surcharge Revenue	\$2,979,835	SAHT	\$1,491,909
Interest	\$16,898	Debt Service for 100 Homes	\$314,500
Appropriation	\$0	Land Acquisition Fund	\$250,000
Total Local Revenue	\$2,996,733	Glen Park Community Garden	\$210,200
State match of FY20 Local Revenue	\$616,084	Somerville Junction Park	\$100,000
Total FY 21 Revenue	\$3,612,817	Somerville Museum	\$157,352
(FY22 Administrative Budget)	(\$159,806)	Grace Baptist Church	\$494,110
		Elizabeth Peabody House	\$30,000
		Debt Service for Library	\$131,143
Available Funds for FY22	\$ 3,453,011	Total FY22 Spending	\$3,179,214

Map 1

Map 2

Section 2: Estimated Revenue Available in FY23 Funding Cycle

As noted in the previous section, the available funds each year are based on the revenues received in the previous fiscal year. For the FY23 funding round, the CPC will be using FY22 revenues as a basis for the available funding. As of May 11, 2022, the City had received total surcharge revenue of \$2,824,210. A record high state distribution of \$1,038,656 (43.8% of FY 21 local revenues) reflects a likely one-time boost from the state's Community Preservation Act Trust Fund. The estimated budget of \$3,862,866 will be adjusted before the FY23 funding award in the Fall to capture additional surcharge revenue and interest received before the end of the fiscal year.

Table 3, CPA FY2023 Budget	
FY22 Estimated Surcharge Revenue	\$2,824,210
State match of FY21 Local Revenue	\$1,038,656
Total	\$3,862,866

While the CPA legislation, Chapter 44B requires that communities spend or set aside a minimum of 10% of the revenues each year for each of the CPA program areas, Somerville's Community Preservation Committee elects to reserve in advance a higher share of funding for each category, reflecting community priorities identified in the annual review process. Funds in the Undesignated or Flexible Reserve may be spent on eligible projects in any of the three program areas. The CPA legislation allows communities to spend up to 5% of annual CPA revenue on the administrative and operating expenses of the Committee. The CPA legislation does not require communities to spend all CPA revenue available each year and therefore allows communities to save revenue and spend it on projects in future years.

In FY23, the CPC has established the following funding allocations:

Table 4. FY23 CPA Funding Allocations				
Use	Percent of FY22 CPA Revenue	Estimated FY22 CPA Revenue	Estimated FY22 Debt Service	Total Available in FY23 for New Projects
Community Housing Reserve	50%	\$1,931,433	\$312,750	\$1,618,683
Open Space and Recreation Reserve	20%	\$772,573	0	\$772,573
Historic Resources Reserve	15%	\$579,430	\$128,144	\$451,286
Undesignated/Flexible Reserve	10%	\$386,287	0	\$386,287
Admin and Operating Expenses	5%	\$193,143	-	-
Total	100%	\$3,862,866	\$440,894	\$3,228,829

In deciding how to set these minimums, the Committee considered, among others, the following factors:

- There is a demonstrated need to invest in all of the CPA focus areas in Somerville, but the most critical need is for affordable housing, as established in the City's planning documents and expressed by residents.
- Public input consistently rates open space and outdoor recreation as a high priority, given the city's density and scarcity of public open space. Especially during the COVID-19 crisis outdoor recreation sites have been critical to the health and well-being of Somerville residents.

- A significant share of requests for historic preservation funds have been to make buildings safe and accessible, supporting cultural facilities, childcare, food access and other social services, and immigrant communities. These types of projects align with the CPC's overall priorities.

Section 3. Allowable Projects

Somerville's Community Preservation Act Funds must be used for projects that serve a public purpose and meet the minimum project eligibility requirements as defined in M.G.L. c. 44B. The following table summarizes the uses allowed within each program area. A more detailed matrix of allowed uses is provided in the CPA Project Application Instructions.

Because CPA funds cannot be used for programming purposes or public art, applicants are encouraged to pair their CPA application with an application for funding from the Somerville Arts Council's [Local Cultural Council grant program](#) when appropriate.

Determining Project Eligibility			
	Open Space/Recreation	Historic	Housing
ACQUIRE	Yes	Yes	Yes
CREATE	Yes	No	Yes
PRESERVE	Yes	Yes	Yes
SUPPORT	No	No	Yes
REHABILITATE and/or RESTORE	Yes – in most cases	Yes	Yes – if acquired or created with CPA Funds
Source: Community Preservation Coalition			

M.G.L. c. 44B defines the activities and resources that are eligible for CPA funding. Projects funded with CPA should demonstrate adherence to these definitions. Alternative funding sources should be sought for activities which do not meet these criteria. In some cases, a project's scope may be refined to align with these criteria. CPA staff can assist with identifying strategies for leveraging CPA funds with other funding sources or using CPA administrative funds where appropriate.²

ACQUISITION: Obtain property interest by gift, purchase, devise, grant, rental, rental purchase, lease or otherwise. Only includes eminent domain taking as provided by M.G.L. c. 44B. Resources that are acquired using CPA funds must be protected with a permanent deed restriction that ensures they will continue to be used for the purpose for which they were acquired.

CREATION: To bring into being or cause to exist.

PRESERVATION: Protect personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction

² Common examples of project ideas which don't meet eligibility criteria include historic or recreation resource inventories, interpretive signage, or impermanent repairs to buildings or structures. In some cases such activities may be considered for use of CPA administrative funds, or they may be included as a minor element in a larger eligible project.

SUPPORT: Provide grants, loans, rental assistance, security deposits, interest-rate write downs or other forms of assistance directly to individuals and families who are eligible for community housing, or to entity that owns, operates or manages such housing, for the purpose of making housing affordable

REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION: Make capital improvements, or extraordinary repairs to make assets functional for intended use, including improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal, state or local building or access codes. With respect to historic resources, “rehabilitation” shall comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the United States Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

OPEN SPACE: Land to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers and recharge areas, watershed land, agricultural land, grasslands, fields, forest land, fresh water marshes and other wetlands, ocean, river, stream, lake and pond frontage, lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve and land for recreational use.

RECREATIONAL LAND: 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 the use of land for a stadium, gymnasium, or similar structure, nor the creation of artificial turf fields.

HISTORIC RESOURCES: a building, structure, vessel, real property, document, or artifact that is listed or eligible for listing on the State register of historic places or has been determined by the local historical preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture, or culture of a community.

COMMUNITY HOUSING: low and moderate income housing for individuals and families, including low or moderate income senior housing.

Chapter 44B also prohibits CPA funds from being used for maintenance or to supplant funds that have already been committed from a different funding source. CPA funds may be used to expand or extend existing projects or programs beyond the capacity provided for by other finite funding sources, but it cannot be used to replace or reimburse funds previously committed from the City budget or other sources.

Compliance with the Anti-Aid Amendment

The Anti-Aid Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution (Mass. Const. Amend. Article 46, § 2, as amended by Article 103) generally prohibits the granting of public funds to private organizations except when the funds are used for a designated public purpose and the benefits accrue to the public. Preservation restrictions, conservation restrictions, and/or permanent public access agreements are typically required to protect the public investment when CPA funds are applied to privately-owned assets.

Section 4. Somerville Community Preservation Act Priorities

The Community Preservation Act provides Somerville with an important tool in facing the challenge of how to maintain the character of the city despite the pressures of growth and development.

SomerVision 2040 identifies **Equity** as a central theme, and elevates core principles of preventing displacement, expanding civic empowerment, and supporting collective action. The CPC aims to use CPA funds in each of the program areas to benefit residents of all walks of life, across all of the City’s

wards. Reflecting the values outlined in SomerVision and Community Preservation goals and best practices, the CPC has established the following priorities for the use of CPA funds:

1. **Consistency with the community's values**

- a. Improve accessibility for all members of the community
- b. Incorporate sustainable practices and design³
- c. Receive endorsement from other Somerville boards, commissions, departments, or community groups or from city, state, or federal officials
- d. Are consistent with the goals and priorities established in other current planning documents but not explicitly addressed in this plan
- e. Address two or more of the CPA focus areas (i.e., blended projects)
- f. Support Somerville's diversity, including support to immigrants regardless of their status

Somerville's Shared Values

- Protect and foster the **DIVERSITY** of our people, culture, housing and economy.
- Celebrate the unique character of our neighborhoods and the strength of our **COMMUNITY** as expressed in our history, cultures and vibrant civic engagement.
- Invest in the **GROWTH** of a resilient economic base that is centered around transit, generates a wide variety of job opportunities, creates an active daytime population, supports independent local businesses, and secures fiscal self-sufficiency.
- Promote a dynamic urban streetscape that embraces public transportation, reduces car dependence, and is **ACCESSIBLE**, inviting and safe for all pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.
- Build a **SUSTAINABLE** future through climate leadership, balanced transportation, engaging civic spaces, exceptional educational opportunities, improved health, varied and affordable housing options, and the responsible use of our natural resources.
- Affirm our responsibility to current and future generations through continued **INNOVATION** in business, technology, education, arts and government.

– SomerVision 2040

2. **Strategic use of CPA funding:**

- a. Leverage other funds or in-kind contributions and/or implement cost-saving measures
- b. Facilitate projects for which other sources of funding are not available
- c. Address long-standing or urgent needs in the community
- d. Take advantage of exceptional, time-sensitive opportunities
- e. Possibly serve as catalysts for transformative change

Priorities by CPA Category

In addition to the overall priorities to fund projects that are consistent with Somerville's community values and use CPA funds strategically, the CPC has established priorities for each of the CPA areas to guide recommendations made in each category.

