



COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
Town of Needham, Massachusetts

REPORT TO TOWN MEETING – MAY 2025

INTRODUCTION

In November 2004, the voters of Needham adopted the legislation known as the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA), a funding mechanism for Cities and Towns to award grants to applicants to support community housing, preservation of historic resources, acquisition and preservation of open space, and the restoration and investment in outdoor recreational resources. The Needham Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is responsible for implementing Needham's Community Preservation Plan pursuant to the requirements of the CPA.

The committee membership is defined by the requirements of the CPA as adopted by Needham. The nine-member committee consists of one member each from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Historical Commission, Housing Authority, and two members each appointed by the Town Moderator and Select Board.

In 2022, the Committee initiated a comprehensive review of the CPA plan and voted to approve an updated plan in March 2023. Over the last twenty years, the Committee has forwarded numerous recreation, community housing, open space, and historic resource projects to Town Meeting for approval, the largest of which was the preservation and reconstruction of Town Hall. **Since adoption of the CPA in Needham, Town Meeting has approved a total of \$39,681,282 in community preservation funds for eligible projects.** A list of all approved Community Preservation projects is available at the end of this report.

A summary of the Community Preservation Committee's FY2025 activities follows:

The CPC received nine initial eligibility project applications in November 2024. After reviewing the applications and consulting with Town Counsel on the issue of eligibility, the Committee determined that eight projects were eligible for funding under the CPA and one project was ineligible. Two projects were withdrawn by the applicants. CPC project liaisons worked with the remaining six applicants in responding to committee questions and requests for information. In February and March 2025, the CPC Chair and Vice Chair met with the Select Board and the Finance Committee to consult on the six proposals. A hybrid public hearing was held on March 12, 2025, with in-person and remote access. It was also broadcast on the Needham Channel.

Copies of CPC meeting agendas, minutes, and the Needham Community Preservation Plan are available on the Town's website.

LOCAL TAX SURCHARGE RECEIPTS

Needham residents are currently assessed a 2% surcharge on annual property taxes, excluding the first \$100,000 of valuation, as a result of a town-wide vote to adopt the CPA. **For FY2026 it is estimated that Needham will collect \$3,637,000 in CPA property tax surcharges.** The CPA fund also generates revenue from penalties and interest assessed on overdue CPA charges and interest income on the CPA funds in the bank.

STATE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION TRUST FUND DISTRIBUTION

Needham receives an annual matching distribution from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund. **The most recent Trust Fund distribution was received in November 2024 in the amount of \$585,212.** This was a 18.06% match to local collection. Since adopting the CPA, Needham has received a total of \$13,397,226 in matching distributions.

Over the years, the Trust Fund match has fluctuated from a high of 100% (after Needham's initial adoption of the CPA) to a low of 17.2% (in FY2018). As additional communities adopt the CPA and become eligible for the state match, the match percentage for participating communities is thereby reduced. However, legislation passed in July 2019 provided for an increase in fees that go toward the Community Preservation Trust Fund, which should help stabilize the state match moving forward.

FUND BALANCES

State law mandates that annually, at least 10% of surcharges plus state distribution funds be spent on actual projects or be allocated for future projects in three specific CPA reserves: Community Housing, Open Space, and Historic Resources. The remainder of the funds, minus funds appropriated for administrative expenses, is appropriated to an Annual Reserve, which can only be used for projects in these three areas and/or qualifying recreational projects.

Needham's CPC has elected to appropriate 11% of the estimated receipts for each special reserve to ensure compliance with the mandate. However, beginning in FY2022 and continuing each year thereafter, the CPC has recommended that 22% of the estimated receipts be appropriated to the Community Housing Reserve to hold aside funds for future housing needs. This year, the CPC is recommending that FY2026 receipts be appropriated directly to an eligible Community Housing project rather than to the Community Housing Reserve, as outlined in the Article 22 information provided below.

As a result of previous appropriations, the FY2025 reserve balances available for appropriation at the May 2025 Annual Town Meeting are as follows:

Community Housing:	\$ 872,545
Open Space:	\$ 2,838,167
Historic Resources:	\$ 106,669
2025 General Reserve:	\$ 87,215
<u>Free Cash:</u>	<u>\$ 3,455,380</u>
TOTAL:	\$ 7,359,976

The unspent 2025 General Reserve, CPA Free Cash, remaining administrative funds, and any unspent funds from completed projects must be returned to the CPA fund and be recertified as CPA Free Cash before those funds will be available for future appropriation.

