

11 Things to Consider when Developing a Project for Community Preservation Act Funding

Community Preservation Act (CPA) projects are complex- from the number of people involved to the number of permits and approvals required to the number of other funding sources that need to be managed. This guide is meant to help you think through the different questions you'll need to answer as you develop your CPA application.

For more information, visit www.somervillema.gov/cpa and www.communitypreservation.org. You can also contact Somerville's CPA Manager, Kristen Stelljes at: kstelljes@gmail.com or 617-625-6600 x2107.

Allowable Uses of CPA Funding				
	Affordable Housing	Historic Preservation	Open Space	Outdoor Recreation
Acquire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Create	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Preserve	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support	Yes	No	No	No
Rehabilitate and/or Restore	Yes, if acquired or created with CPA funds	Yes	Yes, if acquired or created with CPA funds	Yes

Chart adapted from "Recent Developments in Municipal Law," Massachusetts Department of Revenue, October 2012

1. Is your project eligible for Community Preservation Act funding?

The first step in applying for CPA funds is to determine that your project is in fact eligible to receive CPA funding. The enabling state legislation that created the CPA is very specific about the areas CPA can support (affordable housing, historic resources, open space and outdoor recreation) and the kinds of projects CPA can fund in each of these categories. The table below provides you with a quick overview.

To go more in depth, you can read more on the Community Preservation Coalition's [website](#) and read the Community Preservation Act [language](#).

2. Does your project address the priorities in the Community Preservation Plan and other City planning documents like SomerVision and the Open Space and Recreation Plan?

The Community Preservation Committee's (CPC) priorities for CPA funding are laid out in the Community Preservation Plan, which is updated annually. You can find the FY17 plan [here](#). The CPC ensures its priorities are in alignment with the priorities for Somerville established by its residents through community process. Key documents the Community Preservation Plan draws on include:

- [SomerVision](#)
- [Somerville Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)
- [Somerville Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- [Dimensions of Displacement](#) (Metropolitan Area Planning Council)

All applicants should be familiar with SomerVision and ensure the project is in alignment with our SomerVision goals as well as the neighborhood plans, which are available at www.somervillebydesign.com. Your project should also address the needs and priorities in the other City planning documents, as they relate to your project.



3. Who owns the property where the project will take place?

Because Somerville is so dense, land is at a premium and people often have ideas for improving spaces they do not own. You can still apply for CPA funding for your project if you don't own the space, but you do need the owner's approval to go forward. If the proposed project will be on privately owned land, the land owner needs to provide a written letter of consent for the project to go forward.

If the project is proposed for public land, the relevant City or state department will need to be a co-applicant on the project. This is to ensure the project supports City priorities and needs and to assist the applicant in complying with state procurement laws, which apply to all CPA projects on public land. The relevant department should sign on as a co-applicant at the eligibility determination stage. To help facilitate this process, for projects on City land, you will need to submit your eligibility determination form to the CPA Manager in August for help connecting with the right City department and staff. See the CPA website section on Applying for CPA funding for more information.

4. How will you phase the project?

Because CPA funding is limited and projects often evolve over time, it is common for applicants to phase their requests for CPA funding. One example is to ask for design funds in one year and then request additional funding for construction once the design has been finalized. Another is to develop a phased capital improvements plan and ask for funding for a specific phase and then request additional funds once the previous phase has been completed. You will need to determine if phasing is appropriate for your project, and if it is what is the most appropriating phasing.

If you have a project that will take place in phases, it is helpful to share your plans with the CPC so they can see your full vision for the project and how CPA funds will contribute, including if you are planning to ask for CPA funds for the project over multiple years. However, please note that the CPC cannot guarantee funding for future years and applicants will need to complete the competitive application process for each year new funds are requested. The CPC prioritizes projects that leverage funding from multiple sources. Don't forget that you can use CPA funds as a match for other grants!

5. How will the project be managed, both programmatically and financially?

Your organization should have a clear plan for how you will manage your project. You need to make sure that your staff and/or volunteers have the necessary expertise and time available to hire contractors, oversee work, comply with reporting requirements, etc. If you have a co-applicant, each organization should have a clear understanding of which organization is responsible for which aspect of the project.

For construction projects, it is common to hire a project manager (usually the firm that did the design) to handle the construction administration. Hiring someone for this role may be particularly important if you don't have a staff member who has experience managing construction projects.

If you are applying as an organization that does not have 501c3 status, you will need to have a co-applicant that does or a fiscal sponsor who can accept the funds on your behalf.

6. Do state procurement laws apply to your project?

All CPA projects on public land must follow state procurement law, even if they are implemented by a community organization. The Community Preservation Coalition has a helpful article about how state procurement laws apply to CPA projects, which you can find [here](#). State procurement laws may affect your budget and project timeline as well as the hiring process for your contractors. Talk with the CPA Manager about how these laws will apply to your project.

If you are implementing a project on private property, you should follow procurement best practice. A minimum of two quotes for the work are requested in the application to validate how the budget was determined.

7. What are the long term plans for the project site and how will this project contribute?

CPA funds cannot be used to support programming or maintenance, so you'll need to think through how you will sustain the improvements from your project over the long term. If you are planning to use volunteers, how will you continue to recruit new volunteers to continue the work? What is your long-term fundraising plan?

8. What approvals do you need to implement your project?

All CPA funded projects must apply for the necessary permits and approvals, which will vary depending on the scope of your project. You can learn more about what permits may be required for your project on the City's [CitizenServe portal](#) or by talking with someone in the [Building Division](#) of the Inspectional Services Department.

9. Have you considered all of the necessary accessibility issues for the project?

Depending on the size and scope of your site, your CPA project may trigger requirements to make your site fully accessible if it isn't already. CPA funds can be used to make a site accessible. You can learn more about Massachusetts' architectural access regulations [here](#).

10. Are all the relevant stakeholders on board with the project?

CPA projects are meant to support lasting changes in important spaces around Somerville and to make them more accessible and enjoyable to the community. This means that your project likely has many stakeholders- from the neighbors to the users to project partners. All of these groups should be aware of your project and supportive of the direction you plan to take. The CPC requires that all design projects it funds have community meetings to seek input on the design. Stakeholders who are partners on the project should sign on as co-applicants. You should include letters of support from other stakeholders as part of your application.

11. Are there other sources of funding for the project?

The CPC does not require a match to receive funding; however, the CPC does prioritize projects that leverage funding from multiple sources. And CPA funds can be used as matching funds for other grants! Some potential options for finding additional sources of funding include:

- Sign up for the City of Boston's [Funding Update](#), a weekly email with announcements from local, state, federal, and private funding sources.
- If you have a historic preservation project, the Massachusetts Historic Preservation Commission awards grants annually through their [Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund](#) and you may be eligible for a [Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund](#) grant.
- If your project could be considered 'placemaking,' you could be eligible for a MassDevelopment [Commonwealth Places](#) grant.
- If you have an open space/recreation land project, a group of Tufts University Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning students developed [this list](#) of potential sources of funding (see Chapter 10, starting on page 104).
- For a fee, you can subscribe to the Foundation Center's [Foundation Directory Online](#) which will allow you to search for foundations that fund the type of project you are looking to implement.