³ Includes but is not limited to: protecting natural resources, cleaning up contaminated land, revitalizing and reusing existing buildings and structures, using reusable and sustainable materials, using renewable energy sources, achieving high standards of energy efficiency, expanding permeable surfaces, and increasing trees and vegetation, particularly native perennial and drought-resistant species.

Open Space and Outdoor Recreation

Context

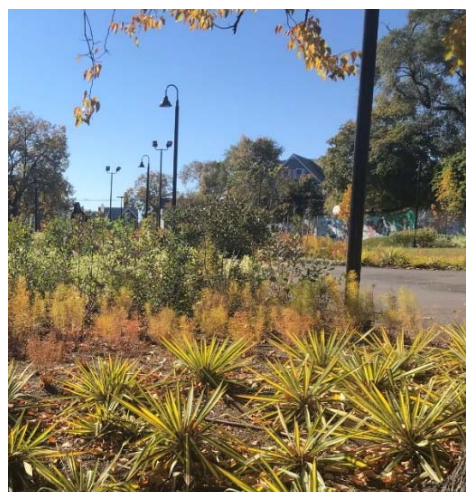
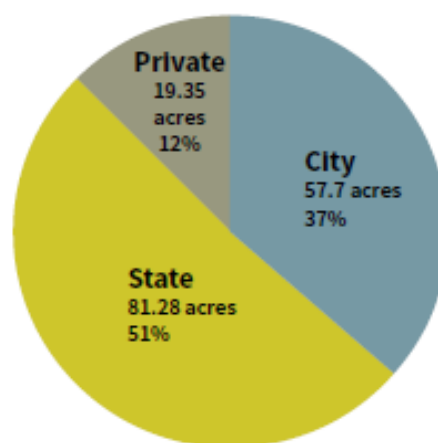
Somerville's parks and open spaces are a vital resource for individuals, neighborhoods, and the city as a whole. Approximately 160 acres, or 6 percent of Somerville's 4.1 square miles meet the definition of "open space", representing 2 acres of open space for every 1,000 Somerville residents. All of Somerville's open spaces are heavily used by nearly 80,000 residents. Because of the lack of opportunities for dramatic expansion, each of Somerville's parks and open spaces is a precious resource.⁴ Increasing and improving open space is consistently identified as a high priority in the City's long-range and neighborhood planning processes, and by participants in CPA surveys and outreach events.

Only 37 percent (58.3 acres) of Somerville's open space is City-owned. Just over half of the City's open space is owned by the state, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) and the MBTA. Privately-owned open space primarily includes Tufts University Fields, Matignon High School, and a small amount of Privately-Owned Public Space (POPS). The majority of this land (69 percent) is permanently protected, while about 47 acres lack permanent protection. Some City-owned open spaces such as schoolyards and many pocket parks or neighborhood squares are not permanently protected. Some spaces, such as the Somerville Community Growing Center and South Street Farm are managed and maintained as publicly-accessible open spaces through license agreements with community-based organizations. State-owned spaces are maintained as regional resources, although the City partners with the state, and in some cases advocacy organizations such as the Mystic River Watershed Association to seek improvements that serve Somerville's community needs.

In addition, there are many privately-owned parcels throughout the City, not counted in the open space inventory, which may be perceived as open space but are unprotected and do not ensure public access. Where land is privately-owned a conservation restriction and/or public access

According to Somerville's Open Space and Recreation Plan (2016-2023), **Open Space** is defined as publicly accessible, undeveloped land that primarily serves a recreational or cultural purpose – including but not limited to, publicly accessible parks, playgrounds, community gardens, walking or biking trails, cemeteries, civic plazas, and athletic fields.

TOTAL ACRES BY OWNERSHIP



Lou Ann David Park

⁴ Somerville Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2016-2023

agreement will be required for public funds to be invested through CPA.

SomerVision 2040 establishes an ambitious goal of increasing the City's supply of open space by 105 acres, updating the previous goal of 125 acres by 2030 to reflect accomplishments. Between 2010 and 2018, 15 new acres of usable open space have been created, while an additional 4.9 acres are in progress for a total of 19.9 new acres of open space. CPA funds were used to purchase the 0.04 acre parcel at 5 Palmer, adjacent to the Capuano School/Glen Park, which will be used to expand the Glen Park Community Garden. CPA has also contributed toward the establishment of an Open Space Acquisition Fund.

The Public Space and Urban Forestry (PSUF) division of OSPCD is responsible for planning, constructing, and stewarding the public realm to promote environmental and public health vitality. In 2016 PSUF prepared an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) which identifies priorities, goals, and strategies with respect to the expansion, improvement, and management of Somerville's open space and recreation resources. The following goals from the OSRP overlap with CPA's open space and outdoor recreation parameters:

- Acquire more land to expand Somerville's total open space acreage in every neighborhood.
- Renovate existing parks and open spaces to ensure attractive, safe, and accessible public lands.
- Continue to increase tree canopy in accordance with the 2021 Urban Forest Management Plan.
- Improve access to parks and open spaces for persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- Incorporate sustainable design in city parks and open space projects in response to the challenges of climate change.
- Use data to guide open space planning; for 2016-2023 data shows a need for athletic fields and community gardens.

Another partner in the City's natural resources planning, the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) developed the Somerville Climate Forward Plan (2018) to guide the City in adapting and addressing the impacts of climate change. OSE's long-range goals according to this plan intersect with all of the CPA program areas, but particularly with open space and outdoor recreation:

- Build and retrofit buildings to be net-zero carbon, healthy, resilient, and affordable, using electricity from renewable sources. (Most applicable to historic preservation and housing)
- Encourage zero-carbon mobility.
- Create built and natural systems that work together to provide resilience to climate change and expand social and environmental benefits to all, providing reliable infrastructure that is adaptable to changes in the climate and to the City's evolving needs.

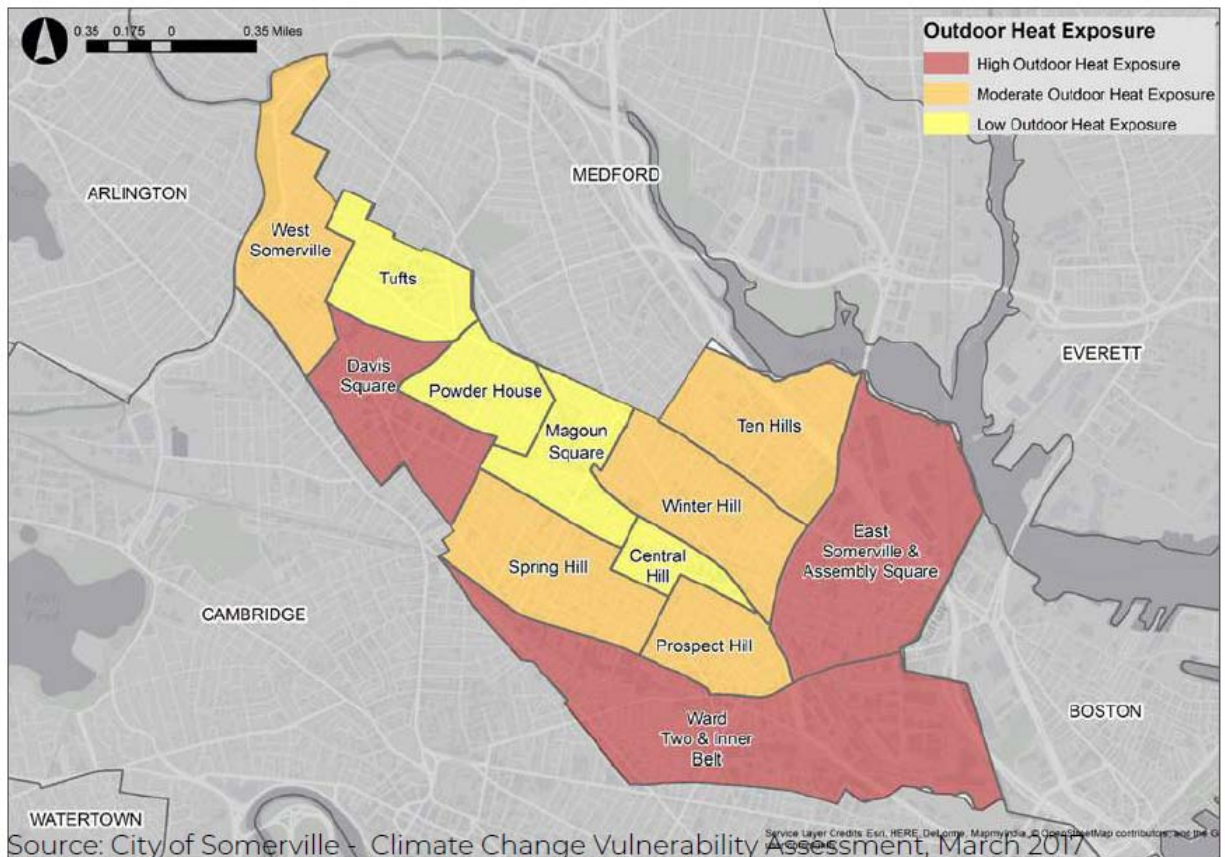
Included as open space are water bodies with recreational use, namely Alewife Brook and Mystic River. Somerville's two miles of shoreline are under control of the state through DCR. The community could benefit from increased access to recreation such as walking, boating, and fishing. The health of the wetlands and shores of these waterways can be improved through efforts such as invasive species control.