The Community Preservation Committee is recommending that the 2025 Annual Town Meeting appropriate money from the CPA FY2025 Reserves and FY2026 Receipts to six eligible projects, and to the FY2026 CPA Budget and Reserves, as follows:

Description	CPC Recommended Funding	Community Housing Reserve	Historic Resources Reserve	Open Space Reserve	FY2025 General Reserve	CPA Free Cash	FY2026 CPA Receipts
<i>FY2025 Reserve Fund Balances:</i>		\$872,545	\$106,669	\$2,838,167	\$87,215	\$3,455,380	\$3,982,000
Article 20 (NHCM)	\$46,712		(\$46,712)				
Article 21 (Trails)	\$104,000					(\$104,000)	
Article 22 (CRC)	\$2,840,223					(\$741,180)	(\$2,099,043)
Article 23 (NHA)	\$3,200,000	(\$872,545)			(\$17,255)	(\$2,310,200)	
Article 24 (Pickleball)	\$300,000					(\$300,000)	
Article 25 (Eliot)	\$69,960				(\$69,960)		
Article 26 (Reserve)				\$438,000			(\$438,000)
FY2026 Admin Budget							(\$82,000)
FY2026 Debt Service							(\$1,362,957)
<i>Remaining Balances</i>		\$0	\$59,957	\$3,276,167	\$0	\$0	\$0

If Town Meeting votes to approve the CPC's recommendations as outlined above, and after the CPA related debt service under the FY2026 General Fund Operating Budget is subtracted, the balances in the respective reserve funds will be:

Community Housing:	\$ 0
Historic Resources:	\$ 59,957
Open Space:	\$ 3,276,167
2026 General Reserve:	\$ 0

Note that this does not include the eventual CPA Free Cash that should be finalized in late calendar year 2025.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

CPC Administrative Funds may be used to pay for the expenses related to the work of the committee, including office supplies, mailings, legal notices, appraisals, consultant fees, property deposits, as well as the Administrative Coordinator salary and the staff liaison stipend. The Needham CPC is a member of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Coalition and pays annual dues to the association, currently \$7,900. The Coalition provides regular training and consultation services to the CPC and monitors and informs member communities on state legislative activity related to the Community Preservation Act.

RECOMMENDED PROJECT FUNDING

Article 20: Needham History Center & Museum: Collections Storage Upgrades

The CPC voted to recommend for Town Meeting consideration, funding of the Needham History Center and Museum's request for **\$46,712** for on-going collections storage upgrades under the Historic Preservation designation. The funding source is the CPA Historic Reserve.

This project will aid in the preservation of the Needham History Center & Museum's collections by increasing storage capacity and making the material more accessible to staff and the public. The recommended funding will be used to pay for heavy-duty modular shelving, racks, cases and dehumidification equipment, as well as shipping, assembly and disposal of materials. This project will also move NHC&M closer to its goal of full compliance with the Department of the Interior's Standards for Managing and Preserving Museum Property, which requires a museum to provide adequate storage space, facilitate safe access to objects through the efficient use of storage systems, protect collections from damage, and provide a protected and stable environment.

Article 21: Needham Conservation Department: Trail Signage Improvements

The CPC voted to recommend for Town Meeting consideration, funding of the Needham Conservation Department's request for **\$104,000** for trail signage and improvements under the Recreation designation. The funding source is CPA Free Cash.

This project aims to enhance use of Needham's 25+ miles of trails in 11 locations across town by improving visibility, safety and user experience through uniformity in the appearance of trail signage and maps and incorporating new technologies like QR codes. The recommended funding will be used for the purchase and installation of new aluminum signage, pressure treated signposts, kiosks, and trail improvements such as bridges, bog walks and trail steps. This project will also leverage numerous volunteer hours to assist in its implementation.

Article 22: Charles River Center: East Militia Heights Development

The CPC voted to recommend for Town Meeting consideration, funding of the of the Charles River Center's request in the amount of **\$2,840,223** for construction costs associated with the East Militia Heights Development under the category of Community Housing. The funding source is a combination of CPA Free Cash (\$741,180) and CPA FY2026 receipts (\$2,099,043).

