

JM GOLDSON

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

Community Preservation Plan

FY2025-2029

PREPARED BY:

JM Goldson LLC

Approved 27 January 2025

PREPARED FOR:

Town of Bridgewater
Community Preservation Committee
66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
Guiding Principles	7
Goals	7
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW	9
Introduction	9
Background	10
Planning Process	18
General CPA Eligibility	19
Guiding Principles	20
CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY HOUSING	23
Eligible Activities	23
Goals and Priorities	24
Five-Year Budget	27
Community Housing Profile	27
CHAPTER 3: HISTORIC PRESERVATION	31
Eligible Activities	31
Goals and Priorities	32
Five-Year Budget	37
Historic Preservation Profile	38
CHAPTER 4: OPEN SPACE	43
Eligible Activities	43
Goals and Priorities	44
Five-Year Budget	50
Open Space Profile	51

CHAPTER 5: RECREATION	55
Eligible Activities	55
Goals and Priorities	55
Five-Year Budget	60
Recreation Profile	61
 APPENDICES	 64
A. CPA Eligibility Matrix	65
B. Acronyms	66
C. Key Definitions	67
D. Community Engagement Results and Analysis	71

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- Joshua McGraw, Staff Assistant to the Community Preservation Committee
- Laurie Guerrini, Finance Director
- Michelle Burgess, Assessing Office Administrator
- Katelyn Putt, Conservation Agent

All Bridgewater community members who gave their time and insights to this project by participating in the focus groups and interviews in September 2024, the community survey in September-October 2024, the public open house in November 2024, and the public hearing in December 2024.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Gina Guasconi, <i>Chair</i>	Parks & Recreation Commission Representative
Carlton Hunt, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Citizen-At-Large
Patrick Driscoll	Planning Board Representative
Harry Bailey, Jr.	Conservation Commission Representative
Maureen Minasian	Open Space Committee Representative
William Smith	Historic District Commission Representative
Geoffrey Merriman	Historical Commission Representative
Stacy Driscoll	Housing Authority Representative
(Vacancy)	Affordable Housing Trust

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF JM GOLDSON LLC

Jennifer M. Goldson, AICP, Founder and Managing Director
Austin Smith, Community Planner I for Land Use and Long-Range Planning
Unless noted, all photographs provided by JM Goldson LLC.

Executive Summary

The Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee (CPC) developed this Community Preservation Plan (CPP) with assistance from JM Goldson LLC by collecting updated data, conducting community engagement, and updating the guiding principles and funding category goals articulated in the 2020 CPP. This updated CPP will guide the allocation of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for the next five years – fiscal years (FY) 2025-2029. The principles and goals outlined in this Plan are not binding; instead, they are meant to guide decisions on the use of CPA funds. Per CPA statute, the CPC consulted appropriate municipal boards and commissions through its CPC member liaisons and gathered additional community input through a public hearing, online community survey, and focus groups.

BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT

Bridgewater voters adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), allowed through Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, in 2005. CPA enables communities to collect money to fund community preservation projects and initiatives. As of November 2024, 200 cities and towns in Massachusetts have adopted the CPA (57 percent of the state’s municipalities). Bridgewater generates CPA funds through a local property tax surcharge of 2 percent and a variable distribution from the state Community Preservation Trust Fund. From Bridgewater’s adoption of the CPA through the end of FY2024, the Town has collected over \$16.5 million, including \$10.8 million in local collections, \$3.7 million in state trust fund contributions, and the remainder coming from earnings on investments, gifts, grants, or other sources. The state Community Preservation Trust Fund distribution for Bridgewater has ranged between 18 to 100 percent of local receipts. The two percent local property tax surcharge has exemptions for low-income residents, low- and moderate-income seniors, and the first \$100,000 of taxable value of residential real estate.

At least 10 percent of CPA funds must be spent or reserved in three categories: Community Housing, Historic Preservation, and Open Space and Recreation. The CPC intends to budget a maximum of five percent of total annual CPA revenue annually for administrative funds to ensure proper record keeping, grant management, and clerical support, as the CPA statute allows. Unused administrative funds revert to undesignated funds at the end of each fiscal year. The remaining 65 percent of funds can be used for any allowable project within any of the CPA categories.

The Community Preservation Plan process guides how Bridgewater’s CPA funds are prioritized across eligible project and initiative types, ensuring alignment with the community’s needs. To appropriate CPA funds, the Town Council must act on a recommendation from the Community

Preservation Committee (CPC) — a nine-member committee with eight representatives appointed by various boards and committees and one at-large member. The Town may also issue general obligation bonds or notes in anticipation of CPA revenues. In other words, the Town can borrow funds to pay for a CPA-eligible project and appropriate CPA funds to repay the debt.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Town proactively contracted JM Goldson LLC to prepare the Community Preservation Plan, demonstrating a commitment to a thoughtful process and strong community engagement. With JM Goldson's expertise in Community Preservation Act planning and familiarity with the Town from previous CPA projects, this choice ensured the plan would reflect both best practices and local priorities. The consultant worked with the CPC, studied existing plans, and identified Bridgewater's community preservation needs and resources.

During the process, the CPC received feedback through a variety of community engagement efforts, including:

- **Four focus groups** in September 2024
- **An online community survey** open between September and October 2024
- **A virtual forum** in November 2024
- **A public hearing** in December 2024

These community engagement efforts aimed to understand the needs and priorities in each of the three Community Preservation Act (CPA) categories. In total, the CPC's community engagement efforts made 196 touch points with the Bridgewater community, including 177 responses to the community survey, 16 non-CPC participants in four focus groups, and three non-CPC attendees at the virtual forum. For detailed documentation of these community engagement exercises, please see the appendices.

The major themes heard during the engagement process included:

- Prioritize holistic planning and meeting multiple goals within CPA projects.
- Promote proactive and strategic management of Bridgewater's existing Open Space and Recreation resources, as well as in pursuing potential new projects.
- Support more affordable housing options, especially for seniors and in areas close to services.
- Focus on the downtown area, particularly in Historic Preservation and Community Housing projects, where historic buildings can see reuse and revitalization as affordable housing.
- Pursue opportunities to strengthen partnerships and leverage CPA funding with grants to support CPA projects and collaboratively meet local needs.
- Enhance the accessibility of Open Space and Recreation resources by creating new connections and access points, as well as increasing physical accessibility for all users.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The CPC reviewed existing guiding principles from the 2020 CPP and updated them after carefully considering community feedback. These updated principles will guide the CPC's evaluation of project requests for CPA funds in all four CPA funding categories and establish funding preferences.

A detailed description of how the CPC envisions these principles can be found in Chapter 1.

1. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING & ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY GOALS

2. LEVERAGING FUNDING

3. COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN CPA CATEGORIES

4. LONG-LASTING COMMUNITY BENEFITS

GOALS

The goals outlined below are designed to guide potential CPA funding applicants and inform CPC funding recommendations. Like the guiding principles, these goals were updated from the 2020 CPP based on public engagement. A detailed explanation of these goals and the CPC's vision for implementation can be found in Chapter 1 and in the chapters dedicated to each funding category.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

1. Preserve and rehabilitate historic properties to improve public accessibility, use, and awareness of the Town's local historic resources, such as the Town House and Bridgewater Public Library, as well as privately-held buildings for public benefit, such as the Scotland Church, Tory House, 96 Main Street, the Mitchell and Virginia Blocks downtown, Old Bridgewater Nursing Home, and United Methodist Church.
2. Preserve the Town's historic artifacts and documents through the creation of permanent facilities, such as at the Town House or Public Library, to house these original resources for greater public access, and pursue digitization where eligible.
3. Preserve historic resources from demolition or deterioration through increased local, state, and federal historic designations and other mechanisms to encourage and support preservation, rehabilitation, and reuse.
4. Rehabilitate eligible commercial facades and other historic resources, such as historic buildings in Central Square, to boost downtown economic revitalization for public benefit.
5. Preserve and rehabilitate outdoor public historic places and public monuments, including places of Indigenous significance, such as the Titicut Conservation Area, as well as cemeteries.

6. Acquire significant historic artifacts, documents, and properties, including those locally significant to Bridgewater's history, to ensure their preservation, public accessibility, and use for community benefit.

OPEN SPACE AND PASSIVE RECREATION

1. Preserve Bridgewater's farms and agricultural land to protect the town's agricultural heritage, support local food production, and maintain its scenic open spaces and community charm.
2. Create new, as well as preserve and rehabilitate existing natural open space and passive recreation facilities — specifically enhancing safety and public access and incorporating native plantings and green infrastructure.
3. Preserve and acquire strategic private open space properties along water resources and river corridors to improve water quality and to protect priority wildlife habitats and critical natural landscapes.
4. Create, preserve, and acquire neighborhood-level open spaces, like the Town River Landing, for pocket parks, community gardens, and other outdoor gathering spaces in each precinct, and support neighborhood "Friends of" organizations to encourage local stewardship at CPA-created or acquired parks.

ACTIVE RECREATION

1. Rehabilitate or restore existing town-owned parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities, such as Jenny Leonard Park or Marathon Park.
2. Rehabilitate existing or create new facilities to improve safety and public access to active outdoor recreational facilities, such as Legion Field.
3. Create a comprehensive and connected bike and walking path network to enhance recreational opportunities.
4. Create, rehabilitate, and restore access to water bodies for canoe and kayak launch sites at key locations, including the Town River, Iron Works Park, and Stiles and Hart.
5. Create inclusive outdoor recreational facilities designed to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities, such as pickleball courts, tennis courts, and ADA-accessible amenities.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

1. Create and preserve affordable housing options for residents above 55 years of age to allow them to stay in the community as they age — prioritizing locations that provide easy access to services and other resources, as well as accessibility in building design.
2. Create affordable and community housing through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, specifically historic properties.
3. Support a variety of affordable and community housing options - specifically for young individuals, young families, and veterans - as well as entry-level housing and smaller housing units.
4. Preserve and ensure long-term affordability for existing affordable and community housing units, support Housing Authority residents, and preserve affordable units through eligible improvements and sustainability measures.

Chapter 1: Overview

INTRODUCTION

The Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee (CPC) developed this update to the existing 2020 Community Preservation Plan (CPP) to guide the allocation of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for the next five years – fiscal years (FY) 2025-2029. The principles and goals outlined in this Plan are not binding — rather, they are meant to guide decisions on the use of CPA funds. The CPC will consult the priorities and goals in this Plan to inform its recommendations to the Town Council on spending CPA funds. The CPC encourages future applicants seeking CPA funds to use this plan to guide their CPA requests and encourages Town Council members to use this Plan to guide their decisions on the allocation of funds. The CPC also maintains a guiding Policies and Procedures document accessible on the CPC's website¹.

This Plan is created in accordance with the Community Preservation Act (CPA), Massachusetts General Laws c. 44B §.5(b)(1). The law states:

The community preservation committee shall study the needs, possibilities, and resources of the city or town regarding community preservation, including the consideration of regional projects for community preservation.

¹ <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/DocumentCenter/View/5627/BRWT-CPC-Process-and-Policies-CPC-Final-03-27-2024-PDF>

BACKGROUND

BRIDGEWATER COMMUNITY HISTORY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Bridgewater is a mid-sized suburban town with historic charm, located along the Taunton River between Boston, MA, and Providence, RI. Spanning 28.2 square miles, it is one of the largest towns by area in Plymouth County. Bridgewater is home to Bridgewater State University, the oldest and largest state university in Massachusetts, the Old Colony Correctional Center complex, and an MBTA commuter rail station that connects residents to Greater Boston. The town's history dates to its chartering in 1656, when it thrived as an agricultural community. By the 19th century, its economy shifted toward industry, spurred by the Lazell-Perkins Iron Works, which utilized hydropower from the Taunton and Town Rivers. In the mid-20th century, Bridgewater evolved into a suburban community with the opening of Routes 24 and 495, offering convenient access to major employment centers. Today, it combines a rich heritage with modern amenities, serving as a vital hub for education, transit, and regional history.

WHAT IS CPA?

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a state law, MGL c.44B, enacted in 2000 and signed by Governor Paul Cellucci. It allows communities to raise and set aside funds for community preservation projects. These projects can include open space conservation and outdoor recreation; historic preservation; and community housing. As of November 2024, 200 communities (57 percent of the state's municipalities) have adopted the CPA.

CPA is funded through a local property tax surcharge of up to three percent and a variable state contribution from the Community Preservation Trust Fund. At least ten percent of total revenue must be spent or set aside annually in the following categories: community housing, historic preservation, and open space and recreation. According to Section 5(b)(1) of the CPA legislation, "the community preservation committee shall study the needs, possibilities and resources of the city or town regarding community preservation," as well as "consult with existing municipal boards, including the conservation commission, the historical commission, the planning board, the board of park commissioners and the housing authority," and "hold one or more public informational hearings on the needs, possibilities and resources...." This CPP represents the Bridgewater CPC's decision to exceed these statutory requirements with regard to community engagement around and study of those needs, possibilities, and resources.

WHO DECIDES HOW THE FUNDS ARE SPENT?

In April 2005, Bridgewater voters approved the CPA, and a nine-member Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was formed according to the statute. As required by MGL c.44B, the CPC must include a member from each of the following five entities:

- Conservation Commission
- Historical Commission
- Housing Authority
- Planning Board
- Recreation Commission

In addition to this minimum, Bridgewater includes a member from the Affordable Housing Trust², Open Space Committee, Historic District Commission, and one citizen-at-large appointed by the Town Manager and ratified by the Town Council.

The role of the CPC is to:

- 1) Study the municipality's community preservation needs, possibilities, and resources.
- 2) Make recommendations to the Town Council for funding projects with CPA funds.

In addition to regular open public meetings, the CPC must hold one or more public hearing(s) per year as part of its charge to study the community's needs, possibilities, and resources. Many CPC's may also hold an annual public hearing to solicit feedback on funding requests before making recommendations. Typically, this is an opportunity for project applicants to discuss their applications further with the CPC.

The funding recommendations from the CPC are sent to the Town Council, where the recommended appropriations can be affirmed, rejected, or lowered. Funding recommendations may not be increased. The Town Council is bound to act only upon an affirmative recommendation of the CPC and cannot consider requests to allocate CPA funding that do not receive a CPC recommendation.

APPLICATION & FUNDING PROCESS

The Bridgewater CPC accepts applications for CPA funding on a rolling basis. The CPC considers each funding application based on the merits of the project as well as the available CPA balance in open public meetings. The CPC developed application guidelines, including evaluation criteria to aid in the CPC's deliberation of funding requests, which is provided in the appendices. Through majority vote, the CPC determines which projects to recommend to the Town Council for funding. Projects

² The CPC currently has a vacancy in this position, as the Affordable Housing Trust is not fully operational.

not recommended by the CPC are not eligible for consideration by the Town Council per statute (MGL c.44B).

Applications are available on the CPC's website: <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/1353/Community-Preservation-Committee/>.

For a complete overview of the CPC's operations, please review the Policies and Procedures document posted on the CPC's website:

<https://www.bridgewaterma.org/DocumentCenter/View/5627/BRWT-CPC-Process-and-Policies-CPC-Final-03-27-2024-PDF>.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

Bridgewater generates CPA funds through a two-percent local property tax surcharge and a variable distribution from the state Community Preservation Trust Fund (Trust Fund).