Dilboy Playing Fields

- Ensure that members of the community have access to safe and healthy housing, food, air water, and open space.
- Lead by example, by implementing sustainable practices in constructing City facilities and parks and through regional collaboration for coastal resilience.

CPA-funded projects such as the Central Hill Playground and Junction Park have, or will be incorporating stormwater infrastructure, water features, and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in their design, to align with these sustainability goals.



Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Priorities

1. Support the acquisition of land for publicly accessible open space and recreation.
2. Rehabilitate and restore existing recreational land according to need.
3. Increase access to water in outdoor public spaces.
4. Increase the availability of all types of trails for recreation.
5. Create multigenerational spaces and provide a range of opportunities that reflect demand for participation in outdoor recreation for people of all ages.
6. Support environmental resiliency, improving the health of wetlands and shorefronts, as well as increasing urban tree canopy and native plantings.
7. Creatively and coherently combine multiple uses that meet community needs.

Historic Resources

Context

Somerville's historic assets include buildings, structures, documents, and artifacts spanning over 300 years. CPA funds can be used to preserve resources owned by the City of Somerville, as well as buildings or objects owned by nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals.

Assets

Public Facilities

Many City-owned facilities are historic neighborhood landmarks. Located throughout the City, these include buildings that currently house municipal departments and services, as well as buildings which may be adapted for future public use or to serve economic development or housing needs. Many of the historic facilities need restoration and life-cycle upgrades. The City recently used CPA funds to renovate and expand the West Branch Library, and CPA funds contributed to the design and engineering for renovations to City Hall and the 1895 building to house City offices. City plans including the Capital Projects Master Plan, Somervision and neighborhood plans, and the Somerville Climate Forward Plan identify additional opportunities to renovate or adaptively reuse City-owned historic buildings. These plans' goals include improving the delivery of municipal services, enhancing sustainability, preserving a unique sense of place, and providing space for local arts and artists.

City-owned Historic Buildings/Local Historic Districts

City Hall/1895 Building	Brown School
Libraries – East, West, Central	Tufts Field House
Fire Stations Engine 6 & 7	Armory
DPW Facility	24 Cross Street East
Edgerly Building	45 College Ave
90 Union Square/SCAT	Cummings School
165 Broadway	19 Walnut

Somerville also has several City-owned historic parks and open spaces, including Milk Row Cemetery, Prospect Hill Park, and Nathan Tufts Park featuring the Powderhouse, which is the oldest stone structure in Massachusetts. CPA funds have been used to restore Prospect Hill Tower (1902) and many of the monuments at Milk Row Cemetery. A plan prepared in 2002 provided a blueprint for restoration of Milk Row Cemetery, which has been largely implemented.

Institutional and Non-profit Buildings

Many organizations in Somerville have historic buildings which are used for a range of cultural, religious, and community service activities. The CPC has funded several of these in the past, including the Somerville Museum, Somerville Hispanic Association for Community Development, Elizabeth Peabody House, and some religious institutions for critical repairs and renovations of their historic buildings, such as roof replacement, structural stabilization, handicapped accessibility, waterproofing, and



The Somerville Museum

fire safety. Preservation of these buildings has helped these organizations meet priority community needs including expanding accessibility, supporting Somerville's vulnerable populations, and providing economic assistance to low-income households through nutrition and childcare programs. Additional organizations may similarly benefit from funding to preserve their structures and to make them safe and accessible.

In some cases, former churches, fraternal organizations, or other institutional buildings may be converted to residential or other public uses. CPA funds can be used along with other funding sources to preserve the historic features of these buildings, and/or to facilitate their conversion to affordable housing.

Increasing Handicapped Accessibility

Several CPA projects have focused on expanding the accessibility of historic buildings for people with disabilities or mobility limitations. For instance, CPA funds have been used to build elevators at the West Branch Library, B'nai Brith Temple, and Somerville Museum. In the most recent funding round, CPA funds were awarded to the Somerville Hispanic Association to begin the first phase of making its 130-year-old building, the former Grace Baptist Church, fully handicapped accessible, ensuring that people of all ages and abilities can participate in the social services provided there.

When thinking about Historic Preservation, elevators may not be the first thing that comes to mind. However, handicapped accessibility is critically important to preserving Somerville's historic fabric by enabling buildings to be actively used and continually cared for. The Americans with Disabilities Act and Massachusetts state law requires that all programs and facilities be accessible to people with disabilities, and that existing buildings be made fully handicapped accessible when improvements are made that exceed 30% of the value of the building. It is easy to trigger this threshold when preserving the exterior envelope of historic buildings or investing in upgrades to building security, structural integrity, mechanical systems, or to repair and prevent flood damage. In addition to complying with the law, improvements to accessibility make public spaces safer and more comfortable for all users, and provide basic civil rights for people with mobility limitations.

Accessibility improvements enable historic buildings to be living assets that meet community needs today and for generations to come. With limited space for new development across Somerville, CPA funds provide an opportunity to make the best use of the community spaces we have.



Highly recommended as a first step for historic preservation projects, **Conditions Assessments** can help to identify specific repairs or updates needed to restore historic buildings and bring them in line with current health and safety requirements, while ensuring that the work complies with historic preservation standards, especially if the property is located within a Local Historic District. A conditions assessment may be used to identify potential projects that can be funded with CPA or other sources. In some cases, such as for the [Elizabeth Peabody House](#), CPA funds have been used to prepare conditions assessments.

Private Residences and Businesses

Historic residential and commercial buildings make up the predominant character of many of Somerville's neighborhoods. The most prolific period of construction was the later 19th and early 20th century, although a few earlier buildings remain.⁵ CPA funds can help to preserve the exterior of properties that are visible to the street. In some extraordinary cases, there may be a public interest in preserving the exterior envelope of an entire historic building, not only what is visible from the street. Generally, using CPA funds for interior renovations is not appropriate for residential and commercial buildings, as the public must be able to enjoy the benefit of the investment of public funds.

Documents, Artifacts, and Other Structures

In addition to buildings, there are also many objects which are important to Somerville's history. Examples include City records and documents, monuments and markers, works of art, and other artifacts. To be eligible for preservation or restoration with CPA funds, objects must be determined by the Historic Preservation Commission to be of historical significance. Objects should be publicly-owned or accessible to the public. Many City-owned historic objects are under the auspices of the Library, City Archive, or the Veteran's Agent. Private organizations such as the Somerville Museum also have publicly-accessible collections of historic artifacts and documents. CPA funds have been used in the past to preserve City Elections records and a wooden bas-relief housed at the Central Library.

City Partners and Planning Efforts

The Historic Preservation Commission has regulatory authority under the Demolition Review Ordinance and the Local Historic District Ordinance. Housed under the Planning Division of the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), HPC also serves as an advisory board offering advice to homeowners for undertaking work on historic properties. HPC holds the Preservation Restrictions for privately-owned properties that have been improved with CPA funds. HPC makes a designation of historic significance for assets to be deemed eligible for CPA funding for historic preservation if they are not listed on the State Register. Applicants for historic preservation projects are



A CPA-funded **Small Grant Program** provides up to \$15,000 to homeowners within the Local Historic District (LHD) for projects that preserve or restore historic features. More info about LHD small grant program may be found at [\[insert link\]](#).

NAME	AGE	PLACE OF BIRTH	Residence January 1st, 1900
Mr. Frederick R. Altonby	32	Beverly	36 Kettleson
Mr. David T. Altonby	22	Boston	23 Knapp St
Mr. Douglas A. MacCallum	21	Somerville	50 Vernon St
Mr. Everett H. MacCallum	30	Mass	72 W. Oak St
Mr. Joseph J. Rallie	21	Somerville	49 Willow Ave
Mr. Donald W. Jeffrey	21	Somerville	49 Weymouth St
Mr. Robert F. Rogers	21	Somerville	50 Abbott St
Mr. Albert C. Corbato	22	Somerville	43 Summer St
Mr. Cornelius E. Duggan	21	Somerville	46 Smith St
Mr. Francis Duggan	25	Somerville	96 Concord Ave
Mr. Robert C. Gump	33	Somerville	37 Calver St
Mr. Robert C. Remonway	21	Mass	15 May St
Mr. John J. Sullivan	36	Mass	35 Everett Ave
Mr. Herbert H. Hinchman	50	Mass	15 Wisconsin St
Mr. Daniel C. C. C.	11	Mass	65 Derby St

Elections Records, City Archive

⁵ Draft Somerville Historic Preservation Plan, 2017

also required to coordinate with HPC to ensure that the projects comply with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation.

The Capital Projects Division oversees City-owned buildings which currently consist of 32 facilities, including many historic buildings. The Capital Projects Division works closely with OSPCD, the Department of Public Works, and other City departments to oversee planning, design, and implementation of construction projects to enhance the sustainability and utility of the buildings, and to improve safety and accessibility for all users. Capital Projects has developed a Master Plan for a selection of buildings in which principal City services are housed, envisioning the consolidation of the majority of administrative services to Somerville City Hall, the 1895 High School Building, and the Edgerly Education Center. One or more historic City-owned buildings may be vacated and repurposed.

In 2015 the CPC commissioned the creation of a Historic Preservation Plan. This plan has not been completed, but a 2017 draft provides an overview of the city's historic development pattern and identifies potential opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of policies, programming, and public/private investment to preserve the city's historic character.

Buildings, structures, or areas may be listed on the **National Register** through nomination if they meet qualifying criteria. Listing on the National Register provides recognition and eligibility for certain funding resources, but little protection.

Local Historic Districts (LHD) provide regulatory protection governing changes to the exterior of buildings. Somerville has applied a unique strategy of designating single buildings rather than areas, resulting in a current inventory of over 100 LHDs.