This project seeks to create 86 new units of affordable housing for households earning at or below 30% to 80% of Area Median Income by redeveloping 3.5 acres of land at 59 East Militia Heights Drive into an integrated campus-style housing and education complex with a community center, outdoor recreation space, and walking paths. 43 units will be designated for individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities requiring less than 30 hours of staff support per week. In addition to housing, CRC will provide these residents with comprehensive wrap-around services to support their goal of living independently within the community. 5 of the units will be set aside for CRC staff (earning at or below 80% AMI) who will provide after-hours support to residents, on an emergency basis. The remaining 38 units will be available to the general public as traditional affordable housing units, with preference given to Needham residents at initial lease-up, to the extent allowable by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC).

As a condition of funding, the Town will require CRC to (i) enter into the Town's Grant Agreement; and (ii) execute and record an affordable housing restriction that secures, in perpetuity, the affordability of the project consistent with the representations contained in the CPA application and made during the CPC's review and hearing process.

Article 23: Needham Housing Authority: Preservation of Seabeds Way

The CPC voted to recommend for Town Meeting consideration, funding of the Needham Housing Authority's request in the amount of **\$3,200,000** for construction costs associated with the Preservation of Seabeds Way under the category of Community Housing. The funding source is a combination of the CPA Housing Reserve (\$872,545), FY2025 General Reserve (\$17,255) and Free Cash (\$2,310,200).

This project seeks to preserve 46 affordable public housing units at the Seabeds Way property for senior and disabled households with incomes at or below 80% AMI. CPA funds will be used for critical upgrades including building envelope, replacement of windows, roofs, siding, and outmoded building systems that affect tenant safety. This project enables the repositioning of housing at Seabeds Way from the Section 9 federal public housing program to the Section 8 program, which allows the NHA to transfer freed-up public housing rental subsidies to the Linden Street redevelopment project.

As a condition of funding, the Town will require NHA to (i) enter into the Town's Grant Agreement; and (ii) execute and record an affordable housing restriction that secures, in perpetuity, the

affordability of the project consistent with the representations contained in the CPA application and made during the CPC's review and hearing process.

Article 24: Needham Park & Recreation Dept: Action Park & Pickleball Courts (Design)

The CPC voted to recommend for Town Meeting consideration, funding of the Needham Park and Recreation Department's request for **\$300,000** for the design of an action sports park, pump track, and pickleball courts under the Recreation designation. The funding source is CPA Free Cash.

Article 25: Needham Park & Recreation Department, Department of Public Works: Eliot School Grounds Renovation (Design)

The CPC voted to recommend for Town Meeting consideration, funding of in the amount of \$69,960 for an overall assessment of the Eliot School's outdoor recreational spaces and to design solutions for the field, playground, basketball court and walkways. The funding source is the CPA FY2025 General Reserve.

Article 26: Appropriate FY2026 CPA Budget and Reserves

If Town Meeting votes to approve the CPC's recommended funding as outlined in Articles 20-25 above, Article 26 will appropriate the remaining estimated FY2026 CPA receipts as follows:

A. Administrative and Operating Expenses of the Community Preservation Committee:	\$ 82,000
Reserves:	
B. Community Preservation Fund Annual Reserve:	\$ 0
C. Community Housing Reserve:	\$ 0 ¹
D. Historic Resources Reserve:	\$ 0 ²
E. Open Space Reserve:	\$ 438,000

¹ If Town Meeting approves the CPC's recommendation to fund Article 22: Charles River Center East Militia Heights, no appropriation to the Community Housing Reserve will be necessary as the amount appropriated for Article 22 will be greater than the 22% Community Housing reserve calculation, thus satisfying that requirement.

² The debt service payable during FY2026 for previously appropriated historic resources projects (Town Hall and Emery Grover) is greater than the 11% reserve calculation. Therefore, no appropriation to the Historic Resources Reserve is necessary.

CONCLUSION

Needham is fortunate to have the use of CPA funds to support numerous successful community housing, recreation, historic resource, and open space projects within our community. The Community Preservation Committee extends its appreciation to the citizens of Needham and specifically, Needham's Town Meeting members, for their support. The CPC looks forward to FY2026, new project requests, and continued interest from the community.