The Town of Bridgewater adopted the CPA surcharge with exemptions for:

- (1) Low-income households
- (2) Low- and moderate-income senior households
- (3) The first \$100,000 of residential property value

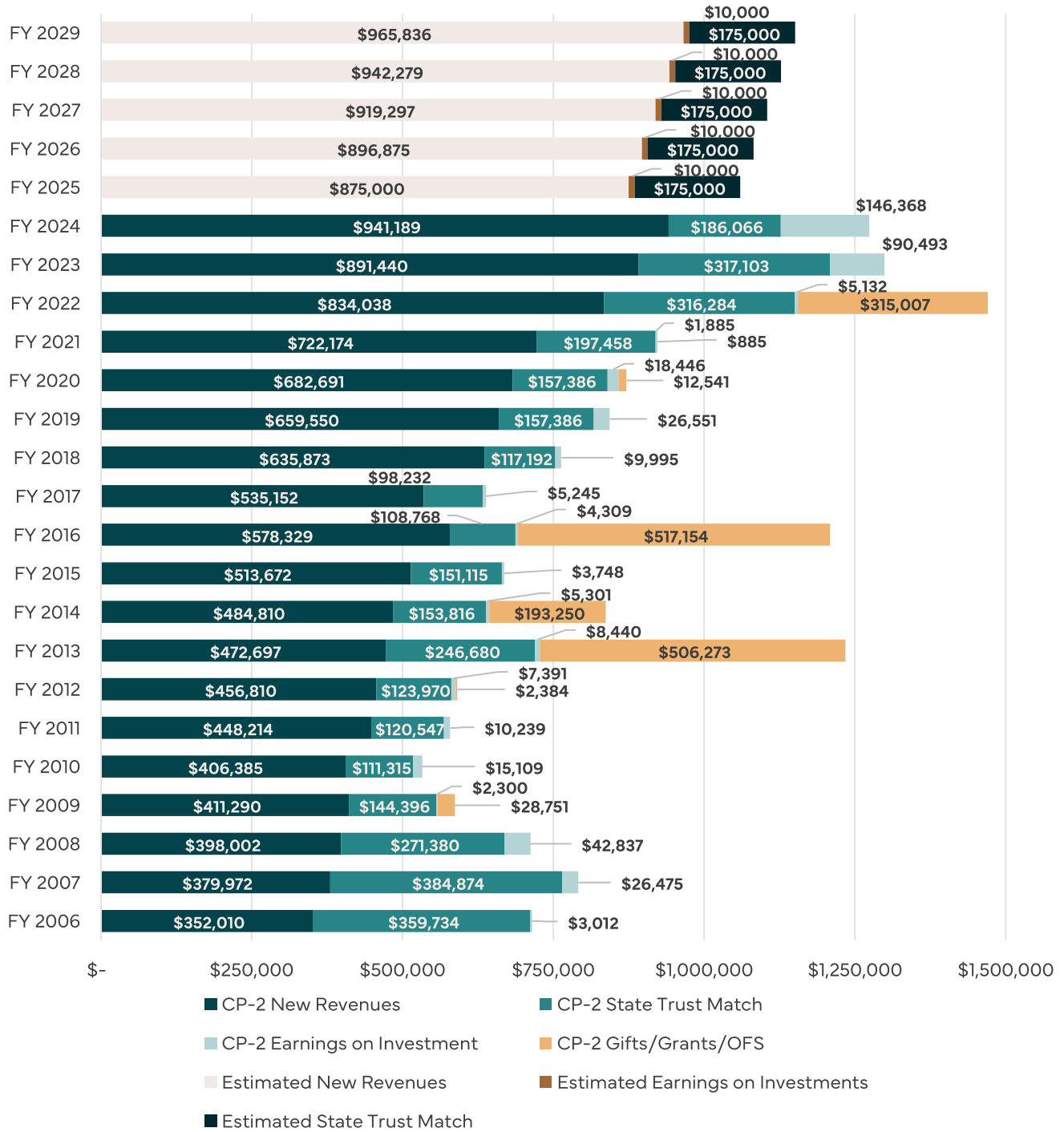
Since local CPA adoption, Bridgewater has collected over \$14.5 million in local collections and state matches. The average annual household contribution to CPA in FY2024 was \$102.37³. The state Community Preservation Trust Fund distribution for Bridgewater has ranged between 18 to 100 percent of local receipts.⁴ In FY2024, the local property tax surcharge generated just over \$941,000, and the state Trust Fund distribution was just over \$186,000. According to estimates from the Town's Finance Department⁵, Bridgewater is anticipated to generate \$5.5 million for CPA projects between FY2025 and FY2029. It should be noted that the Town's Finance Department maintains a conservative estimate of future revenues, both in terms of local property tax surcharges and the variable distribution from the state trust fund.

³ Calculated by dividing the total amount of local assessments in FY2024 (\$941,189.28) by the number of households in Bridgewater (9,194 as of the 2022 ACS).

⁴ In addition to local surcharge collections and state Trust Fund distributions, Bridgewater has received almost \$1.58 million in gifts and grants as of 2024. This includes land grants and grants from the state.

⁵ As of October 2024.

Bridgewater CPA Revenue FY2006 – FY2029 (actual and estimated)⁶



⁶ Revenue data 2006-2019 sourced from the 2020 CPP. Revenue data 2020-2024, as well as projections FY2025-2029 courtesy of the Bridgewater Finance Department. Item CP-2 Gifts/Grants/OFS can include gifts

AVAILABLE FUNDING

The Bridgewater CPA Fund had a total fund balance of \$3,922,592.26 as of the 30th of September 2024. This includes appropriated (approved and set aside) funds for projects, reserves for each funding category, undesignated reserves, and encumbered administrative funding.

Estimated CPA Funds Available for Appropriation FY25⁷

Revenue Budget	
FY24 Fund Balance	\$3,922,592.26
FY25 Anticipated Collections (Local + State Trust Fund)	\$975,000.00 ⁸
Expense Budget	
Keith Homestead Debt Payments (Principal)	\$47,000.00
Keith Homestead Debt Payments (Interest)	\$1,271.25
Academy Building Debt Payments (Principal)	\$240,000.00
Academy Building Debt Payments (Interest)	\$85,800.00
Administrative ⁹	\$83,975.00 ¹⁰
Appropriated Reserves ¹¹	\$1,517,503.50

or grants, as well as other funding sources, such as returned funds from incomplete projects or unspent appropriations from completed projects. Such returned funds do not count as “new revenue,” but are counted by the Town’s Finance Department in the fiscal year’s revenues category.

⁷ Bridgewater Finance Department.

⁸ As of 9/30/2024 financial reporting. It should be noted that this is a conservative estimate.

⁹ The combined total of dues and other budgeted administrative expenses budgeted for FY2025, as of 9/30/2024 financial reporting.

¹⁰ Including \$35,225 of expenses carried over from FY2024.

¹¹ These are funds that have already been appropriated (approved and set aside) for projects. This includes Historic Preservation projects rebinding records and replacing the Town House roof and restoring Parthenon friezes from the McElwain family for display in the new Town Hall; Open Space projects at Stiles & Hart; and a Community Housing project replacing windows at a Bridgewater Housing Authority property. Until the funds are spent, they are left in the reserve funds — but they are not available to be spent on future projects. That is why these funds are reflected in both Table 1 and Table 2 under “Appropriated Reserves.”

Estimated Available for New Project Appropriations	\$2,922,042.51
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With anticipated FY25 collections and projected expenses, the total of funds available for new project appropriations at the end of FY25 will be \$2,922,042.51. This balance is allocated across four reserve accounts, encumbered administrative expenses, and undesignated funds, as seen in the table below.

Reserve Fund Balances (as of 9/30/2024 reporting)¹²

Open Space	\$222,817.48
Historic Preservation	\$580,395.52
Community Housing	\$246,300.14
Appropriated Reserves	\$1,517,503.50
Reserved for Encumbrances	\$357,178.75
Undesignated Funds (<i>can be spent in any category</i>)	\$1,515,350.62
Total	\$3,922,592.26
Current available for New Project Appropriations (<i>excludes Appropriated and Encumbered Funds</i>) ¹³	\$2,047,910.01

BONDING

CPA communities may issue general obligation bonds against future CPA revenues by a 2/3rds vote of the local legislative body (Town Council in Bridgewater). The Town can only bond against the local CPA surcharge projection (not including the projected state CP Trust Fund distributions).

Bridgewater's CPA bonding capacity has been determined by the Town Manager, working with the Town Assessor and Accountant. Bridgewater has bonded against CPA funds in past years and has a balance remaining for the Keith Homestead and Academy Building projects. Bridgewater's CPA fund balances must account for these existing debt payments for the Keith Homestead and Academy Building. The debt for the Keith Homestead matures in 2026, and that for the Academy Building matures in 2036.

¹² Bridgewater Finance Department.

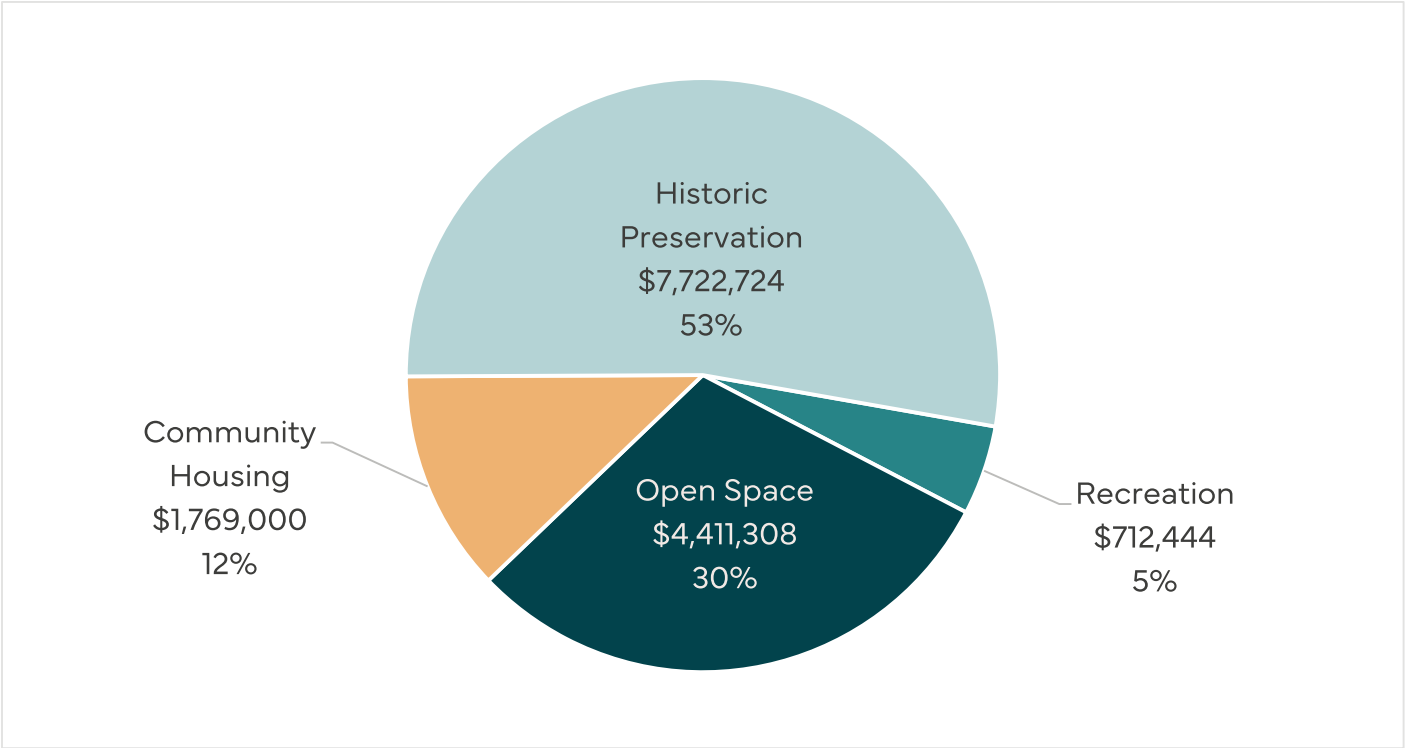
¹³ As of 9/30/2024 reporting, Bridgewater Finance Department.

CPA-FUNDED PROJECTS

Projects Since Adoption

The Town of Bridgewater adopted the CPA in 2006 and has appropriated funding for 52 projects since then. The majority (53 percent) of CPA funds (including bonded amounts for the Keith Homestead and the Academy Building) have been appropriated for Historic Preservation projects (29 projects)¹⁴. Just under a third (30 percent) of funding has been appropriated for Open Space projects (13 projects)¹⁵. Smaller amounts have been dedicated to Community Housing projects (12 percent between six projects)¹⁶ and Active Recreation projects (five percent between seven projects)¹⁷.

Bridgewater CPA Allocations 2006-2024 by CPA Category¹⁸



¹⁴ The largest by far being a 2015 project to partially preserve and restore the Academy Building, with \$370,000 in dedicated CPA funding and another \$4,780,000 in bonded funding.

¹⁵ The largest being a 2022 project at Stiles and Hart that funded multiple improvements for \$1,300,000, and the second largest being the 2011 purchase of the Keith Homestead for a combined \$1,297,000 in dedicated CPA funding and a CPA bond.

¹⁶ The largest being a 2018 project that funded the redevelopment of the McElwain School for affordable housing, with \$1,345,000 in CPA funding.

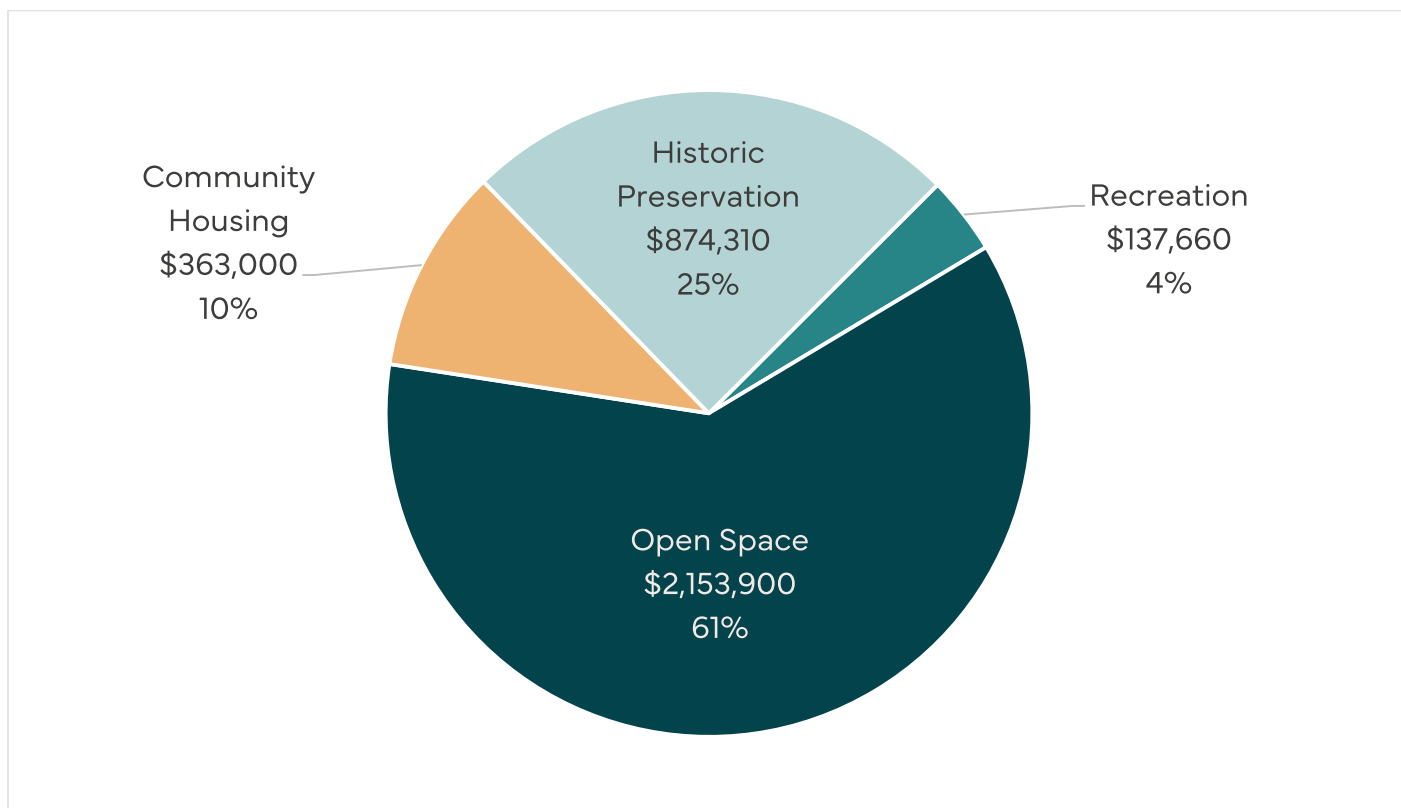
¹⁷ The largest being a 2017 project to upgrade the lights at Legion Field.