The **State Register** is an inventory of significant historic resources. Sites listed on the National Register and/or included in LHDs may be included in the State Register.



Somerville City Hall

Historic Preservation Priorities

1. **Make historic public and institutional buildings safe and accessible**
2. **Preserve iconic Somerville landmarks**
3. **Preserve the historic character of Somerville neighborhoods**
4. **Preserve/enhance access to Somerville's historic assets**

Community Housing

Context

Housing prices in Somerville have escalated in recent decades, as the city has become a magnet for individuals and families of all ages who are drawn by the city's rich character, diverse housing stock, access to public transportation, and proximity to universities and jobs in the surrounding region. Housing instability is a major concern, exacerbated by the extension of the Green Line through the heart of the city, as well as economic shifts triggered by the COVID-19 crisis. Housing market pressures threaten to displace Somerville's more vulnerable populations, including low-income and minority households, seniors, families, and people with disabilities. Somerville residents participating in CPA surveys and tabling events have consistently identified affordable housing as the highest priority among the three CPA program areas. Meanwhile the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) identifies the need for safe and affordable housing, along with childcare and livable wages to be the highest priority strategies to address economic instability.⁶ With a stated commitment to advancing equity and preventing displacement, SomerVision 2040 plan identifies housing security as a primary focus.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Somerville currently has 3,250 affordable units, or 9.7% of its housing stock on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).⁷ Of these, 34 are home ownership units, with the remainder being rental. Not included in the SHI are 98 homeownership units which are permanently deed restricted to be affordable to households with incomes between 80-110 percent of Area Median Income (AMI), and other affordable units which do not meet all of the criteria for inclusion on the SHI, including most of the affordable units created through the 100 Homes Program.

Some of the units on Somerville's SHI are not protected in perpetuity, but have restrictions that will expire after a length of time. There are currently 154 units on the SHI which are due to expire within the next 10 years (by 2032). These units may be at risk of conversion to market rate housing without the investment of subsidies to extend their affordability.

Over the past decade Somerville has added affordable units primarily through Inclusionary Zoning and through investment by the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund (SAHTF). CPA funds, which comprise the largest and most consistent source of revenue for the SAHT, have contributed to the development of 25 apartments for elderly and disabled households at Mystic Waterworks, 6 affordable homeownership units at 163 Glen Street, and 54 units created through the 100 Homes Initiative in partnership with the Somerville Community Corporation.



Mystic Waterworks

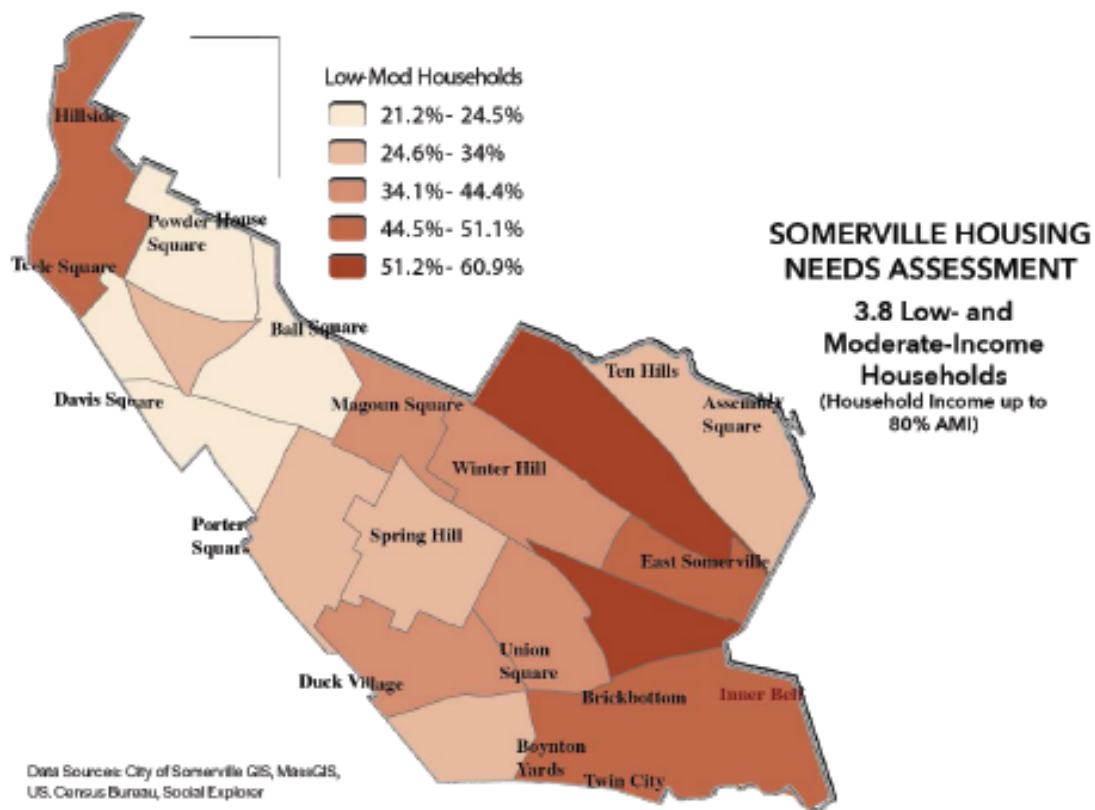
⁶ Ashley Tienken, presentation to CPC Annual Public Hearing, March 23, 2022, based on constituent survey.

⁷ DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), as of April, 2021.

In addition to creating new deed restricted affordable housing units, rental assistance and other housing stability programs are critical for preventing displacement of low-income households. Examples of housing initiatives that SAHTF has supported with CPA funds include:

- **Leasing Differential Program:** funding administered by Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC) to provide housing for formerly homeless, extremely low-income people, many with disabilities.
- **Prevention and Stabilization Services (PASS) Program:** funding to provide direct tenant assistance and case management services, also through SHC, has helped homeless and at-risk households obtain permanent housing and achieve housing stability.
- **Shortstop Leasing Differential Program:** funding for transitional housing and case management services for Somerville youth and young adults to become successful in permanent housing.
- **Tenancy Stabilization:** grants for income-eligible Somerville households to pay rental arrears, security deposits and first/last rent in order to lease housing.
- **Homelessness Prevention:** grants to help people at risk of eviction so they can access housing and social services.

The 2021 Housing Needs Assessment highlights that 41 percent of all Somerville households have low incomes. The overwhelming majority (73 percent) are renters, geographically concentrated in census tracts that fall within the East Somerville and Winter Hill, and Brickbottom neighborhoods. One third of households throughout Somerville are considered to be “cost-burdened”, that is, they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Among households with incomes below \$50,000, 80 percent are cost-burdened.⁸



⁸ ACS 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020

Dramatic increases in housing costs are reshaping Somerville, making the City increasingly out of reach for lower-income renters and would-be homeowners. SomerVision establishes a goal of ensuring that 20 percent of the City's housing stock will be affordable by 2040. This goal highlights the need to increase existing building stock to accommodate growth in population and jobs. In order to meet this goal, it is also imperative to increase the share of housing that will be preserved as affordable forever. In particular, a Housing Needs Assessment completed in December, 2021, identified the following priority housing needs:⁹

- Housing for working families with modest incomes (80-100% of AMI), especially 3-bedroom units
- Affordable housing for families between 30-60% of AMI
- Support for Section 8 voucher holders
- Housing for older adults who may wish to downsize
- First time homebuyer programs
- Units for single-person households, including single room occupancy and one-bedroom units
- Housing with supportive services
- Funding and services for housing stabilization
- Affordable units with access to affordable public transportation
- Public housing

As noted above, the CPC has empowered SAHTF to serve as the housing arm of the CPC. All applicants interested in receiving CPA funding for affordable housing projects must apply to the Trust, and, with the approval of the City Council, the Committee will grant to the Trust the funds it has allocated to community housing. The SAHTF may also apply to the CPC for additional funding if needed. The SAHTF bonded CPA funds to contribute \$6M toward the 100 Homes Initiative, the largest CPA award in Somerville to date. The CPC has also recommended a bond for \$4M toward the redevelopment of Clarendon Hill public housing, for which City Council approval is now pending. Bond payments for this project are made out of the annual share of CPA funds given to the Trust.

Community Housing Priorities

In accordance with the needs identified by the SAHT, the CPC prioritizes housing projects and programs that:

1. **Create new housing that is permanently affordable to households at 100% of AMI or below.**
2. **Provide affordability for households earning below 60% of AMI.**
3. **Support mixed-use and transit-oriented development: prioritize mixed use projects within ½ mile of a rapid transit station, with a particular focus on projects near Green Line stations.**
4. **Prevent the loss of affordable housing units, in particular units with expiring subsidies.**
5. **Prevent homelessness and/or provide housing units or other support for homeless and formerly homeless households.**

⁹ City of Somerville Housing Needs Assessment, 2021.

Section 5. Community Preservation Committee FY23 Action Goals

In early 2021 the CPC commissioned a program evaluation which was carried out by a team of students from the Tufts UEP program. The study made the following key findings:

- The CPA manager's role is critical to the success of the CPA program. The CPA manager must coordinate with staff in other departments, provide strong documentation of processes and regulations, and facilitate discussions to ensure that the program is on track with its goals.
- CPC membership could better reflect the community's diversity, to provide a deeper understanding of varying perspectives.
- The program is in high demand and could benefit from increasing the level of funding.
- The application process may be challenging for some applicants; enhancing support in the application process may help to broaden the variety of project applicants.
- Community outreach and engagement should be expanded, led by the CPA manager with support from CPC members.
- While the CPA program is perceived as being highly effective, the program areas of open space and historic preservation would benefit from long-term visioning by the CPC, consistent with SomerVision2040 and other strategic plans for these program areas.
- The CPA program has room for growth in terms of operating as a truly equitable and inclusive program. The CPC should consider metrics to identify vulnerable populations served by the projects it funds.