Dave Herer, Chair
Maureen Callahan, Co-Chair
Reginald Foster

Adam Block
Marshall Davis
Paul Dawson

Keith LaFace
James Rosenbaum

**Needham Community Preservation Projects
 2005-2024**

Appropriations Since 2005:

Open Space	5,406,400
Community Housing	8,873,530
Historic Preservation	11,291,933
Recreation	14,109,419
Total:	39,681,282

Year	Category	Project	Appropriation
2005	Open Space	Plan for Open Space and Trail Linkages	20,000
2006	Housing	NHA High Rock Estates (Predevelopment)	324,500
2006	Historic	Heritage Project (map historic structures, add to inventory, research)	25,000
2006	Recreation	Development of Comprehensive Walking Trails Plan	47,700
2006	Recreation	Ridge Hill Footbridge Restoration	58,000
2006	Recreation	Replacement of Water Bubblers at 6 Parks	22,000
2007	Historic	Town Hall Renovation Feasibility Study	50,000
2007	Open Space	Replacement of Perimeter Fencing at Green's Field and Mill's Field	12,000
2007	Housing	NHA High Rock Estates (Construction) to Sell Homes at 80% AMI	175,000
2008	Open Space	Preservation of Trails (per Trails Master Plan)	5,500
2008	Open Space	Transfer of Funds to Conservation Fund for Future Opportunities	25,000
2008	Historic	Town Hall Preservation and Renovation (Design)	1,000,000
2009	Housing	Affordable Housing Consulting Assistance	25,000
2009	Housing	Charles River Center Replacement of Windows & Doors for 6 Units	25,000
2009	Housing	NHA High Rock Estates - Funding to Preserve Affordability of Final Four Units	420,000
2009	Open Space	Transfer of Funds to Conservation Fund	50,000
2009	Historic	Town Hall Preservation and Renovation (Construction)	6,829,233
2009	Open Space	Trail Systems Easement Research	25,000
2009	Open Space	Purchase of Land - Carol/Brewster Lot 2	475,000
2009	Open Space	Purchase of Land - Carol/Brewster Lot 1	445,000
2010	Open Space	Purchase of Land - 174 Charles River Street (Walker-Gordon Field)	767,500
2010	Open Space	Restore Open Space at Carol & Brewster Road Properties	40,000
2010	Historic	Preservation of Historic Artifacts from Town Hall Prior to Renovation	57,500
2010	Housing	Charles River Center Energy Improvements (Heating System/3 Group Homes)	45,000
2011	Housing	Charles River Center Energy Improvements (Doors, Windows/3 Group Homes)	80,000
2011	Housing	NHA Redevelopment Master Plan & Feasibility Study	50,000
2011	Historic	Preservation of Historic Artifacts Discovered During Town Hall Renovation	7,500
2012	Historic	Preservation of Town Clerk's Vital Records	30,000
2012	Historic	Continuation of Heritage Project - Map/Add Historic Properties to Inventory	25,000
2012	Historic	Needham Historical Society Historic Artifact Catalogue and Storage (Archivist)	25,000
2012	Housing	Charles River Center Purchase Property on South Street for Group Home	220,000
2012	Open Space	Bay Colony Rail Trail Feasibility Study	35,000
2012	Open Space	Greene's Field Park Improvements (Design & Renovate)	445,000