¹⁸ Bridgewater Finance Department. Calculated by calendar year of project approval date.

Projects in the Past Five Years

The CPC funded 14 projects between 2019 and 2024. Most CPA funds (61 percent) were appropriated for Open Space projects (four projects).¹⁹ About 25 percent were appropriated for eight Historic Preservation projects²⁰ and ten percent were for one Community Housing project²¹. About four percent were for Active Recreation projects.²²

Bridgewater CPA Allocations 2019-2024 by CPA Category²³



¹⁹ The largest of which, by far, being the 2022 allocation to the Broad Street Stiles/Hart Parkland Improvement Project, at \$1.3 million.

²⁰ Including, in order of funding allocation, the Old Bridgewater Historical Society Buildings project, the Memorial Building construction project, the Central Square Congregational Church Steeple project (the application for which was eventually withdrawn), the Library Historic Archival Preservation project, the Town House Roof project, the Parthenon Frieze project, and a second additional allocation to the Memorial Building Construction project.

²¹ The Bridgewater Housing Authority Window project.

²² Including the Legion Field Fencing project and the Pickle Ball project.

²³ Bridgewater Finance Department. Calculated by calendar year of project approval date.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Bridgewater contracted with JM Goldson LLC to assist with the preparation of a Community Preservation Plan in the Summer of 2024. The consultant worked with the CPC members and studied existing plans, including the *2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan*, *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, *2018 Housing Production Plan*, *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, and the Town's last *Community Preservation Plan (2020)*, to identify Bridgewater's community preservation needs and resources.

Soliciting community input is essential to the planning process. The CPC sponsored focus groups, held an online open house, and distributed an online survey. These community engagement efforts helped refine the goals and priorities outlined in this plan, which were updated from the 2020 CPP.

In total, the CPC's community engagement efforts made 196 touch points with the Bridgewater community, including 177 responses to the community survey, 16 non-CPC participants in four focus groups, and three non-CPC attendees at the virtual forum. For detailed documentation of these community engagement exercises, please see the appendices.

WHAT WE HEARD

The major themes heard during the engagement process included the following:

- Prioritize holistic planning and meeting multiple goals within CPA projects.
- Promote proactive and strategic management of Bridgewater's existing Open Space and Recreation resources, as well as in pursuing potential new projects.
- Support more affordable housing options, especially for seniors and in areas close to services.
- Focus on the downtown area, particularly in Historic Preservation and Community Housing projects, where historic buildings can see reuse and revitalization as affordable housing.
- Pursue opportunities to strengthen partnerships and leverage CPA funding with grants to support CPA projects and collaboratively meet local needs.
- Enhance the accessibility of Open Space and Recreation resources by creating new connections and access points, as well as increasing physical accessibility for all users.

The CPC approached this planning process as an update to the existing 2020 CPP, an approach that was supported by what was heard during community engagement. Overall, in both the survey and the focus groups, broad support was seen for the existing goals and principles from the 2020 CPP, with some potential amendments. The CPC revised the existing priorities and goals based on what was heard, as well as the updated needs and opportunities for each funding category.

GENERAL CPA ELIGIBILITY

The CPA provides funding for four general project types: community housing, historic preservation, open space, and recreation. For definitions of CPA eligible verbs, see *Key Definitions*. See eligibility chart in *Appendix C*.

Community Housing

CPA funds can be used to acquire, create, preserve, and support community housing for households with incomes at or below 100 percent of the area median income (AMI).²⁴

Historic Preservation

CPA funds can be used to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore historic resources that are listed on the State Register or determined to be locally significant by the Historical Commission.

Open Space

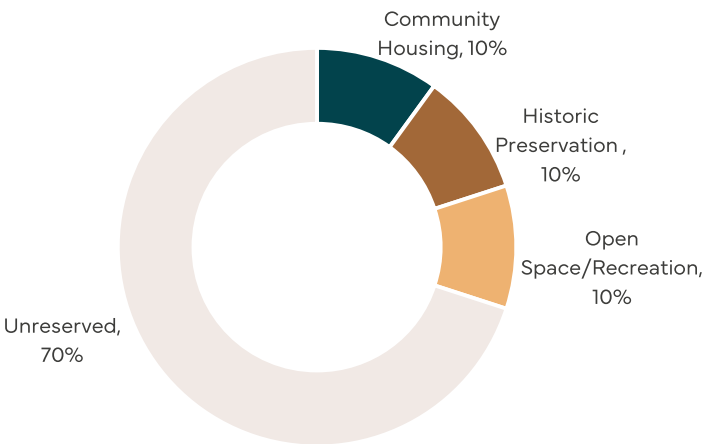
CPA funds can be used to acquire, create, and preserve open space and natural resources.

Recreation

CPA funds can also be used to acquire, create, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore land and facilities for recreational use.

While the statute provides flexibility for CPA communities to determine the portion of CPA funds allocated to each of the four categories, the statute requires that a minimum of 10 percent of total revenue be spent or reserved for projects in the following categories: community housing, historic preservation, and open space/recreation.

CPA - Minimum Spending/Reserve Requirements



²⁴ The AMI numbers for CPA eligibility are determined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. In Bridgewater in 2024, the AMI for a family of four is \$109,900; for a moderate-income senior living alone, this limit is \$76,930.

Section 12(a) of the Community Preservation Act requires that a permanent restriction be placed on any "real property interest" acquired using CPA funds to ensure that the property continues to be used for the applicable CPA purpose. Given this statutory requirement, a CPA project involving the acquisition of any real property interest is technically not complete until the restriction is approved by the appropriate state agency and filed at the Registry of Deeds. The CPC may require a restriction to protect the nature of its investment for some improvements, such as a new roof, windows, accessibility, and other code-compliant improvements. For private properties, applicants must demonstrate a public benefit which may be accomplished through a public access easement or deed restriction.

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS

The Bridgewater CPC requires professional staff support to ensure proper record keeping, grant management, and clerical support. Therefore, the CPC intends to budget a maximum of five percent of total annual CPA revenue for administrative funds, as the CPA statute allows. Administrative funds may be used to support the CPC's consideration of community preservation needs, resources, and possibilities such as additional studies and surveys, including but not limited to feasibility studies, condition assessments, historic evaluations/surveys, appraisals, etc. Additional funds may also be awarded using category funds to support projects. Administrative funds are allocated in the annual budget, and their expenditure does not require Town Council approval. Unused administrative funds at the end of each fiscal year revert back to undesignated funds.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The CPC developed the following overall guiding principles based on its core values and by carefully considering community feedback and broad community goals.

These principles are not binding. The CPC will ultimately base its recommendations on individual project merits, using these as a guide.

These principles are designed to guide the CPC's deliberation of project requests for CPA funds in all four CPA funding categories and will be used to establish funding preferences.

1. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING & ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY GOALS

The CPC will prioritize projects that demonstrate comprehensive planning and compatibility with other community initiatives and goals. Preference will be given to projects that also accomplish related initiatives and community goals established in the Town's *Comprehensive Master Plan*,

Housing Production Plan, and *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. Such articulated community goals and initiatives are listed below each goal in subsequent chapters.

In addition, the CPC encourages projects that foster collaboration and relationship-building between the Town of Bridgewater and key community institutions, such as Bridgewater State University (BSU). Although CPA funds cannot be used directly for university-led projects, the CPC values initiatives with components that strengthen the connection between BSU and the broader community.

The CPC also supports CPA-eligible initiatives from existing organizations in all CPA categories. Some examples are outlined below:

Housing-Oriented Organizations: Bridgewater Housing Authority, Bridgewater Affordable Housing Trust

Historic Preservation Organizations: Historic Commission; Historic District Commission; Old Bridgewater Historical Society

Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Organizations: Agricultural Commission; Conservation Commission; Parks & Recreation Commission; Open Space Committee; Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater; Wildlands Trust; Town River Fishery Committee.

2. LEVERAGING FUNDING

The CPC encourages projects which utilize both CPA funds and other public and private funding, including donations and bargain sales. The CPC will prioritize projects where CPA funding will fill a gap or provide a critical need where funding is otherwise unavailable or provide an opportunity that would not be possible — if not for CPA funding. Leveraging can include in-kind donations or sweat equity to reduce project costs.

3. COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN CPA CATEGORIES

The CPC encourages projects that include eligible activities in multiple CPA areas, such as affordable housing and recreation. The CPC will prioritize projects that reinforce or are compatible with both the CPA goals within a project's funding category(ies) and goals in other CPA categories.

4. LONG-LASTING COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Projects must demonstrate long-term benefits to the community by showing their ability to sustain and protect the value of the CPC's investment. Applicants are required to submit a detailed maintenance plan that outlines the financial resources, staffing, and operational capacity necessary to preserve the project's value over time. CPA funds cannot be used for ongoing routine maintenance; therefore, the applicant must account for such upkeep.

Withholding funding or other appropriate measures may be taken to ensure that projects seeking CPA funding plan for ongoing maintenance. The CPC may also require a restriction to protect the nature of their investment for some improvements, such as a new roof, windows, accessibility, and other code-compliant improvements. For projects on private properties, applicants must demonstrate a public benefit, which may be accomplished through a public access easement or deed restriction. Section 12(a) of the Community Preservation Act requires that a permanent restriction be placed on any "real property interest" acquired using CPA funds to ensure that the property continues to be used for the applicable CPA purpose. Deed restrictions are most commonly required for *Historic Preservation* or *Open Space and Passive Recreation* projects.

Chapter 2: COMMUNITY HOUSING



McElwain School Project (mcelwainschoolapts.com)

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Chapter 44B of the Massachusetts General Laws (CPA Statute) defines “community housing” as “low- and moderate-income housing for individuals and families, including low- or moderate-income senior housing.” Low-income housing is affordable to households with annual incomes of less than 80 percent of the areawide median income (AMI) and moderate-income housing is affordable to households earning less than 100 percent AMI.²⁵ Furthermore, the CPA Statute defines “senior housing” as housing for persons 60 years old or over, who also meet the qualifications for low- or moderate- income.

The CPA Statute allows expenditures for the acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of community housing and for the rehabilitation of community housing that is acquired or created through CPA. Preservation, which is a permitted activity for community housing, is defined as the “protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction, but not including maintenance.” Rehabilitation, which is only permitted for housing created using CPA funds, is

²⁵ The AMI numbers for CPA eligibility are determined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. In Bridgewater in 2024, the AMI for a family of four is \$109,900; for a moderate-income senior living alone, this limit is \$76,930.

defined as “the remodeling, reconstruction and making of extraordinary repairs, to...community housing for the purpose of making such...community housing functional for their intended use, including, but not limited to, improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal, state or local building or access codes.”

The CPA Statute defines the term “support” as programs that 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 . . .” The CPA Statute also allows CPA funds to be appropriated to a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MGL c.44 §.55C).

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) developed the following housing goals and possibilities through careful consideration of Bridgewater’s housing needs, public input, and overall community goals. The goals, as described below, are intended to guide potential applicants for CPA funding and will be used to direct CPC funding recommendations. However, applications for funding are not limited to the project ideas listed in this plan.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY HOUSING PROJECTS:

- CPA requires that housing developed with CPA funds serve persons or families with an annual income up to and including 100 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).²⁶
- CPA funds can be used to **ACQUIRE, CREATE, PRESERVE, and SUPPORT** community housing.
- CPA funds can also be used **REHABILITATE/RESTORE** community housing that has been acquired or created using CPA funds. Preference is typically given to adaptive reuse of existing buildings or construction of new buildings on previously developed sites. See the *Eligible Activities* section of this chapter for more details.

GOAL 1

Create and preserve affordable housing options for residents above 55 years of age to allow them to stay in the community as they age — prioritizing locations that provide easy access to services and other resources, as well as accessibility in building design.

²⁶ The AMI numbers for CPA eligibility are determined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. In Bridgewater in 2024, the AMI for a family of four is \$109,900; for a moderate-income senior living alone, this limit is \$76,930.

Though Bridgewater's population is projected by MassDOT to remain relatively constant over the coming decades, the recent trend of an aging population is likely to continue. As children move out and household sizes shrink, older residents may seek smaller, more manageable, and more affordable housing options located closer to services and transportation options. In communities like Bridgewater where single-family homes dominate the housing stock, many older adults may end up living in units larger or more complicated than they need or want.

As identified in the *2017 Housing Production Plan*, there is a need for more smaller units in Bridgewater. This is true for older residents as well as younger residents. Nine percent of Bridgewater's residents living alone in non-family households are 65 and older (American Community Survey DP02).

A variety of accessible housing options, such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and options incorporating Universal Design Standards, closer to downtown, could increase the number of residents who could walk to goods, services, and other activities. As residents age, they often need a higher level of services and may seek housing options within walking distance or transit-accessible to these services. The CPC encourages projects that focus on community housing options for older residents to allow them to age within the community. In particular, the CPC will prioritize housing projects with smaller units located in walkable areas close to community services.

CPA Category Compatibility: Historic Preservation

Community Goals Compatibility:

- Goal #2 in Bridgewater's *2017 Housing Production Plan*, "Create, maintain, and preserve affordable multi-family housing units in the downtown."
- Policies 8.4.2., "Encourage a mix of housing types with convenient walking and biking access for residents," and 8.4.3., "Encourage development of senior housing and disability housing with services," in Bridgewater's *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*.

GOAL 2

Create affordable and community housing through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, specifically historic properties.

Bridgewater can support multiple community goals across historic preservation, economic development, and community housing through the adaptive reuse of key historic buildings and redevelopment of underutilized sites to create affordable and mixed-income housing units. As a stated preference in the CPA statute, the CPC will prioritize affordable housing projects that reuse existing buildings or redevelop previously developed properties: *With respect to community housing, the community preservation committee shall recommend, wherever possible, the reuse of*

existing buildings or construction of new buildings on previously developed sites. (MGL c.44B s.5(b)(2)).

In 2018, the CPC approved funding to transform the surplus town-owned McElwain School Property into 57 mixed-income residential units. As a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this project was able to leverage historic rehabilitation tax credits in addition to CPA Funding. This project is an exemplary instance of combining these two CPA funding categories for community benefit. The CPA will prioritize projects that similarly meet this goal.

CPA Category Compatibility: Historic Preservation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #3 in Bridgewater's *2017 Housing Production Plan*, "Create affordable housing on town-owned properties and through adaptive reuse of existing buildings."
- Housing Recommendations in the 2016 *Downtown Bridgewater Plan* by Old Colony Planning Council

GOAL 3

Support a variety of affordable and community housing options, specifically for young individuals, young families, veterans, as well as entry-level housing and smaller housing units.