Since the completion of this study, the CPA program has seen several transitions, most notably the relocation from Somerstat to be housed now under the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) Finance Division, and the appointment of a new staff manager in summer of 2021. Consistent with the recommendations of the program evaluation, the focus in the first year of this transition has been to identify and address areas where the CPA program can be improved, namely:

- Increase public awareness of CPA, i.e., through public engagement and signage
- Complete filing of Preservation Restrictions in progress
- Launch LHD Small Grant program
- Update/improve documents and reporting
- Assist applicants/grantees with navigating CPA and City of Somerville procedures.

In addition to continuing these activities, the following are goals for the CPA program implementation over the next fiscal year:

- Provide strategic support to City departments and community applicants for identifying and initiating projects
- Broaden applicant pool
- Explore revival of Historic Preservation Plan
- Track leveraged funding from other sources
- Review procedure for Committee appointments

Appendix 1 – Public Engagement

The Community Preservation Committee used several methods of outreach to gather public input about community needs and priorities with respect to CPA funding. Opportunities to provide input were widely advertised via posters, a video on the City's Cable/Youtube channel, the City website, social media, and a legal advertisement in the Somerville Times. In addition, we facilitated the following:

- Annual Public Hearing, 3/23/2022
- Tabling at different locations and events throughout summer and fall 2021 and winter 2022
- Survey available online and in print and on the SomerVision page

Annual Public Hearing

The Community Preservation Committee held its annual Public Hearing in accordance with Chapter 44B on Wednesday, March 23 by remote webinar. Eight stakeholders provided invited testimony, including representatives from City of Somerville OSPCD Planning and PSUF divisions, Office of Sustainability and Environment, and Capital Projects Division, as well as representatives from the Elizabeth Peabody House, Somerville Community Corporation, and Community Action Agency of Somerville. Several of the stakeholders gave PowerPoint presentations, and all spoke about the community needs they perceive on the horizon, and the ways that they have engaged the community to identify these needs. Several of the stakeholders referenced recent planning initiatives which have been described in this CPP update. In addition, one of the presenters was a community member Josh Safdie, who spoke as an expert on architectural accessibility about the nexus between historic preservation and state and federal rules around handicapped accessibility. One attendee raised a question about whether CPA funds can support infrastructure improvements. No further public comments were received.

Tabling Events

The CPC set up tables at farmer's markets and Somerstreets events in August through October of 2021, and at each of the branch libraries and at the winter farmer's market in March of 2022.

Committee members and the CPA Manager engaged passersby with information about the CPA and the projects that have been funded in the past, and invited them to share their priorities and ideas by placing dot stickers and sticky notes on an easel. Participants were offered strips of five stickers to divide between the three program areas, although many chose to use fewer.

Participants consistently ranked affordable housing as the highest priority among the three program areas, averaging just under 50 percent. Open space and recreation also resonated strongly with participants, who often mentioned favorite parks or improvements they would like to see in their neighborhoods. Historic preservation captured the least votes in terms of priority, although many participants appreciated learning about projects the CPC has funded in the past.



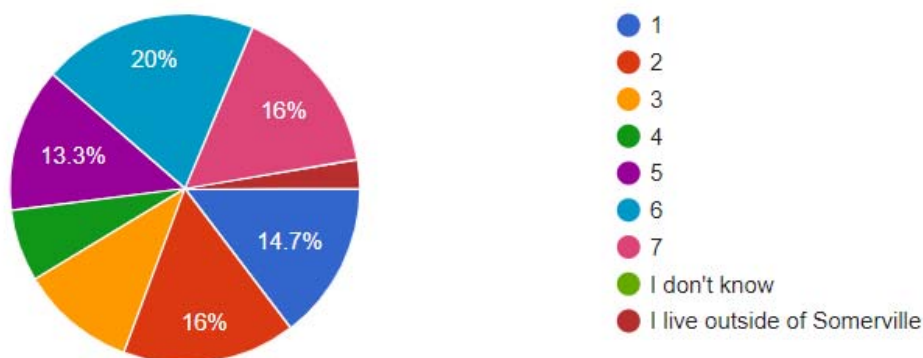
Location	Date	Total Votes	Affordable Housing	Historic Preservation	Open Space/ Recreation
Mobile Farmer's Market, Senior Center Holland Ave	8/27/2021	68	46%	13%	41%
Farmer's Market, Union Square	9/11/2021	420	48%	16%	36%
Mobile Farmer's Market, Mystic Place	2/11/2021	39	49%	23%	28%
Mobile Farmer's Market, North Street	9/18/2021	61	56%	13%	28%
SomerStreets, Highland Ave	9/19/2021	509	46%	14%	40%
SomerStreets, Somerville Ave	10/31/2021	236	44%	17%	39%
East Somerville Branch Library	3/5/2022	0			
West Somerville Branch Library	3/7/2022	32	53%	9%	38%
Central Library	3/9/2022	21	38%	24%	38%
Winter Farmer's Market, Armory	3/19/2022	164	48%	17%	35%
Average, all events		1,550	47%	15%	37%

Comments from Tabling Events (All Combined)			
Additional votes/mentions		Additional votes/mentions	
Open Space/Recreation		Historic Preservation	
More Trees	12	Historic Preservation	
Public Restrooms	9	Interpretive/Informational signage	2
Xeriscaping, local pollinators, clover lawns	9	Handicapped Accessibility	2
streets as open space	9	More info about the story of historic Somerville	
Soccer fields	9	Preserve Armory for small businesses	
Bike Paths	7	Stop knocking down stuff just to put up housing no one can afford and destroy our history	
More green space/passive parks	4	Housing	
More green space in the new Union Square	3	Expand public housing	5
Dog Parks - something for animals	2	Solar panels on roofs of affordable units	4
Speed to Execution (i.e., complete funded projects faster)	2	High density housing	3
More places to gather, gardens	2	Focus on small developers, hiring women-owned construction businesses	2
Riverwalk, landscaping along the river	2	More SROs and small condos	2
More meadow, less lawn!		Will the Green Line price me out of Union Square?	2
More trees, bikeways, green space		Preservation + Housing ; great combo + green connective	
Small spaces, benches in lots of places		Homelessness	
Skate park, playgrounds, trees!		Access to growing food as a right	
Community gardens & urban farm/outdoor community gardening spaces		B-Pods - prefabricated buildings to lower the per unit cost of constructing affordable housing	
Trees please - a place to congregate. Maybe an orchard, or make it a community garden too		Taller buildings = more open space and more affordable housing	
Playgrounds		Rent control - especially along the Green Line Extension	
Widen the Community Path Extension		Do this and the rest will happen - as a side effect of doing it.	
Mystic Charles Connector!		Community Land Trust!	
Bouncy Houses		Other/All Categories	
Fence in the Nunziato Soccer Field so people don't get hurt by stray balls		City-wide composting	8
Want Trum field to be more multifunctional - to serve a wider range of people, to better connect Ball & Magoun Sq.		Fix the flooding!	8
Park between Orange Line and Mystic River		Pedestrian Streets	3
Non-car transportation		Music venues and interesting ethnic restaurants	3
Public seating - fun chairs in a sunny spot like Seven Hills Park		More Renewable Energy	2
Love Foss Park!		Creative parking solutions	2
Improve/secure fence around community gardens		Daycare affordability scholarships subsidy	2
Schoolyards - Brown, West Somerville		Preserve Union Square (All 3 categories!)	2
Relocate or acquire Elf Land			

Online Survey and SomerVision Page

The CPC conducted a survey online and via print copies, which were available in numerous locations throughout the city between February 18 and March 31, 2022. The survey was available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. (The SomerVision page, advertised via the CPC's website, did not receive any responses during the annual plan review period, but remains available for gathering input throughout the year.)

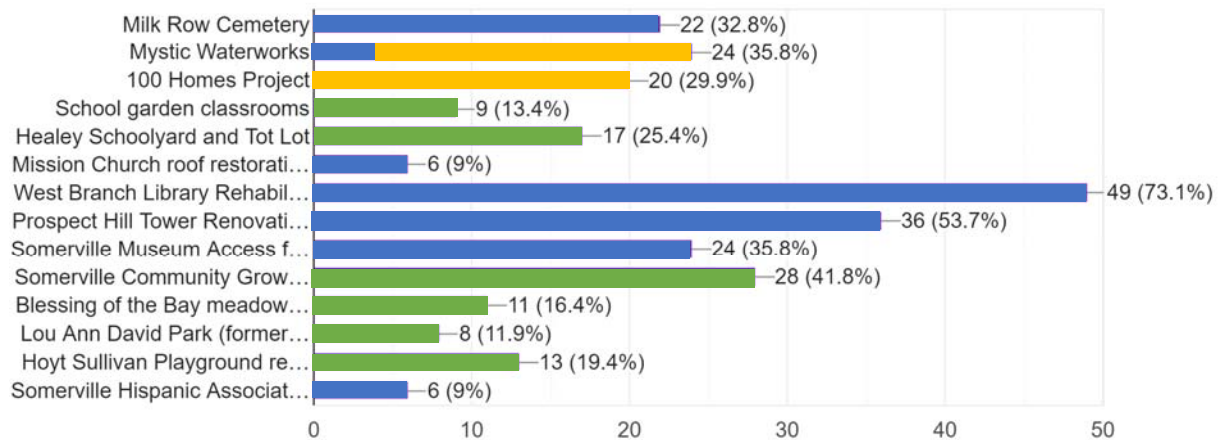
A total of 75 responses were received, all in English. There were respondents from all of Somerville's wards, and a few who live outside of the city. The largest share of respondents came from Wards 2, 6, and 7.



