

**To:** The Community Preservation Committee

**From:** City of Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development

**Subject:** Request for funds to support land acquisition

**Date:** October 14, 2016

**Background**

SomerVision, our comprehensive plan for our City, established a goal of creating 125 new acres of open space by 2030. In a city as dense and developed as Somerville, this is definitely a stretch goal. The Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development identified Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds as an opportunity to help the City make progress towards this goal faster than would be possible using existing sources of funding from the City and State.

In FY16, the City of Somerville applied for Community Preservation Act funding to create a land acquisition fund under the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) recommended \$750,000 (\$340,945 from the open space reserve and \$409,055 from the undesignated fund balance) for this project to the Board of Aldermen. The Board's Finance Committee requested the terms of the fund be presented along with the CPC's recommendation for the Finance Committee's consideration.

As a result, City staff did further research to determine the most appropriate structure for the fund. After much consideration, it is the recommendation of the City that the CPC maintain funds earmarked for land acquisition within the CPA fund. The City will make funding requests to the CPC when parcels are identified for acquisition. The approval process for these requests will be the same as for other requests for CPA funding- the CPC will make a recommendation to fund the acquisition of identified parcels and this recommendation will go to the Board of Aldermen for consideration.

**Current Request**

In order for the City to respond quickly to acquisition opportunities and gather the necessary information to prepare an application for CPA funding, the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, Parks and Open Space Division requests \$40,000 to create a fund that would be used to pay for appraisals, environmental studies, surveys and other necessary studies to determine if a parcel would be appropriate for acquisition for open space. These funds could be taken from the \$750,000 currently earmarked for land acquisition within the CPA fund.

Study: appraisals, environmental studies, surveys, etc.	\$40,000
<b>Total requested in CPA funds</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

The success of this fund will be determined using the following measures of success:

- # of parcels studied
- % of parcels studied that go forward with the acquisition process
- Number of acres of new open space acquired