Growth in the cost of living in Bridgewater has outpaced surrounding areas, and housing costs have risen faster than inflation. Taken together, these present challenges for the affordability of the Town for many residents, including younger residents, older residents, and everyone in between.

Housing assistance programs for both renters and prospective owners are eligible to use CPA funds in the support and, in some cases, in the creation of community housing, depending on the program's structure. Ownership-oriented housing assistance programs could include a first-time homebuyer program, a lease-to-own program, or a down payment/closing cost assistance program as deferred payment loans with recapture provisions. Most of these types of programs, except for the first-time homebuyer model, do not create units that have long-term affordability restrictions. Rental assistance programs, such as a local rental subsidy program or emergency short-term rental assistance program, help low- or moderate-income residents secure housing or make regular rent payments.

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #5 in Bridgewater's *2017 Housing Production Plan*, "Ensure existing affordable housing units are preserved for long-term affordability."

- Policy 8.4.2. in Bridgewater’s 2022 Comprehensive Master Plan, “Encourage a mix of housing types with convenient walking and biking access for residents.”

GOAL 4

Preserve and ensure long-term affordability for existing affordable and community housing units, support Housing Authority residents, and preserve affordable units through eligible improvements and sustainability measures.

This goal can be achieved by converting existing market-rate housing into permanent affordable units for Bridgewater residents through deed-restricted housing. Rehabilitation, repair, and improvements to community housing acquired or created with CPA funds are also CPA-eligible activities. For example, a project could provide funding to a community organization, land trust, or housing trust to purchase a market-rate property and convert the units into affordable deed-restricted units. The funds could also be used to improve the property and support the creation of units that comply with current building, health, and safety codes.

CPA Category Compatibility: Historic Preservation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #5 in Bridgewater’s 2017 Housing Production Plan, “Ensure existing affordable housing units are preserved for long-term affordability.”

FIVE-YEAR BUDGET

Amount Available as of 9/30/24	\$246,300.14
Estimated Community Housing Reserve (10% of Estimated FY2025-FY2029 Revenue)	\$552,428.75
Total Actual + Estimated Community Housing Reserve	\$798,728.89

COMMUNITY HOUSING PROFILE

Bridgewater's population is projected to hold relatively steady in the coming decades, while growing more diverse and older on average. The cost of living has been rising in connection to the regional crisis of housing shortages and land use constrictions. Bridgewater remains above the ten percent subsidized housing target set by the Commonwealth, and nearly all units on the SHI are permanently affordable.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- MassDOT projects that Bridgewater's population will stagnate over the coming decades. Bridgewater counted 28,531 residents in 2022, up four percent from 27,434 in 2017 (ACS S0101).
- There are 9,194 households, with an average household size of 2.66 (ACS DP02).
- The population of Bridgewater is aging. The number of residents 65 and older grew 74 percent between 2010 and 2022, while the number of children under 18 fell nearly five percent (2010 Decennial Census T11, 2022 ACS B01001).
- Bridgewater's 2020 population was 81 percent non-Hispanic white, a nearly 7.5 percent decrease in the proportion from 2010 (Decennial Census P9). As the non-Hispanic white population only declined one percent in absolute numbers, this change in proportion is due to the growth of the non-Hispanic Black or African American population, which grew 61 percent, those that identified "Some other Race," which grew 134 percent, those that identified as two or more races, which grew 232 percent, and Hispanic residents, which grew 51 percent (Decennial Census P9).

HOUSING SUPPLY

- In total, Bridgewater has 9,567 homes (ACS DP04).
- Most homes in Bridgewater are single-family detached structures (63 percent). The total number of single-family detached homes grew 21 percent between 2010 and 2022 (ACS B25024), but as a percentage of all housing units fell nearly one percent. This is due to significant combined growth in single-family attached townhomes, structures with 10-19 units, and structures with fifty or more units (ACS B25024).
- Most homes in Bridgewater are owner-occupied, and the fell only slightly from 76 to 75 percent between 2010 and 2020 (Decennial Census H4). The number of rental units added between 2010 and 2020 was 75 percent greater than the number of homeownership units added, contributing to this slight change in the ratio of owned and rented homes (US Census H4).
- Bridgewater has low vacancy rates, with 0.6 percent ownership vacancy and 4.8 percent rental vacancy (Decennial Census H5). Economists have suggested seven percent for rental housing as a "healthy" vacancy rate; Bridgewater's low rates are indicative of the desirability of living in the Town and a restricted supply of available housing.

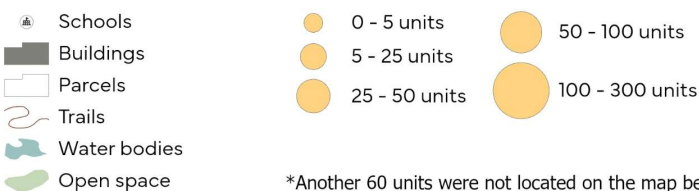
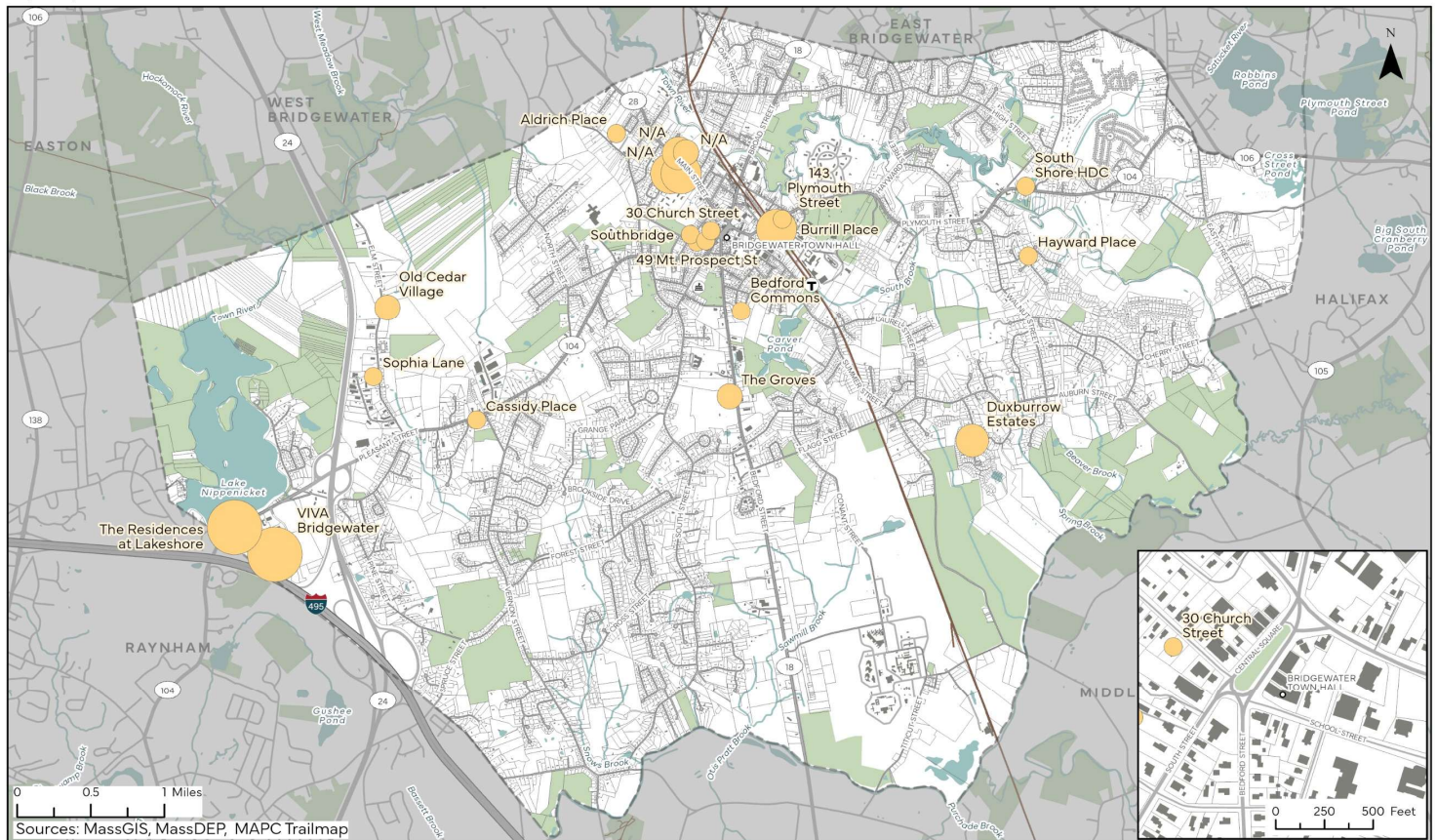
HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND HOUSING COST

- The cost of living in Bridgewater is outpacing income gains. The Area Median Income (AMI) has grown faster than the Median Household Income in Bridgewater, suggesting that the cost of living for most people is rising faster in Bridgewater than in surrounding areas. The Median Household Income in Bridgewater is \$110,354, an increase of over \$24,000 since 2010 (ACS S1903). Adjusted for inflation, the Median Household Income actually fell 1.3 percent between 2010 and 2019.

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER - SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



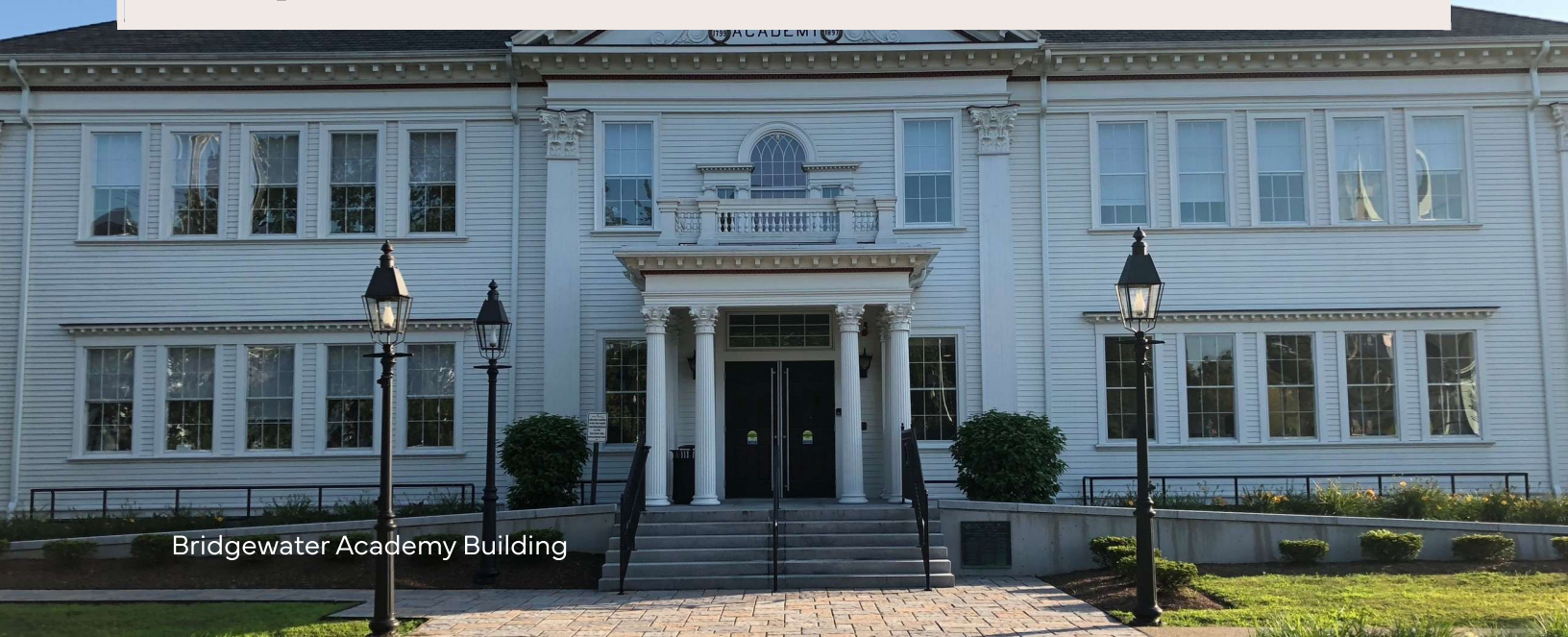
*Another 60 units were not located on the map because the location is confidential or the units are scattered.

Though formally established, the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) is reportedly a non-functional entity, with no standing members or staffing. A successful AHT can effectively collect and hold funds dedicated to creating and preserving affordable housing.

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Chapter 3: HISTORIC PRESERVATION



ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The CPA Act, as amended July 2021, defines a historic resource as “a building, structure, vessel, real property, document, or artifact that is listed on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture, or culture of a city or town.” CPA funds can be used for the “acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources.”

In addition, CPA funds may be appropriated to pay a nonprofit organization to hold, monitor, and/or enforce a deed restriction as described in Section 12 of the CPA (amended July 2021). Within the definition of “rehabilitation,” CPA is allowed to fund improvements to make historic resources functional for their intended use, including improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other building or access codes. All rehabilitation work, with respect to historic resources, is required to comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the US Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (codified in 36 C.F.R. Part 68), available online: www.nps.gov/tps/standards.

Admin funds may be used to support projects that require additional professional and technical support, including but not limited to feasibility studies, condition assessments, historic evaluations/surveys etc. Additional funds may also be awarded using category funds to support

projects, particularly if a survey will support the CPC in its statutorily required responsibility to study the community preservation needs and resources of the community. Inventories provide a comprehensive understanding of the community's historic resources and lay a foundation for prioritization and preservation. The CPA funds are an important source as a local match for the state's Survey and Planning Grant (through the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)).

In general, CPA funds can be used for projects that deal with tangible historic resources, but not with historic interpretation, education or heightening awareness of history. For example, using CPA funds to hire a videographer to film oral histories of members of the community would not be allowed. General surveys, studies and the like that are not connected to a specific CPA project may or may not be eligible, depending upon the specifics of the request and the funding source used. However, the CPC encourages project applicants which incorporate outreach, public awareness, and education but cannot fund those components of projects.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The CPC developed the following historic preservation goals and possibilities through careful consideration of Bridgewater's historic preservation needs, public input, and overall community goals. The CPC's goals, as described below, are intended to guide potential applicants for CPA funding for historic preservation of the community's historic resources and will be used to direct CPC funding recommendations. Applications for funding are not limited to the project ideas listed in this plan.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECTS:

- The project must address *public* resources or private resources with *public access* or other demonstrable public benefits.
- The resource must either be listed on the State Register of Historic Places or be determined by Bridgewater's Historic Commission as historically significant to the community.
- CPA funds can be used for projects that deal with *tangible* historic resources, but not with historic interpretation, education or heightening awareness of history.
- CPA funds can only be used to **ACQUIRE, PRESERVE, or REHABILITATE/RESTORE** a historic resource. See the *Eligible Activities* section of this chapter for more details.
- All historic preservation work must follow the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (codified in 36 C.F.R. Part 68).

GOAL 1

Preserve and restore historic properties to improve public accessibility, use, and awareness of the Town's local historic resources, such as the Town House and Bridgewater Public Library, as well as privately-held buildings with public access, such as the Scotland Church, Tory House, 96 Main Street, the Mitchell and Virginia Blocks downtown, Old Bridgewater Nursing Home, and United Methodist Church.