The survey highlighted a list of recent major projects to gauge public awareness of CPA accomplishments to date. Respondents were most familiar with the West Branch Library restoration and Prospect Hill Tower renovation, followed by Somerville Community Growing Center, Mystic Waterworks, Somerville Museum, and Milk Row Cemetery. It is interesting to note that some of the most visible projects have been in the category of historic preservation. Invited to share appreciation for specific projects, the 100 Homes Initiative was cited most frequently, followed by the Somerville Museum Prospect Hill Tower, and West Branch Library. The importance of affordable housing, handicapped accessibility, and access to cultural resources were most frequently cited as reasons for supporting these projects.

We are trying to raise public awareness of how Somerville's CPA funds are being put to work. The following questions will help us understand how to ...lowing CPA projects? (Please select all that apply)

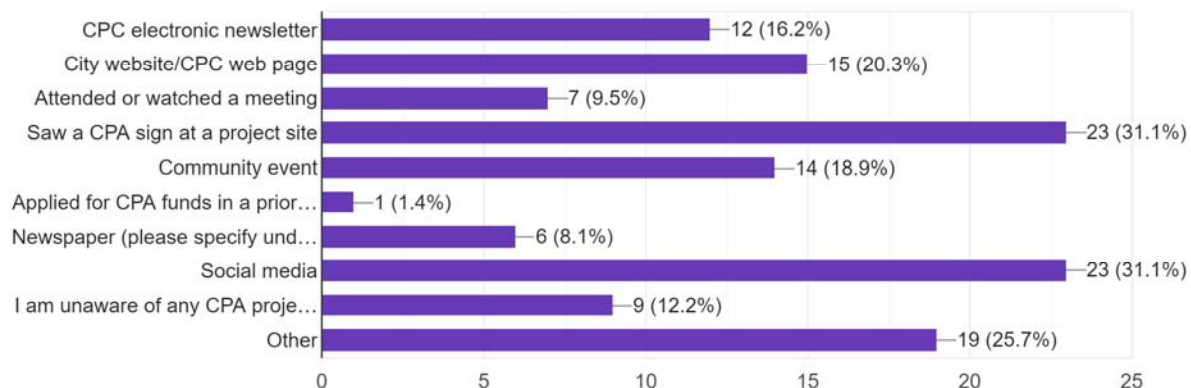
67 responses



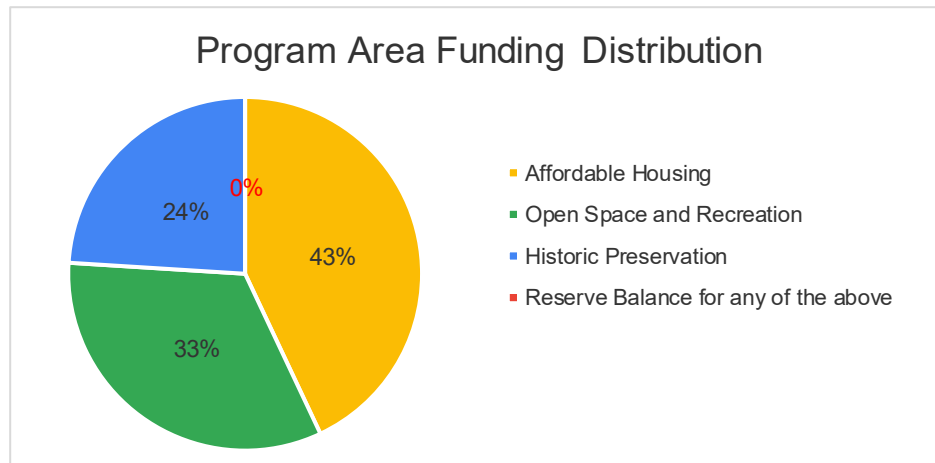
Respondents who were aware of prior CPA projects were most likely to have heard about them by seeing a sign at a project site, via social media, or word of mouth (the reason most frequently given for "other".)

How did you learn about the projects?

74 responses



Respondents were then asked how they would prioritize funding between the program areas by hypothetically dividing \$100 between affordable housing, open space/recreation, historic preservation, and a reserve balance that can be used for any of the above. Averaging all of the responses, respondents dedicated the largest share of funds (43 percent) to affordable housing, followed by open space and recreation (33 percent), giving 24 percent to historic preservation. Few respondents included Reserve Balance in their funding distribution.



Respondents were invited to submit specific comments relating to each of the CPA program areas and the CPA program in general. Some highlights and generalizations:

Open Space/Recreation

- There is a broad desire to increase the quantity of open space, especially in areas of the city that currently have less. Many respondents suggested the conversion of roadway, parking lots, or specific under-utilized properties in their neighborhoods to create more open space.
- Increasing tree cover was frequently mentioned, as well plantings, shade structures, and splash pads as strategies for mitigating heat and flooding.
- Many respondents would like to see improvements to existing parks and open spaces, in particular plazas in the squares, and the Community Path.
- Specific amenities mentioned were community gardens, dog parks, skate park, nature playground, and passive recreation opportunities.

Historic Preservation

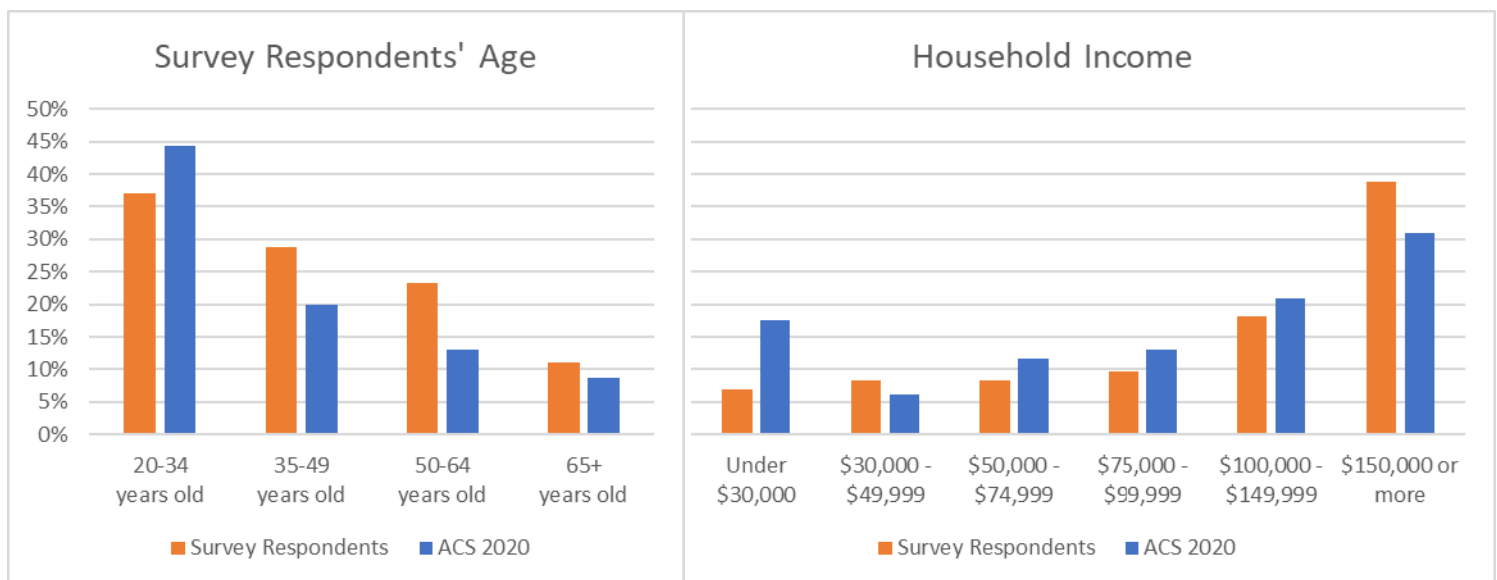
- Respondents highlighted City-owned buildings they would like to see improved – especially the libraries and City Hall, as well as the former fire station in Union Square.
- Several respondents indicated that they would prioritize projects which increase handicapped accessibility and support the safety, health, stability and quality of life of vulnerable residents.

Affordable Housing

- Most comments underscore the need for more affordable housing in general, including housing for families, households with incomes below 30% AMI, and homeownership opportunities.
- Some specific strategies supported by respondents include purchasing more existing homes to convert to affordable units, or establishing a community land trust.
- Some respondents feel that CPA funds can be spent more effectively in other program areas, as affordable housing requires large amounts of funding from other sources.