**Needham Community Preservation Projects
 2005-2024**

2013	Open Space	Reservoir Trail (Design)	85,000
2013	Housing	Planning & Community Development Community Housing Specialist	70,000
2013	Open Space	Bay Colony Rail Trail Environmental Insurance	45,000
2013	Recreation	Eastman Conservation & Newman Athletic Fields (Design)	248,000
2013	Recreation	Newman Preschool Playground Surfacing	60,000
2013	Recreation	Mills Field Improvements (Design)	40,000
2013	Open Space	5-Year Update of Open Space and Recreation Plan	25,000
2014	Recreation	Memorial Park Drainage & Grounds Improvements (Design)	35,000
2014	Open Space	Community Farm Soil Improvements (Former Nike Site)	8,200
2014	Historic	Town Clerk Vital Records (2nd District Project)	52,500
2014	Recreation	Footbridge Restoration (Construction)	213,219
2014	Open Space	Town Common Historic Redesign	20,000
2015	Recreation	Rosemary Pool (Design Schematics and Site Improvements)	450,000
2015	Recreation	Eastman Conservation & Newman Athletic Fields (Construction)	800,000
2015	Recreation	Mills Field Improvements (Construction)	510,000
2015	Recreation	Student Conservation Corps Projects (Trail Improvements/Ridge Hill Bridge)	10,000
2015	Recreation	Bay Colony Rail Trail (Construction)	100,000
2015	Recreation	Eastman Conservation & Newman Athletic Fields (Construction)	1,527,000
2015	Recreation	Boat Launch (Design)	30,000
2016	Recreation	Rosemary Pool (Phase 2 Design-Permitting, Preparing for Construction Bids)	550,000
2016	Recreation	Memorial Park Drainage Improvements	310,000
2016	Recreation	Student Conservation Corps Projects (Ridge Hill & Farley Pond Trails)	25,000
2016	Recreation	Rosemary Lake Sediment Removal (Design)	118,000
2016	Housing	Planning & Community Development Community Housing Specialist	60,000
2017	Recreation	Rosemary Pool, Spray Park, Bathhouse, Trailhead (Construction)	4,000,000
2017	Recreation	Reservoir Trail (Construction)	860,000
2017	Recreation	Cricket Field Renovations (Design)	35,000
2017	Recreation	Elementary School Walking Trail & Outdoor Classroom	210,000
2018	Open Space	Rosemary Lake Sediment Removal	2,400,000
2018	Recreation	Memorial Park Field House (Construction)	500,000
2018	Historic	Historic Artifact Catalogue and Storage	25,000
2018	Recreation	Rosemary Camp Property (Demolition of 3 seasonal buildings)	50,000
2019	Open Space	Town Common Renovation (Design)	117,000
2019	Recreation	Playground Improvements (Green's Field, Cricket Field)	350,000
2019	Recreation	Rosemary Lake and Trail Projects (Picnic Shelter, Dock, Trail Improvements)	200,000
2019	Housing	Consulting Services - Modernization & Redevelopment of Affordable Housing	150,000
2019	Recreation	Cricket Field Renovations	480,000
2019	Recreation	Fisher Street Trailhead (Design)	15,000
2020	Historic	First Baptist Church Preservation & Restoration	90,200
2020	Housing	Affordable Housing Trust Emergency Rental Assistance Program (Pandemic)	20,000
2020	Recreation	Claxton Field Lights & Skin Diamond Renovation (Design)	101,500

**Needham Community Preservation Projects
 2005-2024**

2020	Historic	First Parish Church Steeple Preservation (Paul Revere Bell)	50,000
2020	Open Space	Needham Community Farm Growing Bed Expansion	6,200
2021	Recreation	Trail Identification Design	6,000
2021	Historic	Preservation/Digitization of Town Marriage Records	25,000
2021	Historic	Town Common Historic Renovation	1,000,000
2021	Open Space	Town Reservoir Sediment Removal (Design)	175,000
2021	Recreation	McLeod Field Renovation (Design)	45,000
2021	Recreation	Fisher Street Trailhead (Construction)	15,000
2021	Recreation	DeFazio Park Synthetic Track Resurfacing	166,000
2022	Open Space	Needham Community Farm (150 new beds/regrading/tool shed/water)	200,000
2022	Housing	NHA High Rock Estates Existing Conditions Property Survey	81,978
2022	Housing	NHA Linden Chambers Redevelopment (Predevelopment Funds)	1,386,000
2022	Recreation	High School Tennis Courts (Design)	50,000
2022	Historic	Emery Grover Renovation (Construction)	2,000,000
2023	Housing	Seabeds-Cook Preservation (Predevelopment Funds)	241,052
2023	Recreation	DeFazio Playground (Tot Lot Design)	35,000
2024	Recreation	DeFazio Complex Perimeter Fencing	417,000
2024	Housing	NHA Linden Street Redevelopment (Construction)	5,500,000
2024	Recreation	High School Tennis Courts (Construction)	1,400,000
		Total:	41,281,282