Over the years, the CPC has dedicated considerable funding to the restoration and preservation of historic buildings downtown, such as the Town House, Academy Building, and Memorial Building. As these historic resources have been prioritized, the CPC is aware that other buildings, such as privately held structures downtown that are of public use, have historic value as well. There are also historic bridges in Bridgewater, including one on Oak Street dating to 1886, that may be eligible for CPA funding for rehabilitation. The CPC encourages projects that preserve, restore, and/or rehabilitate these resources.

The CPC supports accessibility improvements during these projects to expand public enjoyment and access to public resources or private historic resources that are open to the public for public enjoyment and use. Alterations to historic properties should follow the provisions identified in the 2010 ADA Standards governing historic properties. Under those provisions, alterations should be done in full compliance with those standards for other types of buildings unless following the usual standards would threaten or destroy the historic significance of a feature of the building. If so, alternative solutions may be used. The decision to use alternative solutions for that feature must be made in consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and interested parties should be invited to participate in the decision-making process. Note that any corrective actions needed to ensure program accessibility must also comply with the requirements of the 2010 ADA Standards for historic facilities. Other historic buildings have incorporated ramps, replaced door handles with levers, removed thresholds, and other accessibility improvements to enhance public access through the historic preservation of the buildings.

It should be noted that any support of religious institutions must conform to the Anti-Aid Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution and all relevant case law. According to the 2018 case *Caplan v. Town of Acton*,²⁷ the constitutionality of grants of public funds to renovate an active church

²⁷

https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=7037002281856728151&hl=en&as_sdt=6&as_vis=1&oi=scholar. Accessed December 2024.

identified as an historic resource under the CPA depends upon three guidelines²⁸: 1) whether the purpose of the grant is to maintain or aid the religious organization 2) whether the effect of the grant is to maintain or aid the religious organization, and 3) whether the grant would go against the motivating factors of the anti-aid amendment, including infringement of liberty of conscience, entanglement of public funding and religion, and threats to civic harmony. Consultation with legal counsel should be conducted in association with any applications for CPA funding from such entities.

GOAL 2

Acquire, preserve, and increase access to the Town's historic artifacts and documents through the creation of permanent facilities, such as at the Town House or Public Library, to house these original resources for public access, and pursue digitization where eligible.

Preservation of historic archives and artifacts is important to protect the community's legacy and foster a greater and more complete understanding of history. Bridgewater has vital historic records in Bridgewater Library's Historical Room, Colonial-era documents and artifacts maintained by the Old Bridgewater Historical Society (OBHS) in West Bridgewater, MA (including the area's original 1649 land deed); and publicly-accessible archives at Bridgewater State University (BSU) that primarily focus on the founding of BSU in 1840 — and the history of Southeastern Massachusetts. It also houses information on the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Flora T. Little. All of these resources are important to protect and preserve for current and future generations' understanding of the community's roots.

The acquiring and preservation of such historic resources, promoting both the public accessibility of the original resources as well as digital accessibility, is key to the CPC's goal. The CPC may use funds to promote the physical preservation and restoration of documents or artifacts, funding toward appropriate climate-controlled and secure storage and public viewing facilities in specific buildings in Town that themselves have historic significance, as well as digitization and online accessibility.

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Policies 8.6.3., "Preserve and promote awareness of cultural and historic resources to give residents a sense of place and of what is available to them and their families," and 8.6.4.,

²⁸ For more information, see

https://www.communitypreservation.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif4646/f/uploads/patrick_moore_bullet_point_summary_-_caplan_v._town_of_acton_handout.pdf.

"Encourage resident interaction with the cultural, intellectual, and recreational resources available in the community" in Bridgewater's 2022 *Comprehensive Master Plan*.

GOAL 3

Preserve historic resources from development or deterioration through increased local, state, and federal historic designations and other mechanisms to encourage and support preservation.

Local, state, and federal historic designations are complementary preservation tools. National Historic Districts (NHDs) and individual designations credibly identify a community's historic resources and provide access to federal and state tax incentives. However, they do not provide substantive protection from state or local actions. Of Bridgewater's 385 documented historic resources, only three are listed on the National Register — Lazell Perkins Iron Works Park as a historic district and the McElwain School. The Town River Dam, while still listed on MACRIS, was removed in the last several years.

Local Historic Districts (LHDs) and local landmarks, however, provide strong protection for historic resources by preventing demolition or alterations that would be detrimental or incongruous to the historic values of the district. Although locally designated sites may be eligible for local grants, they do not qualify for state or federal tax incentives. Bridgewater has one LHD around Central Square and four individual buildings with preservation restrictions (PRs) — the Keith Homestead, First Parish Church, Bridgewater Town House, and Bridgewater Memorial Library. Project funds can be used to support historic resource surveys if the survey serves a specific purpose, such as establishing a LHD per MGL c.40C. Under this purpose, historic resource survey work helps "preserve" historic resources, defined by the CPA statute as the "protection of personal or real property from injury, harm, or destruction."

GOAL 4

Rehabilitate commercial facades and other historic resources, such as historic buildings in Central Square, to boost downtown economic revitalization.

Bridgewater can support economic revitalization and other community goals through redevelopment of underutilized sites and adaptive reuse of downtown properties, such as the Town House, the Memorial Building, and privately held commercial and mixed-use buildings. Development of existing single-use properties into mixed-use developments could also support *Community Housing* goals by locating more people close to services while also increasing the amount of foot traffic to businesses downtown.

Potential CPA Category Compatibility: Community Housing

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #3 in Bridgewater's 2017 *Housing Production Plan*, "Create affordable housing on town-owned properties and through adaptive reuse of existing buildings."
- 2014 *Downtown Community Development Master Plan* by the Cecil Group and Nelson\Nygaard
- 2016 *Downtown Bridgewater Plan* by Old Colony Planning Council
- Policy 8.5.3. in Bridgewater's 2022 *Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Strengthen, support, and enhance the character of the Town's business districts."

GOAL 5

Preserve and restore outdoor public historic places and public monuments, including places of Indigenous significance, such as the Titicut Conservation Area, as well as cemeteries.

Bridgewater has a number of outdoor places with historical significance. These include places of both Colonial and Indigenous significance. There are several historic cemeteries dating to the 18th century, including Bridgewater Old Graveyard, the Old Trinity Church Cemetery on Main Street, Jennings Hill Cemetery on High Street, and the South Street Burial Ground, among 13 cemeteries listed in MACRIS. The Titicut Conservation Area is also noted to be the location of a long-standing Indigenous community. The preservation of these and other resources is important to protect the Town's character and understanding of history.

In addition, areas of land that hold significance to Indigenous communities can be purchased with CPA money and returned to Indigenous stewardship, provided that the terms of the Community Preservation Act are adhered to. Groups like the Native Land Conservancy²⁹, based in Mashpee, are well-equipped to hold land titles and conservation easements for the promotion of Indigenous historical and cultural heritage, as well as open space conservation and land stewardship.

GOAL 6

Acquire significant historic artifacts, documents, and properties, including those locally significant to Bridgewater's history, to ensure their preservation, public accessibility, and use for community benefit.

²⁹ <https://www.nativelandconservancy.org/land-rescue>

Beyond funding eligible preservation and restoration activities, the CPC also intends to acquire historic resources such as artifacts, documents, and properties, as they may have notable cultural significance related to their history. These artifacts and documents may be housed at another CPA-funded property, such as an historic house converted into a museum. The CPC will prioritize public access and use for community benefit in these.

FIVE-YEAR BUDGET

Amount Available as of 9/30/24	\$580,395.52
Projected Historic Preservation Reserve (10% of Estimated FY2025-FY2029 Revenue)	\$552,428.75
Total Actual + Estimated Historic Reserves	\$1,132,824.75

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROFILE

Bridgewater has 385 documented historic resources, including buildings, cemeteries, objects, and structures (MACRIS). The majority (264) of the Town's historic resources date to the 19th century. Some of these documented resources no longer exist, but the local Historical Commission can notify the Massachusetts Historical Commission to update the MACRIS database.

NATIONALLY DESIGNATED RESOURCES

- **Bridgewater has one designated National Register District: the Lazell Perkins Iron Works (aka Bridgewater/Stanley Iron Works).** Within this district, there are 18 individual resources listed in MACRIS, including the masonry-ruins of the Storehouse, built circa 1835 and still standing at 131 High Street (MACRIS). Some of these resources no longer exist, but information about them is still recorded in MACRIS.
- **Bridgewater has one National Register Individual Property, the McElwain School, circa 1912.** The CPC contributed funding to study the reuse of this site in 2007, funding to purchase and redevelop the site in 2018, and funding to restore original plaster cast Parthenon friezes from the site for display in the Academy Building in 2023 (MACRIS, Community Preservation Coalition).
- **There is a Determination of Eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for the Double P Site, but it has no formal listing.** This site was studied during the construction of I-495 along the planned route. The Double P Site was the oldest site studied through that project, with Indigenous artifacts over 8,000 years old found (Johnson, 2012).

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

- **Bridgewater has one local historic district.** Local historic districts (LHDs) are a regulatory tool created through local bylaws. In LHDs, before any exterior architectural feature visible from a public way is altered, the plans must be approved by the Historic District Commission.
- **Bridgewater adopted the Bridgewater Center Historic District in 2001.** The historic district includes 21 resources spanning the 18th to 20th centuries, most of which are 19th-century buildings around Central Square. Two of these resources – the Town House and the Memorial Library – have preservation restrictions on them as well.

INDIGENOUS CONTEXT

- **Indigenous communities of hunter-gatherers first populated the area now known as Bridgewater for over 12,000 years;** agriculture is reported to have begun in the area between 3,000 and 1,500 years ago (Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan).

17TH CENTURY COLONIZATION

- **Bridgewater was the first inland colonization in what is now Massachusetts**, settled in 1649 when a “deed” transferring Bridgewater to colonial control was signed, according to colonial records; Bridgewater was chartered in 1656 (Town of Bridgewater). Sachem of the Wampanoag Massasoit, then called Ousamequin, (written today in Wôpanâô8âôk as 8sâmeeqan) negotiated this agreement with three Duxbury residents including Myles Standish (Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan). This deed exists in the Old Bridgewater Historical Society’s Memorial Building (Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan).

18TH CENTURY

- There are fifty eighteenth century resources in Bridgewater that are registered by the state (MACRIS).
- The Deacon Joseph Alden House at 768 High Street and the Keith-Wilbur-Packard House at 1776 South Street are thought to be the two oldest houses in Bridgewater, both build around 1700 (MACRIS).
- The Tory House (aka Joseph Leonard House) at 57 Central Square is a Federal-style house build c. 1710. It has had multiple uses in addition to residential including a tavern and doctor/dentist office (2020 CPP).
- Bridgewater has several historic cemeteries established during the eighteenth century, including the Bridgewater Old Graveyard (1717), the Old Trinity Church Cemetery on Main Street (1748), Jennings Hill Cemetery on High Street (1750), and the South Street Burial Ground (1756) (MACRIS).
- Other notable eighteenth century resources include the Weston-Mitchell House on Auburn Street (1720), the Henry Perkins Office Building at 170 Broad Street (1750), and the Deacon John Fobes House at 615-617 Pleasant Street (1704) (MACRIS).
- The Keith Homestead (1783) was protected through a Town acquisition funded with CPA funds. This Georgian style house is located at the end of Lakeside Drive (Community Preservation Coalition).
- The Stanley Ironworks site began iron making in 1707 and continued until 1988. The Town purchased the property in 1996 (Bridgewater Reconnaissance Report).

19TH CENTURY

- Many residences in Central Square and surrounding neighborhoods date to the 1850s and 1860s, and Central Square has been encapsulated by the Bridgewater Center Local Historic District (LHD) since 2001 (MACRIS). In total, 17 registered historic resources from the 19th century are also included in the Bridgewater Center Historic District (MACRIS).
- The Bridgewater Academy Building (1868), included in the LHD, is an Italianate style building on Central Square with a large Colonial Revival front addition that was built in 1868 as a private high school (2020 CPP).

- **The New Jerusalem Church (1871)**, included in the LHD, is a prominent Gothic Revival church on Bedford Street (2020 CPP).
- **The Prattown School building** was built in 1855 and is located at 40 Orange Street (Bridgewater Archive).
- **The Flagg School building** was built around 1850 and is located on the east corner of Summer and Auburn Streets (Bridgewater Archive).
- **The Titicut Conservation Area** was a site of Indigenous significance before being used as a shipyard in the 19th century, then as a girl's camp in the 20th century (Bridgewater Reconnaissance Report).
- **Protected resources from the 19th century** include the First Parish Church (1845) at 50 School Street, the Bridgewater Town House (1843) at 64 Central Square, and the Bridgewater Memorial Library (1881) at 25 South Street (MACRIS). The First Parish Church was constructed by Solomon Keith Eaton, who also designed the Bridgewater Town House two years earlier (2020 CPP).

20TH CENTURY

- **Several of Bridgewater's twentieth century resources are part of Bridgewater State University (BSU)**, including the Boyden Gymnasium (1903), Woodward Hall (1911), and Normal Hall (1915). The J. Franklin McElwain House at 29 Park Terrace (1902), historically owned by William H. McElwain's brother who donated the property for the McElwain School, is also currently owned by BSU (2020 CPP).

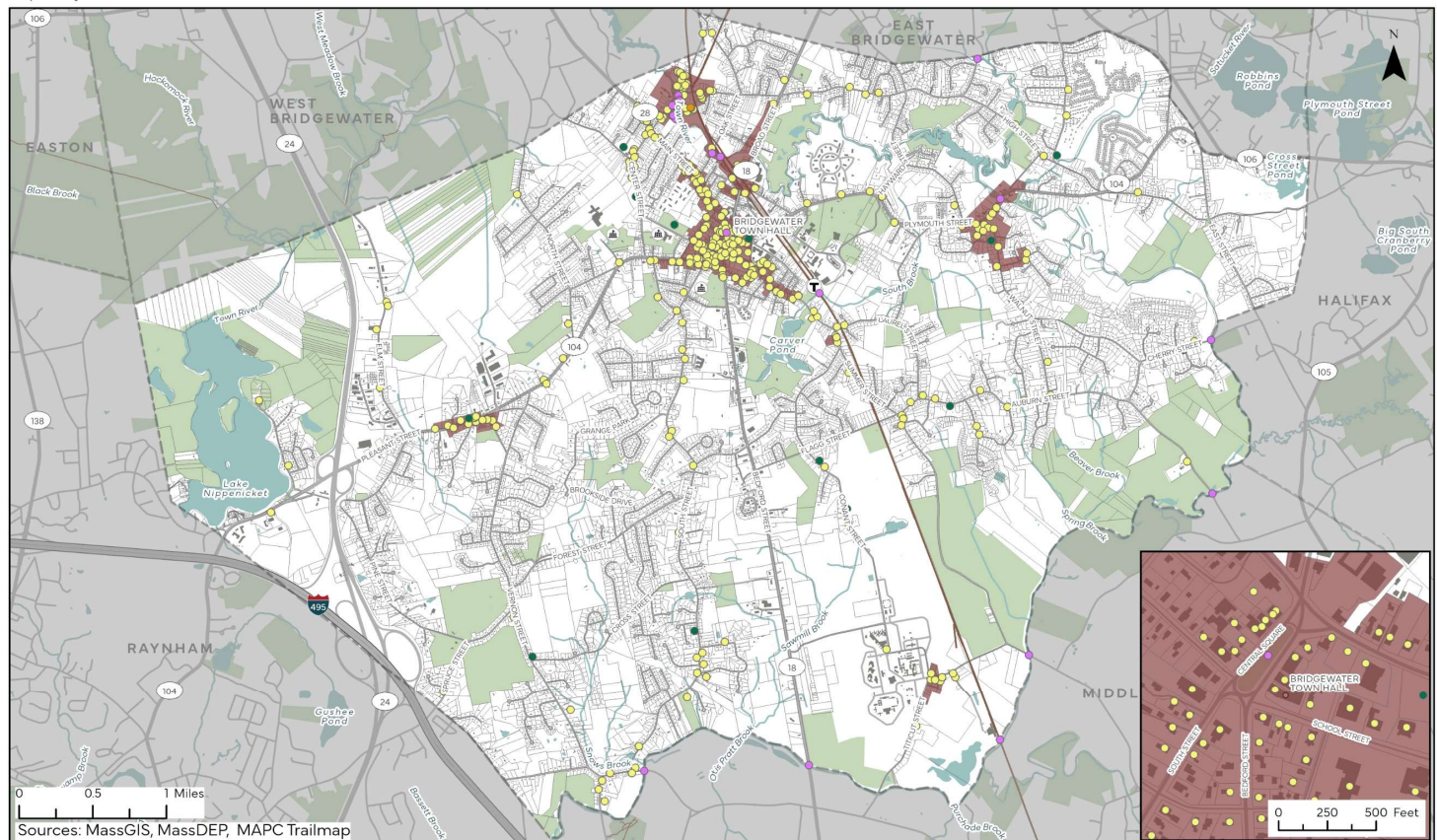
ARTIFACTS AND DOCUMENTS

- **CPA funding was allocated in 2022 to support the preservation of historic documents** at the Bridgewater Public Library (Community Preservation Coalition).
- **The Old Bridgewater Historical Society serves to collect, preserve, and publish history about the original Bridgewater settlement**, which includes the Towns of Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, and the City of Brockton (Old Bridgewater Historical Society).