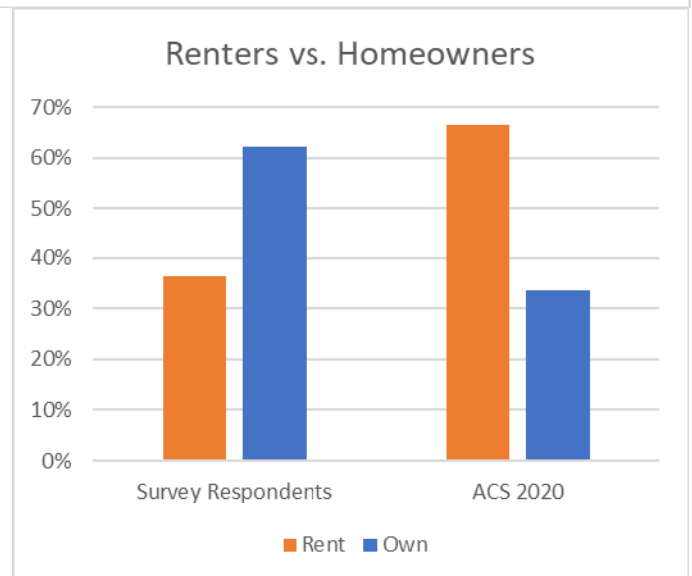
Demographic Composition

The survey included a series of questions about the demographic profile of respondents, in order to gauge how well the survey participation reflected Somerville's population. Survey responses are compared with ACS 5-year estimates for all of Somerville. Survey respondents tended to be older than the population as a whole, and a higher share were homeowners. A larger proportion of survey respondents had household incomes above \$150,000. The racial composition of survey respondents was skewed toward White, non-Hispanic/Latino residents. As noted, none of the respondents chose to take the survey in Spanish or Portuguese, although about 10 percent of residents speak English "less than very well" – including 3.9 percent who speak Spanish and 4.7 percent who speak other Indo-European languages. Finally, a higher than proportional share of respondents reported having children, seniors, and/or people with disabilities in their households.



Other Social Characteristics

	Survey Respondents	ACS 2020
African American/Black	2.5%	5.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.2%	0.2%
Asian	8.6%	9.9%
White	80.2%	76.1%
Hispanic or Latino	7.4%	11.3%
I would rather not say.	3.6%	
Households with children under 17 years old	45%	16%
Households with seniors over age 65	25%	16%
Persons with disabilities or mobility limitations	23% of households	8% of residents
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2016-2020		



Open Ended Question Responses

Is there a specific past project that you are particularly supportive of? Why?

- West Branch Library for computer internet access
- Prospect Hill Tower - needed to happen
- Somerville Museum Access for All - the museum is a great resource for the community and needs to be accessible to the entire community.
- 100 Homes Project - We are desperate for housing, especially affordable housing, in Somerville. Can it be expanded to 1,000 Homes? 10,000 Homes?
- Affordable housing and libraries
- Affordable residential housing and handicapped accessible design are my priorities. Market rate real estate is too high to maintain a community that stays and contributes without supporting moderate income folk and keeping buildings usable for people who need adaptive equipment.
- I believe that 100 Homes is a particularly important project for Somerville to continue to fund to ensure long term affordable housing for our community members.
- The 100 Homes Project - because housing is so unaffordable in Somerville, we need to do everything we can to create more affordable housing to end the displacement crisis.
- 100 Homes Project - the need for affordable housing stands out to me as one of the most urgent
- Any affordable housing project; wish there were more to fund. Clarendon should also receive CPA funds, not listed above.
- 100 Homes
- 100 Homes = More affordable housing
- CPA eviction prevention funds
- Healey schoolyard and tot lot -- it's fantastic so far and will get so much use
- Somerville Museum -- Access for All -- without ADA access City events not able to happen there.
- West Branch Library, Prospect Hill Reno., Somerville Museum Access. They improved things and provided better access for many citizens.
- Library and Museum projects. Crucial community knowledge repositories.
- WB Library
- I knew CPA existed but didn't know what it does.
- Somerville Museum plus Blessings of the Bay
- I am very happy about the West branch library rehabilitation because I really think having libraries as continued cultural institutions in Somerville is critical to supporting the city's populace especially the families, working class individuals and immigrants.
- 100 Homes Project
- Community Gardens/The Growing Center, Affordable Housing, Public art especially around Mystic Lake
- Somerville Museum Access for All campaign.
- The Growing Center, because I volunteer there and it means a lot to me personally
- Historic Somerville, Somerville Museum, Prospect Tower, Milk Row Cemetery, Powder House
- Library - I love it (West Branch); Prospect Hill - Important history; How I learned about projects - Somerville Times, Word of mouth
- Prospect Hill Tower / Park Restoration. Unique historical landmark that should be a point of pride for the community.
- Prospect Hill Tower Renovation/Park Restoration. This is an incredibly important historical site that all Americans should value and be appreciative of.
- Community Path improvements - I'm involved with the Friends of the Community Path.

CPA funds can be used to create, expand, improve, or rehabilitate parks, open spaces, and recreational amenities. Are there any specific open space/recreational projects that you would like to see?

- Unless we bulldoze houses there's no more green space to be had.
- Dog park in West Somerville, more open space generally, better maintenance of existing open space. Tree pruning, better drought tolerant planting. Davis Square plaza in front of JP Lick is tired and bricks are an ankle buster. The plaza at Starbucks is going to be "activated" by the developer, don't think they should receive CPA funds.

- All of the categories are extremely important. I think having a significant reserve balance would allow additional funds to be devoted to any particularly pressing or valuable projects in a given year.
- I would like the city to change some streets to have parking on only one side of the street, and create strips of parks alternating along the streets, as a kind of bump-out, so that the streets have more natural slowing of traffic and more growing space. I think this would improve access to green spaces across the city, even if small ones, and it would help with pedestrian safety, and it would improve the city's vision of working toward Net Zero emissions, and there could be more trees planted in such spaces. I heard Somerville has only 16% canopy cover, compared to Cambridge's 25% canopy cover. We could improve this tremendously, street by street, if we did this small thing.
- Nature playgrounds
- Increasing the availability of overhead structures in parks seems prudent. Where there are overhead structures, they were well-used during the pandemic. I don't have any particular parks in mind.
- I would like to see more community garden opportunities in low income areas- particularly East Somerville.
- Hire staff to keep needles out of parks
- More open space and recreational areas
- In general I would love to see parking lots replaced with public parks
- More things like the community path that can be used both for recreation and equitable safe transportation (like biking). Would also love to see more trees, more green space. Ward 2 has a lot of concrete and asphalt. Also love the community gardens, and I wish there was more awareness about them.
- More open space opportunities and mitigation of urban heat island effect in Union sq area
- Splash pads at all parks
- Turn 6 Oak St to a public park /// improve concord Ave community space
- Turn abandoned lots into parks. For example, 6 Oak St.
- The city should seize abandoned properties and turn into playgrounds, e.g. 10 Oak Street (Ward 2)
- Prioritizing another large green space in Somerville
- Dillboy pool hours have been extremely limited, would really like longer pool hours and adult swim in early AM hours.
- Pocket parks in empty lots.
- Maintenance of public parks, more smaller scale amenities- tennis courts, pickle ball courts, soccer fields
- More dog parks!
- More green space near the water for enjoyment, sitting, picnic and water activities.
- The fenced off gravel lot on Somerville Ave across from Vinal Bakery
- WSNS outdoor space/playground
- Trum Field turned into multi-purpose space!!
- Bike lanes with bollocks for protection
- Skate park
- Areas around new green line bike/walking path
- Yes, I'd like the Cross St location across from Chuckie Harris park to be turned into a community/recreational center. I'd also like the mystic connector bike path to be completed, and for additional rec/park space to be created in East and Union.
- More parks in East Somerville
- Brown School playground; - Milk Row Cemetery landscaping upgrade, including removal of dead tree stumps, flag pole lighting, new landscaping on periphery to serve as buffer from MB parking lot & create needed passive open space in very urban area devoid of it.
- More community gardens, especially around Winter Hill and East Somerville. a skate park under 93 near Mystic and Wheatland
- I don't know if it counts as a "park" per se, but with the imminent opening of the Community Path, I'm really looking forward to continued expansion of the city's bike path network, as well as improved sidewalks to make the city (even) better to get around on foot. The Community Path will provide a route along most of the long axis of the city, but it would be great to see criss-crossing routes that link from here into our neighborhoods & squares.
- More tree planting and maintenance across all neighborhoods
- Powder House Park/Tufts Park is a bit lackluster.
- More green space with fields and/or grass for community sports teams and other recreation that requires a lot of space — Lincoln Park is a perfect example of this

- Open spaces near the Union Square station
- More open green space and playgrounds in East Somerville, where we are impacted by negative environmental effects of living so close to 93 and McGrath
- Improve lighting at all playgrounds for evening use
- Not a specific project, but in general more trees on the streets and less construction up to the sidewalk- too many waivers that end up in pavement instead of plantings. To spread the greenery around.
- Improved waterfront along the Mystic
- "Passive" parks, more trees
- Open spaces
- I think that Leathers Park could use a bit more love. Just as a way to make it more usable to the community. Right now it just feels like benches on grass... maybe a gazebo or community fitness zone, or even picnic tables?
- Movies or concerts in parks not in Davis Square or in the Plaza. Honk in a park not in the public parking lot on Day street
- 5 Palmer Ave, Cobble Hill, Sullivan Sq.
- Creating new open space
- Rain gardens along the Community Path to help mitigate runoff and flooding in heavily trafficked sections
- The Blessing of The Bay
- Clean up more of Mystic River/Alewife Brook
- More parks, open space for rollerblading, skateboarding, tennis courts, remove parking spaces for wider sidewalks and outdoor dining. Prioritizing pedestrians over motor vehicles.
- Climbing wall/rock mountain Somerville; Citywide bike locking mounts (solid, sturdy, fixed posts); Community tree planting projects
- Larger dog parks; green spaces with denser vegetation/planned for flood control
- Union Square Plaza
- Extension of the Community Path.
- Connecting Community Path to Mystic River paths; Replacing ugly stone buffers on Community Path extension with plantings; Mystic River Bike/Ped bridge.

CPA funds can be used to preserve historic buildings and artifacts which are valuable to the public, as well as to bring buildings up to modern safety codes and make them handicapped accessible. Are there any specific historic preservation projects that you would like to see?

- Somerville Museum
- City Hall? Old High School? Or just help people out when they can't afford to restore on their own
- City-owned church on College Ave, recreation building on Walnut
- I think all city buildings should be easily accessible to those of us who are disabled.
- More about the native land Somerville occupies
- More projects for the old houses of worship. Those buildings help the community. (Like Grace Baptist this year).
- Preservation of older buildings that are in use by all members of the community (human service centers, community centers, etc.). Especially buildings in which vulnerable community members receive support.
- Renovation of Central Library
- I am curious if the funds could be used to do something with the abandoned white church across the street from the West Branch of the public library (Google Maps says the street address is 45 College Ave). I once heard that the building was owned by the City, and if so, it could be great to see it spruced up and turned to some community use. However, I don't know enough about the building to even know if the city owns it!
- Improving handicap access in general sounds like a GREAT idea.
- Add large print signs to all City buildings, everywhere!
- East Somerville Library upgrades
- Libraries upgraded
- Old post office in Union Square as a music venue
- YMCA
- Make older buildings ADA compliant
- Powderhouse pickle factory
- City Hall building is not handicap friendly and need renovating

- Former Haitian Baptist Church on Morrison/College Avenue, conversion to West Branch Library Annex as originally proposed, including community mtg. space; City Hall exterior renovation as in deplorable and shameful condition, including creation of seating area for mtgs., lunch, & break time, off 1st floor facing Highland Ave; Milk Row Cemetery landscaping on periphery, to serve as site buffer and create nicer passive open space.
- Prospect Hill Tower, the Armory Building, the Somerville Museum, and a repurposing of the western wing of the former Somerville High School into City Hall offices or some other community purpose.
- Accessibility is great. I do think historical preservation is sometimes overdone here and as a priority matters far less than affordable housing and public outdoor space.
- City Hall really needs a paint job. I think that should come under historic preservation. It certainly impacts city pride.
- Historic preservation is not as important as supporting the safety, health, stability and quality of life of residents with affordable housing and access to green space
- There is an abandoned and condemned city building on Cross St East across from Chuck Harris Playground that could be torn down to provide more green space. There is also an empty lot at the corner of Broadway and McGrath that is essentially just gravel right now that could be utilized for park and open space
- Historic structure preservation; you can't re-create things that are gone or destroyed
- Not specific, but I approve of preserving historic buildings!
- Any historic building
- I have none that I am aware of at this time, but accessibility is very important to me.
- Louie's Ice Cream- Lower Broadway,
- Somerville Museum, Somerville Public Library Main Branch, City Hall, 90 Union Square
- Historic Somerville, Somerville Museum, Prospect Tower, Milk Row Cemetery, Powder House
- I would like to see more buildings in general with handicap accessibility; The Somerville Central Library - would like for the building to be preserved and brought up to modern safety code (and maybe some remodeling?)
- Cupola Restoration at Historic Fire Station in Union Square Plaza
- Restoration and beautification of the WWI monument in Union Square.
- Brown School, Old Post Office

CPA funds for affordable housing are transferred to the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which has a separate process for evaluating community needs and awarding funds. Please share any comments you have regarding affordable housing needs.

- Also for artists!
- Lots and lots of money available for affordable housing already
- There are a number of excellent organizations working on affordable housing. I feel that CPA should be used to make the city more usable and pleasant for everyone.
- Affordable housing is a huge problem and I feel like we have missed the boat on addressing it. Should have been done years ago. I don't think CPA funds can make a dent in this problem so I'd rather see the money spend in the other categories where it will have more impact. Also, I think it is a bit of a stretch to include affordable housing as part of CPA.
- Somerville needs a LOT more affordable housing at the 30% AMI level, if not lower. We need public housing and halfway housing, too. Our unhoused neighbors are being shipped out of our city, where they get Covid in the shelters and then are sent even further away, like quarantine hotels in Taunton. It's horrific.
- More!
- There has been a lot of affordable apartments at Assembly. I would prefer to see more in the fully residential part of the city.
- Affordable housing should be the main priority of Somerville residents. The City becomes more expensive by the year and our community members are being pushed out. It's important to invest in affordable housing now, before it is too late.
- Housing is the #1 issue in our community (I knock doors for local candidates regularly and this is the top item I hear about) and should be the #1 priority for CPA funds.
- More affordable housing is needed near areas that are transportation or retail hubs.
- I believe affordable housing is paramount over these other concerns
- Give priority to households with children
- It's our most pressing issue and should be prioritized above parks or preservation.
- I think affordable housing that is *accessible to transportation* is a massive issue that needs to be addressed in order to support and maintain the vibrant community we have here in Somerville. Nobody I know can afford to buy a place here

(considering that they are moving into the phase of their lives with children), and few can afford to rent without roommates (again, not optimal if you have kids). That wasn't the case in 2010 when I first came to the area... or at least it wasn't as egregious.

- More ownership opportunities would be great for all income levels, particularly with smaller unit sizes.
- Step it up!
- From my work, I know there is a huge shortage of affordable housing. This basic need not being met has many effects on individuals and a community at large. Putting more resources into this area will have widespread benefits.
- Have no idea how to get access to affordable housing resources, does Somerville even have any affordable housing units?
- This is crucial to maintaining our community's diversity!
- We need more. the City needs to help secure land to be specifically developed as affordable housing.
- Still difficult to access housing
- Critically important use of these funds
- More housing, period.
- Convince older wealthy homeowners to bequeath housing
- Eviction diversion program funding needed w/ less means testing; Continued support for affordable housing, community land trust; Community development corporation needed
- More of it. More of it for families.
- Do not allow large projects to "buy" their way out of affordable housing requirements
- Priority given to projects like the 100 Homes that preserve existing older housing & bldg. stock which has architectural character, local history, promotes sustainability goals, avoids landfills & located near to services & amenities needed by targeted demographics.
- We just need more! especially with the Green Line opening up
- I'm mostly persuaded by the "YIMBY" line of thought that housing costs are primarily driven by supply & demand market forces, and the way to lower the price is to either suppress demand, or increase supply. Since "suppressing demand" sounds like "make Somerville a less-awesome place to live", that implies "increase supply" is the better solution. We therefore need to densify our housing supply: more apartment buildings in districts where they make sense, more support for "in-law suites" in other neighborhoods, and making better use of areas like Inner Belt and Boynton Yards for more housing (and commercial use, too). In the near term, affordable housing initiatives are appreciated & worth doing, but I feel like they're nipping at the edges of the problem and won't meaningfully impact the problem as effectively as a radical expansion of housing supply will, so maybe at least some of this fund should go toward building out a lot more housing at scale.
- Very supportive
- This is a top priority. This area is extremely expensive and people cannot live here.
- East End Grille and Patsys on lower Broadway have been abandoned and empty for years with zoning approval to build more housing but the property owners have not moved on any plans to build
- Just need so much more however it can be done.
- With rents about to sky rocket with the Green Line extension please prioritize this....
- I also support this, but don't feel qualified to evaluate the best use of these funds
- We need more - but I think there's a problem in the city with developers only wanting to create more expensive housing
- The rent is too damn high.
- Create Stabilize Rent
- Build affordable housing and upgrade apartments to be available for affordable housing. Have incentives for landlords to want to rent to people who have SHA vouchers or an incentive to landlords to have a few units in their buildings or homes that are much more affordable
- Abandoned properties around lower Broadway like East End Grill and Patsy's Bakery need to be re-envisioned with possible mixed use, mixed affordability.
- Affordable housing is an important priority.
- More affordable housing is needed
- I like the idea of the town buying market condos throughout town - as available
- I am not familiar with SAHT at all but I hope that the trust considers building new affordable homes since many of the buildings here are old and were not built to last past 70-80 years. This is also so that buildings are up to code & can be energy efficient.

- Please renew efforts to invoke Section-8-like mindset, and lobby forward also. Rent should be driven down somehow - additional funds are a bandaid only. Develop working groups of different types, perhaps?
- We should ensure that we are building large amounts of affordable and market rate housing to bring down the price of all housing. Community land trust agreements are a good use of funds.
- Buy old houses instead of expensive & long lead time new construction

Please share any additional comments or concerns related to Somerville's CPA program.

- Thanks for all you're doing!
- Good choices this year. Thank you for your work.
- More parks and more trees on the sidewalks please
- More community embedded playgrounds like Cambridge has scattered around the city.
- Keep it up.
- It would be helpful to have a green corridor not simply disconnected spots by neighborhood.
- Great program providing funds for critical QOL areas & projects!
- I'm so glad that the community voted to support this with their dollars, and it seems to be working.
- Glad it exists!
- Thank you for this program. I'm happy to know that some positive things are being done on the local level to try to preserve the community in the face of massive, powerful developers and development.
- Please stick to the formula that was cited on in 2012
- New Public Safety building and Green Line train stop should access funds for streetscaping and passive park considering all the cut-through traffic in neighborhood. Also better pedestrian access around Mystic Ave/ Lower Broadway to Assembly
- I think it is fantastic that Somerville has a CPA program! Thank you for all you do.
- Thanks for reaching out! Physical infrastructure is critical. Query: ought there to be a parallel group for communal infrastructure and what form might this take?
- More money should go to "private" projects rather than City projects that the City, in many cases, should be doing anyway.

Appendix 2 – Project Status Update