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER - HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



- | | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| Schools | MassHistoric Commission Inventory Areas | MassHistoric Commission Inventory Points |
| Buildings | | Building |
| Parcels | | Burial Ground |
| Trails | | Object |
| Water bodies | | Structure |
| Open space | | |

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Chapter 4: OPEN SPACE



Murray-Needs Farm

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The CPA defines the term “open space” as including, but not limited to, land deemed necessary to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers and recharge areas, watershed land, agricultural land, lake and pond frontage, beaches, and scenic vistas. The CPA statute allows the use of CPA funds for the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space. Additionally, the CPA statute allows for the rehabilitation/restoration of open space that was acquired or created with CPA funds. Per MGL c.44B §.5(f), CPA funds may not be used to acquire real property, or property interest, for a price exceeding the value of the property (as determined by methods customarily accepted by the appraisal profession).

In accordance with the CPA statute (MGL c.44B §.12(a) and (b)), an acquisition of real property is required to be owned by the municipality and to be bound by a permanent restriction. Any open space acquisitions by the Town using CPA funds will require execution of a permanent restriction that will run with the land and will be enforceable by the City, Town, or Commonwealth. It may also run to the benefit of a nonprofit organization, charitable corporation, or foundation and that is in accordance with the requirements of MGL c.184. In addition, CPA funds may be appropriated to pay a

nonprofit organization to hold, monitor, and enforce the deed restriction on the property (sometimes called a “stewardship fee”). Please contact the CPC with questions on eligibility.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The goals and possibilities described in this chapter are based on Bridgewater’s open space and passive recreation needs, community input, and overall community goals. This chapter describes open space and passive recreation goals, CPA eligibility for open space and passive recreation projects, and minimum spending requirements. In addition, this chapter includes a resource profile describing Bridgewater’s open space and passive recreation needs and resources. The CPA goals, as described below, are intended to guide potential applicants for CPA funding for open space and passive recreation and will be used to direct CPC funding recommendations. However, applications for funding are not limited to the project ideas listed in this plan.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PROJECTS:

- Recreational projects must focus on land-based outdoor passive or active uses or facilities. For example, community gardens, trails, youth and adult athletic fields, parks, or playgrounds. See the *Eligible Activities* section of this chapter for the definition of open space and other details.
- CPA funds must be used for capital projects — not ongoing maintenance or operating costs.
- CPA funds can also be used to **PRESERVE** or **REHABILITATE/RESTORE** open space that is existing or has been acquired or created using CPA funds. See the *Eligible Activities* section of this chapter for more details.

GOAL 1

*Preserve Bridgewater's farms and agricultural lands to protect the town's agricultural heritage, support local food production, and maintain its scenic open spaces and community charm.*³⁰

Ongoing low-density suburban growth in Bridgewater has contributed to the loss of open space and farmland — impacting the Town’s scenic character and its ability to produce local food. Two-hundred

³⁰ This can include properties with prime farmland soils not currently actively farmed for scenic, economic, and local food production value.

and fifty-four acres of private agricultural land are protected under Chapter 61A³¹, including the Murray-Needs Farm. The largest agricultural properties not permanently protected include 55- and 35-acre parcels on Auburn Street east of Old Farm Road and southeast of Solar Way. The Hanson Farm on Pleasant Street is in the process of receiving a conservation restriction. The CPC encourages projects which protect Bridgewater's agricultural legacy and preserve opportunities for local food production into the future.

CPA Category Compatibility: Historic Preservation

Community Goal Compatibility: Goal #4 in Bridgewater's 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, "Preserve and cultivate public and private agricultural lands."

GOAL 2

Create new, as well as preserve and rehabilitate existing natural open space and passive recreation facilities — specifically enhancing safety and public access and incorporating native plantings and green infrastructure.

The 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (OSRP) noted that Bridgewater already has relatively abundant open space and recreation resources for its residents when looking at its "acreage level of service," which compares the amount of open space and recreation acreage to its population. During the outreach for this plan, participants expressed a desire to focus more resources on managing and maintaining its existing facilities and resources to optimize their use — rather than acquiring more conservation land that would also come with maintenance needs. Since the July 2012 amendments to the CPA statute, rehabilitation of existing parks and playgrounds is CPA-eligible.

Further, as the community's population ages, accessibility improvements that accommodate people of all ages and abilities will only grow in importance. The CPC supports accessibility improvements to expand public enjoyment and access to public resources or private open space resources that are open to the public for public enjoyment and use. It should be noted that though this goal falls under Open Space, CPA projects that aim to increase human use and access would be eligible for funding under the Recreation category. Roughly ten percent of Bridgewater's total civilian

³¹ Chapter 61 programs offer tax breaks to landowners who maintain their property as open space for timber production, agriculture or recreation. Chapter 61 addresses land maintained for forestry; Chapter 61A for agriculture; and Chapter 61B for open space and recreation. For more information: <https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/Ch61-v2.pdf>.

noninstitutionalized population has some disability (American Community Survey) — ranging from vision or hearing difficulties to ambulatory or independent living difficulties. The CPC encourages project proposals to rehabilitate or create new recreation facilities to make them accessible to all, such as through the inclusion of additional lighting, fencing, ramps, and other accessible design features. Improvements related to ADA compliance are eligible rehabilitation projects.

The incorporation of resilience aspects – such as native plantings, invasive species removal, and green infrastructure – to these open space and passive recreation projects can also help meet those community goals. These resilience strategies can help improve ecosystem resilience, stormwater mitigation, and potentially reduce the impacts of riverine flooding on open space and recreation areas in Bridgewater. These types of Rehabilitation activities are CPA-eligible if the property was acquired or created with CPA funds and the action makes the resources “functional for their intended uses.” In particular, invasive species removal is an eligible open space preservation project, which does not require that the property was acquired or created with CPA funds.

Additional changes and improvements to open space and passive recreation facilities identified on pages 114-115 of the *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update* to increase ADA-accessible recreation facilities include:

- Conventional ramps to bathrooms, bleachers, public spaces
- Modification of picnic tables to allow people in wheelchairs to sit close to the table
- Means of entering the water for swimmers, e.g. a ramp or lift into a pool, or provision of large-wheeled wheelchairs that can roll into the water at any beach
- Provision of boardwalk or trail guidance system for the blind (e.g. a rope strung from pole to pole) and a coordinated Braille or audible system identifying significant aromatic plants
- Modification (grading, smoothing, use of oversized graphics) of trails to allow passage by wheelchairs, or confident walking by people with balance or vision problems

CPA Category Compatibility: Active Recreation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #1 in Bridgewater’s *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, “Provide and enhance balanced recreational opportunities for active and passive recreation that meet the sports-oriented and nature-oriented needs of the community’s age demographics.”
- Goal #3 in Bridgewater’s *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, “Increase public awareness of available open space and recreation opportunities.”
- Goal #1 in Bridgewater’s *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, “Improve uniform signage and clearly established entrances to clearly brand Town conservation areas and recreation facilities and direct the public to them.”
- Goal #5 in Bridgewater’s *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, “Create a passive park at Town River Landing with seating areas, interpretive signage, clearing of vegetation in strategic

locations to open views, improvements to trails and the canoe launch and introduction of a footbridge providing access to the Stiles & Hart Conservation Area.”

- Goal #6 in Bridgewater’s *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, “Improve safety at passive recreation areas including highly visible and safe vehicular and pedestrian entrances, improved parking areas, bike storage facilities, ADA-accessible pathways, benches and picnic tables, interpretive signage, expanded trail networks, trail markings and opening up of viewing areas.”
- Goal #7 in Bridgewater’s *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, Identify and implement opportunities for additional public walkways providing connectivity between neighborhoods and the various recreation facilities.”
- Goal #8 in Bridgewater’s *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, “Expand existing bike paths and bike lanes to provide safe access to recreation facilities both from within Town and from adjoining communities. As with public walkways and trails, these should be developed as a comprehensive network allowing for phased improvements.”
- Policy 8.6.2 in Bridgewater’s *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, “Improve access to and maintenance of parks and open space.”
- Policy 8.7.1 in Bridgewater’s *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, “Commit to environmental sustainability in all Town of Bridgewater Policies.”

GOAL 3

Preserve and acquire strategic private open space properties along water resources and river corridors to improve water quality and to protect priority wildlife habitats and critical natural landscapes from development.

Bridgewater’s river corridors and water resources serve vital environmental, cultural, and recreational purposes within the community. The Town’s rare and endangered plant species are generally found in its wetlands. Diverse wildlife habitats exist along Bridgewater’s rivers, brooks, streams, and varied upland areas. The Taunton River has been designated as a Wampanoag Commemorative Canoe Passage (an historic 70-mile Native American waterway) in Massachusetts — and is also regionally significant as the longest undammed coastal river in New England. It also has globally rare freshwater and brackish tidal marsh habitats. In addition, Bridgewater’s water bodies offer recreational opportunities through canoeing and kayaking.

According to Bridgewater’s 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, The Taunton River is a high priority natural resource for protection and riverfront properties are high priorities for land conservation.”

CPA funds could support protection of land from development through acquisition or through conservation restrictions held by public entities or non-profit organizations, such as land trusts.

Opportunities exist to maintain the quality of open spaces along and within a relevant distance to water resources, such as the Olde Scotland Links golf course, as well as open space parcels along the Taunton River.

Improved and continuous wildlife corridors could be created along the Towns' streams and waterways to permit the free movement of larger wildlife. Bridgewater's greatest natural setting is the land surrounding Lake Nippenicket. Hockomock Swamp is the largest fresh-water swamp in Massachusetts and is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

The *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (OSRP)* identified several water quality issues for Bridgewater's water bodies, including non-native aquatic plants at Lake Nippenicket and Carvers Pond; pollutants (fecal coliform) in the Matfield River; and effluent from Brockton's Advanced Wastewater Treatment plant. The *2009 OSRP* also reported Highway Department studies that recommended repairs to the dam at Carver Pond, but work was constrained by incomplete public ownership (2020 CPP).

Stormwater runoff can be a major cause of water pollution. Parking lots, streets, or sidewalks, are impermeable surfaces, meaning that water cannot soak into the ground as it should. Green infrastructure is a landscape management strategy which attempts to mitigate runoff by conserving and absorbing rainwater into the soil instead of impermeable surfaces. Green infrastructure practices can employ soils, shallow depressions, and vegetation to minimize the negative impacts of stormwater runoff and more closely reflect natural conditions. Green infrastructure can keep water and air cleaner, reduce flooding during heavy rainfall, reduce street temperatures during the summer, and save money.

Green infrastructure projects could include creating rain gardens; harvesting rainwater through cisterns; native landscaping; constructing bioretention ponds, bioswales and rainwater planters; and incorporating pervious pavement or pavers. The CPC will also consider other green infrastructure projects not listed here. Rehabilitation activities are CPA-eligible if the property was acquired or created with CPA funds and the action makes the resources "functional for their intended uses." If there is an access component, such as a green infrastructure improvement that prevents flooding and increases human access to the open space area, then it would be CPA-eligible under the Recreation category, and properties that were not originally acquired or created with CPA funds would also be eligible.

CPA Category Compatibility: Active Recreation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #5 in Bridgewater's 2017 *Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, "Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas that promote local and regional ecological and environmental integrities."
- Goal #5 in Bridgewater's 2015 *Recreation Needs Assessment*, "Create a passive park at Town River Landing with seating areas, interpretive signage, clearing of vegetation in strategic locations to open views, improvements to trails and the canoe launch and introduction of a footbridge providing access to the Stiles & Hart Conservation Area."
- Policy 8.6.2 in Bridgewater's 2022 *Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Improve access to and maintenance of parks and open space."
- Policy 8.7.1 in Bridgewater's 2022 *Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Commit to environmental sustainability in all Town of Bridgewater Policies."
- Policy 8.6.5 in Bridgewater's 2022 *Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Plan for resilience to climate change to protect Bridgewater's natural resources."

GOAL 4

Create, preserve, and acquire neighborhood-level open spaces, like the Town River Landing, for pocket parks, community gardens, and other outdoor gathering spaces in each precinct, and support neighborhood "Friends of" organizations to encourage local stewardship at CPA-created or acquired parks.

As communities grow, open space is under increasing pressure to perform important ecosystem services, such as providing more dense habitats, mitigating stormwater runoff, and offering additional health benefits. Public natural areas and open space, often stewarded by conservation land trusts or municipal governments in Massachusetts, typically provide these critical ecological functions.

The CPC will prioritize neighborhood-oriented projects that explore opportunities to improve vacant or underutilized spaces through greening infrastructure and community-oriented open space. These open spaces should be equitably distributed throughout Bridgewater, providing all residents with a close public open space. To encourage stewardship and maintenance of these public spaces, the CPC encourages neighborhood "Friends of" organizations to facilitate local volunteer management and pride in these parks and open spaces.

CPA Category Compatibility: Active Recreation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #2 in Bridgewater's *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, "Create and preserve a town-wide, regionally linked trails and parks system that connects neighborhoods with various open space and recreation amenities."
- Goal #7 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, "Identify and implement opportunities for additional public walkways providing connectivity between neighborhoods and the various recreation facilities."
- Goal #8 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, "Expand existing bike paths and bike lanes to provide safe access to recreation facilities both from within Town and from adjoining communities. As with public walkways and trails, these should be developed as a comprehensive network allowing for phased improvements."
- Policy 8.2.1 in Bridgewater's *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Use 'smart growth' development approaches to preserve open space and encourage sustainability."
- Policy 8.6.2 in Bridgewater's *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Improve access to and maintenance of parks and open space."

FIVE-YEAR BUDGET

Amount Available as of 9/30/24	\$222,817.48
Estimated Open Space Reserve (10% of Estimated FY2024-FY2029 Revenue)	\$552,428.75
Total Actual + Estimated Reserve	\$775,246.23

OPEN SPACE PROFILE

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

- Nearly 16 percent of the total land area in Bridgewater was permanently protected open space in 2020 (2020 CPP).
- Of all the protected open space in Bridgewater, 94 percent is permanently protected (MassGIS).

SCENIC VISTAS

- Open fields in Bridgewater have been noted as significant scenic landscapes. The Town's Open Space plans have proposed a number of potential scenic landscapes in the past, including Auburn Street, Spruce Street, Summer Street south of Flagg Street, the northern portion of Elm Street, Plymouth Street east of Pond Street, South Street south of South Drive, and the portion of Lakeside along the edge of Lake Nippenicket (2020 CPP). Designation of these areas by the Town Council would make these roads subject to Planning Board hearings before any alterations (2020 CPP).
- Great Hill on the BSU Campus and Sprague's Hill were identified in the 2018 Open Space Plan as potential viewing point opportunities; these areas are both covered by trees and have large water supply tanks (2018 OSRP).

WATER RESOURCES AND HABITAT

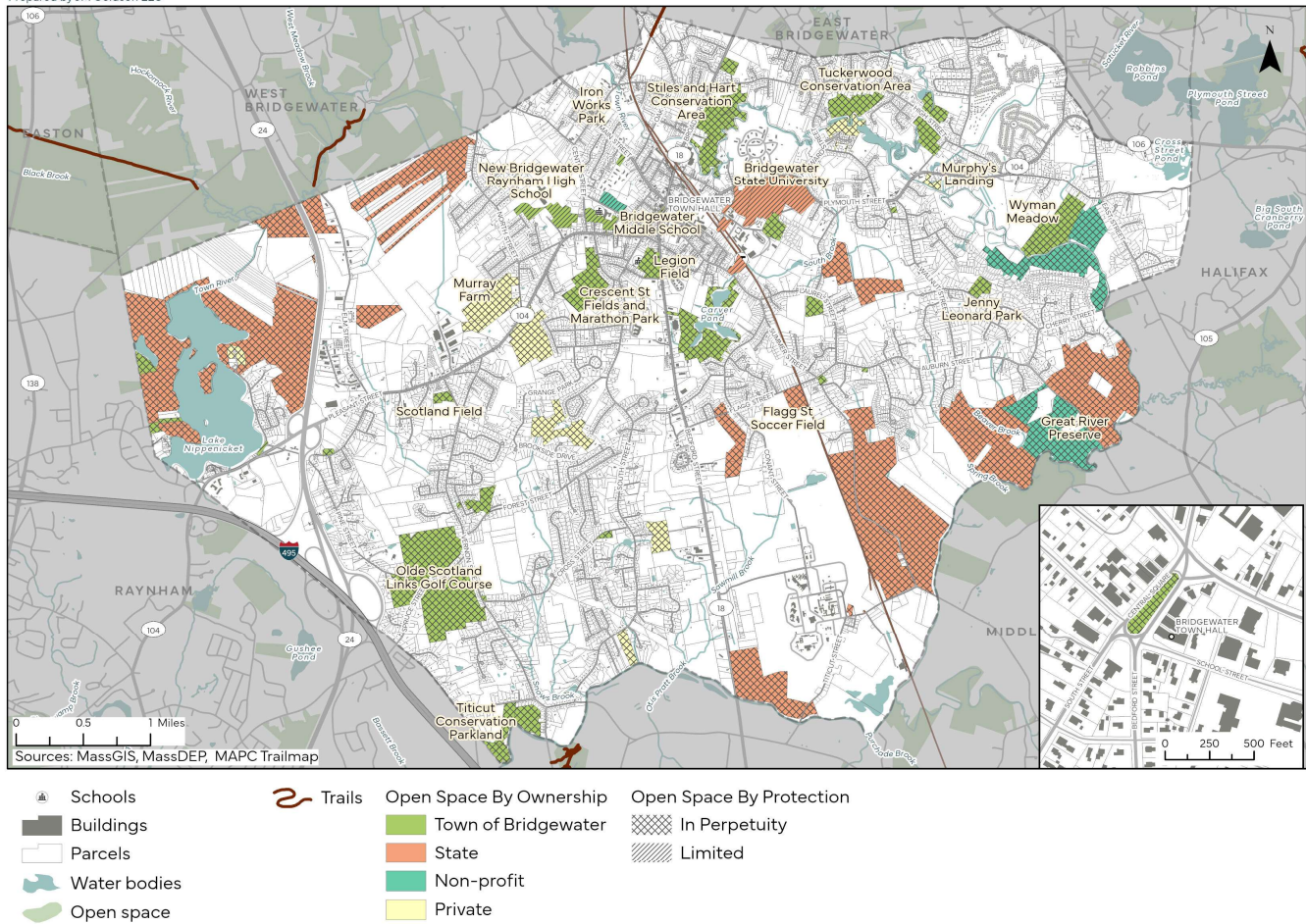
- The Town and Taunton Rivers are designated as a Wild and Scenic River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan). The Taunton River is also nationally recognized as the longest undammed coastal river in New England, as well as designated by the state as the Wampanoag Commemorative Canoe Passage, marking it as a waterway of Indigenous significance (2020 CPP).
- Bridgewater is located within the 562 square mile Taunton Basin, the second largest watershed in Massachusetts (2020 CPP).
- There are 15 Certified Vernal Pools and 298 Potential Vernal Pools in Bridgewater (MassGIS). These serve as essential habitats for a variety of species.
- As of 2020, Bridgewater had an estimated 3,048 acres of wetlands, including the state's largest freshwater swamp, the 16,800-acre Hockomock Swamp. This area was identified as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, which marked it as a unique and significant natural and cultural resource (2020 CPP).
- Wetland areas provide habitat for a number of rare and endangered species. Bridgewater's greatest natural place is the area around Lake Nippenicket, and continuous wildlife corridors could be supported along the Town's existing streams and waterways to facilitate wildlife mobility (2020 CPP). The Town and Taunton Rivers are significant areas of Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscapes, according to BioMap3, the state's plan to guide biodiversity

conservation (MassGIS). Smaller ponds and wetland areas, such as Sturtevant Pond on South Street, the Sawmill Brook north and west of the Old Colony Correctional Center, and the large parcels around the Stiles and Hart Brick Company along the Taunton River, are also noted as Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes.

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



Note: This map includes parcels noted by the Community & Economic Development Department to be in the process of receiving preservation/conservation restrictions but have not yet formally been recorded as protected as of this writing. These include large parcels along the Taunton River behind subdivisions on Magnolia Way and Oldfield Road, which are being transferred to Wildlands Trust, as well as the Hanson Farm parcel on Pleasant Street, which is receiving an agricultural preservation restriction.

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



- Schools
- Buildings
- Parcels
- Trails
- Water bodies
- Open space
- Certified Vernal Pools
- Potential Vernal Pools
- BioMap3 Core Habitat
- BioMap3 Critical Natural Landscape
- Wetlands

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Chapter 5: RECREATION

Fencing at Crescent Street Softball Fields

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The CPA defines recreational use as including, but not limited to, the use of land for community gardens, and noncommercial youth and adult sports, and the use of land as a park, playground, or athletic field. The definition goes on to prohibit "... horse or dog racing or the use of land for a stadium, gymnasium, or similar structure."

Per the July 2012 amendments, the CPA statute allows use of CPA funds for the acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of land for recreational use. Note that the 2012 amendments allow "rehabilitation" where previously it only allowed for recreational land *created* through the CPA. This amendment would allow existing parks and playgrounds to be rehabilitated with upgraded and new facilities and amenities. Maintenance costs are not eligible for CPA funds. In addition, acquisition of artificial turf for athletic fields is expressly prohibited in Section 5(b)(2).

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The goals and possibilities described in this chapter are based on Bridgewater's recreation needs, community input, and overall community goals. This chapter describes active recreation goals, CPA eligibility for recreation projects, and minimum spending requirements. In addition, this chapter

includes a resource profile describing Bridgewater’s recreation needs and resources. The CPA goals, as described below, are intended to guide potential applicants for CPA funding for recreation and will be used to direct CPC funding recommendations. However, applications for funding are not limited to the project ideas listed in this plan.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PROJECTS:

- Recreational projects must focus on land-based outdoor passive or active uses or facilities. For example, community gardens, trails, youth and adult athletic fields, parks, or playgrounds. See the *Eligible Activities* section of this chapter for details.
- CPA funds must be used for capital projects — not ongoing maintenance or operating costs.
- CPA funds can be used to **ACQUIRE** or **CREATE** open space and land for recreation.³²

GOAL 1

Rehabilitate or restore existing town-owned parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities, such as Jenny Leonard Park or Marathon Park.

The age and design of recreation facilities can impact safety, accessibility, and general functionality. With the July 2012 amendments to the CPA statute, rehabilitation of existing parks and playgrounds are eligible CPA activities. During the outreach for this plan, participants expressed a desire to focus more on managing and maintaining its existing facilities and resources, identifying Jenny Leonard Park and Marathon Park in particular.

CPA Category Compatibility: Open Space and Passive Recreation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #1 in Bridgewater’s *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, “Provide and enhance balanced recreational opportunities for active and passive recreation that meet the sports-oriented and nature-oriented needs of the community’s age demographics.”
- Goal #3 in Bridgewater’s *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, “Redevelop Jenny Leonard Park into a full-sized play area for various age groups serving the east side of Town, with design and implementation achieved through a public/private partnership with the developer of the adjoining residential area.”
- Goal #6 in Bridgewater’s *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, “Improve safety at passive recreation areas including highly visible and safe vehicular and pedestrian entrances, improved parking areas, bike storage facilities, ADA-accessible pathways, benches and picnic

³² For example, open space or land for recreation can be created through demolition of structures and/or clean-up of polluted sites.

tables, interpretive signage, expanded trail networks, trail markings and opening up of viewing areas.”

- Policy 8.7.3 in Bridgewater’s *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, “Balance services with careful short- and long-term budget considerations.”

GOAL 2

Rehabilitate existing or create new facilities to improve safety and public access to active outdoor recreational facilities, such as Legion Field.

The CPC encourages project proposals to rehabilitate aging or create new recreation facilities to make them accessible to persons of all abilities, including those with special needs, such as additional lighting, fencing, ramps, and other design features. Roughly ten percent of Bridgewater’s total civilian noninstitutionalized population has some disability (American Communities Survey) — ranging from vision or hearing difficulties to ambulatory or independent living difficulties.

Additional changes and improvements identified on pages 114-115 of the *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update* to increase ADA-accessible recreation facilities include:

- Conventional ramps to bathrooms, bleachers, public spaces
- Modification of picnic tables to allow people in wheelchairs to sit close to the table
- Means of entering the water for swimmers, e.g. a ramp or lift into a pool, or provision of large-wheeled wheelchairs that can roll into the water at any beach
- Provision of boardwalk or trail guidance system for the blind (e.g. a rope strung from pole to pole) and a coordinated Braille or audible system identifying significant aromatic plants
- Modification of swings, seesaws etc. to allow use from wheelchair or use by someone lacking balance or upper body strength
- Modification (grading, smoothing, use of large graphics) of trails to allow passage by wheelchairs, or confident walking by people with balance or vision problems

CPA Category Compatibility: Open Space and Passive Recreation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #1 in Bridgewater’s *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, “Provide and enhance balanced recreational opportunities for active and passive recreation that meet the sports-oriented and nature-oriented needs of the community’s age demographics.”
- Goal #3 in Bridgewater’s *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, “Increase public awareness of available open space and recreation opportunities.”
- Goal #1 in Bridgewater’s *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, “Improve uniform signage and clearly established entrances to clearly brand Town conservation areas and recreation facilities and direct the public to them.”

- Goal #5 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, "Create a passive park at Town River Landing with seating areas, interpretive signage, clearing of vegetation in strategic locations to open views, improvements to trails and the canoe launch and introduction of a footbridge providing access to the Stiles & Hart Conservation Area."
- Goal #6 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, "Improve safety at passive recreation areas including highly visible and safe vehicular and pedestrian entrances, improved parking areas, bike storage facilities, ADA-accessible pathways, benches and picnic tables, interpretive signage, expanded trail networks, trail markings and opening up of viewing areas."
- Goal #7 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, Identify and implement opportunities for additional public walkways providing connectivity between neighborhoods and the various recreation facilities."
- Goal #8 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, "Expand existing bike paths and bike lanes to provide safe access to recreation facilities both from within Town and from adjoining communities. As with public walkways and trails, these should be developed as a comprehensive network allowing for phased improvements."
- Policy 8.6.2 in Bridgewater's *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Improve access to and maintenance of parks and open space."

GOAL 3

Create a comprehensive and connected bike and walking path network to enhance recreational opportunities.

The Nunckatessett Greenway connects the Bay Circuit Trail with the Town River, Iron Works Park, Stiles and Hart Conservation Area, and Tuckerwood Conservation Area along the Town River to form a greenway and blue-way canoe trail. The Greenway is a natural hiking and canoeing/kayaking corridor that also connects the West Bridgewater and Bridgewater town centers and Bridgewater State University (BSU). The CPA can support the growth of this network and others to continue developing an interconnected system of bike and walking paths.

CPA Category Compatibility: Open Space and Passive Recreation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #2 in Bridgewater's *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, "Create and preserve a town-wide, regionally linked trails and parks system that connects neighborhoods with various open space and recreation amenities."
- Goal #7 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, Identify and implement opportunities for additional public walkways providing connectivity between neighborhoods and the various recreation facilities."

- Goal #8 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, "Expand existing bike paths and bike lanes to provide safe access to recreation facilities both from within Town and from adjoining communities. As with public walkways and trails, these should be developed as a comprehensive network allowing for phased improvements."
- Policy 8.6.2 in Bridgewater's *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Improve access to and maintenance of parks and open space."

GOAL 4

Create, rehabilitate, and restore access to water bodies for canoes and kayak launch sites at key locations, including the Town River, Iron Works Park, and Stiles and Hart.

Bridgewater is nestled between the Town and Taunton Rivers, both designated as priority protection areas by the Town of Bridgewater and regionally by the Old Colony Planning Council in 2013. River access points exist along the Nunckatessett Greenway, which forms a greenway and blue-way canoe trail along the Town River. The CPC encourages projects that improve or create public water access.

CPA Category Compatibility: Open Space and Passive Recreation

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #5 in Bridgewater's *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*, "Create a passive park at Town River Landing with seating areas, interpretive signage, clearing of vegetation in strategic locations to open views, improvements to trails and the canoe launch and introduction of a footbridge providing access to the Stiles & Hart Conservation Area."
- Policy 8.6.2 in Bridgewater's *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*, "Improve access to and maintenance of parks and open space."

GOAL 5

Create outdoor recreational facilities designed to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities, such as pickleball courts, tennis courts, and ADA-accessible facilities.

With the segment of residents aged 55 years and older growing to almost a third of all residents, the recreational needs of the community will also change (Housing Production Plan). During this plan's community outreach process, community stakeholders expressed a desire for facilities oriented toward older adults. There are many health benefits from daily moderate physical activity, including lower blood pressure and healthy bones and joints (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). This allows many to maintain the ability to live independently for longer. Some older residents may have physical disabilities — making it difficult to use existing facilities. Active outdoor recreation facilities should accommodate all of Bridgewater's users.

Additional changes and improvements identified on pages 113-114 of the *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update* to increase senior-friendly recreation facilities include:

- Improvements to trails and greenways town-wide to create safe walking opportunities near every neighborhood
- Increase opportunities for accessible swimming within the town
- Develop community garden plots, particularly near concentrations of elderly persons in multi-unit affordable housing
- Continue enhancing Senior Center service and programs
- Extend Senior Shuttle service to increase access to local programs and recourses
- Add more shaded tables, sitting areas and low-stress activity opportunities such as exercise circuit, neighborhood parks, bocce court, etc.

CPA Category Compatibility: Open Space and Passive Recreation; Community Housing

Community Goal Compatibility:

- Goal #1 in Bridgewater's *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, "Provide and enhance balanced recreational opportunities for active and passive recreation that meet the sports-oriented and nature-oriented needs of the community's age demographics."

FIVE-YEAR BUDGET

Active Recreation does not have its own designated minimum reserve. See the *Open Space and Passive Recreation* chapter for the five-year minimum reserves.

RECREATION PROFILE

PASSIVE RECREATION

- The Styles and Hart Conservation Area provides walking trails, light boat access, and fishing. The shallow banks of the Town Rivers are an asset to access.
- Carver's Pond, with 66 acres of conservation land, offers walking trails and scenic views.
- The Iron Works Park provides a portage point for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing.
- The Keith Homestead on Lake Nippenicket was purchased in part with CPA funds.
- Tuckerwood Conservation Area on High Street offers walking trails to the Town River.
- Wyman Meadow Conservation Area includes 35 acres of meadows and woods along the Taunton River and is adjacent to the North Fork Preserve.
- The Wildlands Trust's Great River Preserve at Conihasset includes over 125 acres of meadows and woods along the Taunton River and a loop trail of around 2.5 miles (Wildlands Trust).
- The Titicut Conservation Area includes a campground and a put-in for canoes and kayaks.
- Sturtevant Pond has a small parking area with access for passive recreation on South Street near Green Street.
- There are a number of open spaces owned by the Commonwealth, including Bridgewater State Forest, Old State Farm conservation land, Skeeter Mill Pond west of Water Street, Hockomock Wildlife Management Area, and the Lake Nippenicket Preserve (2020 CPP).

ACTIVE RECREATION

- Water access exists at Town River Landing at Iron Works Park, Lake Nippenicket, and at sites along the Taunton River, providing residents with opportunities to engage in active water recreation. Some access points also facilitate launches of larger, motorized boats.
- There are six Pickleball Courts at the Bridgewater Senior Center, organized by Bridgewater Parks and Recreation. These were funded by a CPA allocation in 2021 (Community Preservation Coalition) and quickly became popular and busy with scheduling conflicts reported.
- The Olde Scotland Links Golf Course is a significant area of Bridgewater dedicated to active recreation, at 210 acres.
- Opportunities exist for rehabilitating and expanding active recreation facilities at Jenny Leonard Park and the former site of Rainbows' End Park.

The matrix below details active recreation facilities in Bridgewater:

Facility	Multi-purpose	Basketball	Baseball/ Softball	T-Ball	Football	Soccer	Playground	Boat Launch	Canoe/ Kayak Launch	Golf	Pickle Ball
Legion Field											
Scotland Field											
Crescent Street Fields											
Town River Landing											
Various Sites on the Taunton River									1		
Olde Scotland Links											
Lake Nippenicket Boat Ramp											
Flagg Street Soccer Fields											
Marathon Park											
Senior Center											

Note: this table does not include the Regional School District or Bridgewater State University facilities, although residents benefit from using recreation facilities at these locations. These facilities include tracks, tennis courts, playgrounds, and various athletic fields.

1: Along the Taunton River, there are formal canoe/kayak launches on Summer Street and at the Titicut Conservation Area, as well as evidence of informal access on Titicut Street.

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Appendices

A. CPA ELIGIBILITY MATRIX

Chart 1
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND ALLOWABLE SPENDING PURPOSES (G.L. c. 44B, § 5)

	OPEN SPACE	HISTORIC RESOURCES	RECREATIONAL LAND	COMMUNITY HOUSING
DEFINITIONS (G.L. c. 44B, § 2)	Land to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers and recharge areas, watershed land, agricultural land, grasslands, fields, forest land, fresh and salt water marshes and other wetlands, ocean, river, stream, lake and pond frontage, beaches, dunes and other coastal lands, lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve and land for recreational use	Building, structure, vessel, real property, document or artifact listed on the state register of historic places or determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of the city or town	Land for 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 Does <u>not</u> include horse or dog racing or the use of land for a stadium, gymnasium or similar structure.	Housing for low and moderate income individuals and families, including low or moderate income seniors Moderate income is less than 100%, and low income is less than 80%, of US HUD Area Wide Median Income
ACQUISITION Obtain property interest by gift, purchase, devise, grant, rental, rental purchase, lease or otherwise. Only includes eminent domain taking as provided by G.L. c. 44B	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CREATION To bring into being or cause to exist. <i>Seideman v. City of Newton</i> , 452 Mass. 472 (2008)	Yes		Yes	Yes
PRESERVATION Protect personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
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				Yes, includes funding for community's affordable housing trust
REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION Make capital improvements, or extraordinary repairs to make assets functional for intended use, including improvements to comply with federal, state or local building or access codes or federal standards for rehabilitation of historic properties	Yes if acquired or created with CP funds	Yes	Yes	Yes if acquired or created with CP funds

Source: Department of Revenue (DOR) 10-5-2012 conference, "Recent Developments in Municipal Law," Workshop B - Local Finances

B. ACRONYMS

ACS	US Census Bureau's American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AMI	Areawide Median Income set by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development
CPA	Community Preservation Act, Chapter 44B of the Massachusetts General Laws
CPC	Community Preservation Committee
CP Plan	Community Preservation Plan
DCR	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
EOHLC	Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRMs	Flood Insurance Rate Maps
FY	Fiscal Year(s)
HPP	Bridgewater Housing Production Plan 2017
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
LHD	Local Historic District
MACRIS	Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System
MFI	Median Family Income
MGL	Massachusetts General Laws
MHC	Massachusetts Historical Commission
MOE	Margins of Error
NHESP	Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
NPS	United States Department of Interior, National Park Service
OSRP	Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan 2017
SHI	Massachusetts Subsidized Housing Inventory

C. KEY DEFINITIONS

This list of key definitions is intended to assist the reader and is not intended to replace applicable legal definitions of these terms. The following definitions are for key terms used throughout the document, many of which are based on definitions per MGL c.44B s.2 or other statutes and regulations.

Active Recreation – Requires intensive development to create outdoor recreation and often involves cooperative or team activity, including playgrounds, ball fields, and paved bike paths.

Areawide Median Income – the median gross income for a person or family as calculated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, based on the median income for the Metropolitan Statistical Area. For FY2022, the HUD median family income (MFI) for the Brockton MA HUD Metro FMR Area (which includes Bridgewater) was \$111,400³³ AMI is also referred to in the document as median family income (MFI). According to the CPA legislation, CPA funds may be applied to community housing affordable at up to 100 percent AMI as defined by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities³⁴. To be counted on the Subsidized Housing Inventory by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, affordable housing units must instead use HUD's calculated income limits for 80 percent AMI.

Community Housing – as defined by the Community Preservation Act is housing for individuals and families with incomes less than 100 percent of the Areawide Median Income (AMI), including senior housing. In general, the occupant(s) should pay no greater than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities.

Community Preservation – the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space; the acquisition, creation, preservation, and rehabilitation/restoration of land for recreation; the acquisition, preservation, and rehabilitation/restoration of historic resources; and the acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of community housing.

³³ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. FY 2022 Income Limits Summary.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2024/2024summary.odn> Accessed July 2024.

³⁴
https://www.communitypreservation.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif4646/f/uploads/cpa_low_and_moderate_income_worksheet_for_2024.pdf. Accessed December 2024.

Community Preservation Act – a state law, MGL c. 44B, is enabling legislation that allows communities to raise and set aside funds for community preservation projects, including open space and natural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, historic preservation, and community housing. It is funded through a combination of a local property tax surcharge of up to 3 percent and a variable state contribution from the Community Preservation Trust Fund.

Community Preservation Committee – the committee established by the legislative body of a city or town to make recommendations for community preservation, as provided by Section 5 of MGL c. 44B.

Community Preservation Fund – the municipal fund established by Section 7 of MGL c. 44B.

Family Household – Family households consist of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people.

Historic Resource – a building, structure, document, or artifact that is listed on the state register of historic places or National Register of Historic Places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of a city or town.

Household – all the people, related or unrelated, who occupy a housing unit. It can also include a person living alone in a housing unit or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit as partners or roommates. Family households consist of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people. Nonfamily households consist of people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals.³⁵

Local Historic District – an area or group of historic structures that are deemed significant to the town's history, archeology, architecture or culture and protected by public review.

Low-Income Housing – housing for persons or families whose annual income is less than 80 percent of the areawide median income (AMI) (as defined by the CPA).³⁶ The AMI is calculated annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For example, the Brockton MA HUD Metro FMA Area, which includes Bridgewater, a four-person household with a gross household

³⁵ Bridgewater's estimated median household income is \$110,354 (2022 median family income was \$127,279) per the 2022 American Community Survey.

³⁶ Note: The CPA defines low-income and moderate-income differently than other state and federal programs. For example, for purposes of MGL c.40B, moderate income is defined as up to 80 percent AMI.

income of \$97,800 or less is considered low-income under the CPA definition.³⁷ A one-person household with a gross household income of up to \$68,500 is considered low-income. To be counted on the Subsidized Housing Inventory by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, affordable housing units must use HUD's calculated income limits.

Moderate-Income Housing – housing for persons or families whose annual income is less than 100 percent of the area median income (AMI). The AMI numbers for CPA eligibility are determined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. In Bridgewater in 2024, the AMI for a family of four is \$109,900; for a moderate-income senior living alone, this limit is \$76,930.³⁸

Natural Resources – any and all naturally occurring materials, substances, or land within a community, watershed or region. This includes ocean, shellfish and inland fisheries; wild birds, wild mammals, and game; fish; forests and all uncultivated flora (including public shade and ornamental trees and shrubs); land, forests, soil and soil resources; lakes, ponds, and streams; marshes and wetlands; coastal, underground and surface waters; and minerals and natural deposits. JM Goldson recognizes that this term is grounded in an extractive understanding of the natural world, but the term may be used within this document in congruence with Bridgewater's existing planning documents and legal terminology.

Open Space – land to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers and recharge areas, watershed land, agricultural land, grasslands, fields, forest land, fresh and saltwater marshes and other wetlands, oceans, rivers, streams, lake and pond frontage, beaches, dunes and other coastal lands, lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve, and/or land for recreational use.

Passive Recreation – that which emphasizes the open space aspect of a park and which involves a low level of development, including picnic areas and trails.

Preservation – the protection of personal or real property from injury, harm, or destruction.

Recreational Use – Recreation uses are often divided into two categories: passive and active recreation. See definitions for "Passive recreation" and "Active Recreation." Recreation, under the CPA, does not include horse or dog racing, or the use of land for a stadium, gymnasium or similar structure.

³⁷ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. FY 2024 Income Limits Summary.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2024/2024summary.odn> (accessed December 2024).

³⁸

https://www.communitypreservation.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif4646/f/uploads/cpa_low_and_moderate_income_worksheet_for_2024.pdf. Accessed December 2024.

Rehabilitation – capital improvements or extraordinary repairs to historic resources, open spaces, lands for recreational use, and community housing for the purpose of making the above functional for their intended uses and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal, state, or local building or access codes. With historic resources, “rehabilitation” must comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the United States Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (codified in 36 C.F.R. Part 68). With recreational use, “rehabilitation” includes the replacement of playground equipment and other capital improvements to the land or facilities which make the related land or facilities more functional for the intended recreational use.

Restoration – The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties define restoration as the process of accurately depicting a property's form, features, and character at a specific period in time by removing features from other periods in the property's history and reconstructing missing features from the restoration period. In the case of natural systems, the National Parks Service defines³⁹ restoration as reestablishing “natural functions and processes,” as well as returning “disturbed areas to the natural conditions and processes characteristic of the ecological zone in which the damaged resources are situated.” This may include removal of exotic species or contaminants, restoration of natural soundscapes and native flora and fauna, or other actions.

³⁹ <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/mp-4-natural.htm>

D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

MEMORANDUM ON EXISTING PRIORITIES	71
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY	77
SURVEY SUMMARY	87

Town of Bridgewater COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

MEMORANDUM

Prepared by JM Goldson, 21 October 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memo provides suggestions for continuation or revision of goals and principles articulated in the 2020 Community Preservation Plan (found in the Appendix) based on the results of community engagement undertaken through the survey and focus groups facilitated for the 2025 plan update. Overall, in both the survey and the focus groups, **broad support was seen for the existing goals and principles**, with some potential amendments.

Comments included in this memo are made as suggestions to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), with the understanding that the CPC has the responsibility for articulating final goals and principles for their five-year plan.

Refinement of goals and priorities will be discussed by the CPC at the October meeting, with draft versions to be made ready for the November 4th virtual public forum. This forum will serve as another opportunity to get feedback from the community on what has been heard so far in the planning process.

POTENTIAL CHANGES IN PRIORITIES

Overall, the engagement results from the focus groups and the survey indicate support for retaining and adapting the existing goals and principles from the 2020 CPP. One notable exception regards prioritizing connections with Bridgewater State University (BSU), such as in affordable housing siting and recreation resources – this only showed up twice in the survey comments, suggesting that it may not be as important a priority as it was in 2020 during the engagement for the previous CPP.

Guiding Principles– Potential New Priorities

- **Downtown Priority** – support was seen for prioritizing *Historic Preservation* projects downtown and *Community Housing* projects in areas close to services. Particularly downtown, the overlap of these funding categories was seen as a potential synergy between adaptive reuse and revitalization. A focus on downtown existed within the *Historic Preservation* and *Community Housing* goals in the 2020 CPP, but the support seen for these respective goals (each the top priority within their category in the survey) may warrant consideration of uplifting this to a guiding principle.

Historic Preservation Goals – Potential New Priorities

- Explicit support for Indigenous history, lands, and sites (recommended in the survey responses)
- Cost-saving measures in historic projects, including those that make future ongoing maintenance easier and more affordable (recommended in the survey responses). This aligns with the existing Guiding Principle *Longevity*.

Open Space and Passive Recreation Goals– Potential New Priorities

- Projects that address climate change (recommended in the survey responses)
- Projects that incorporate green infrastructure (recommended in the 2022 Comprehensive Master Plan) including through open space conservation on the smaller scale (recommended in the survey results)
- Purchase of parcels, conservation restrictions, or easements that facilitate additional access points to existing *Open Space and Passive Recreation* resources (recommended in survey responses and focus groups, particularly with regard to the new fire station and the Murray Needs farm)

Community Housing Goals– Potential New Priorities

- Support for the Affordable Housing Trust through funding allocation and potential training of new members (recommended in focus groups)
- Funding support for a Housing Coordinator position shared with neighboring towns (recommended in focus groups and 2022 Comprehensive Master Plan)
- Prioritize accessibility in housing developments (recommended in survey responses, focus groups), and consider supporting other Town efforts to increase accessibility requirements in larger projects (recommended in the 2022 Comprehensive Master Plan)

CONCLUSION

Overall, the focus groups and survey results showed **support for maintaining many of the existing goals and principles from the 2020 CPP**. The potential revisions proposed above reflect both the results of this engagement as well as other support seen for these proposals in the 2022 Comprehensive Master Plan.

It should be kept in mind that the goals and principles articulated in the CPP must correspond to eligible activities. The CPC will make the final decision about which goals and principles to include in the plan, and there will be additional public review through the virtual public forum on November 4th and a public hearing to present a final draft of the plan in January 2025.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Note: The date of the public hearing was changed to December 19, 2024, after this memo was presented to the CPC.

MEMORANDUM APPENDIX

PRIORITIES AND GOALS FROM THE 2020 CPP

Guiding Principles

1. Planning and Community Goals

The CPC will prioritize projects that demonstrate comprehensive planning and compatibility with other community initiatives and goals. The CPC will look for projects that also accomplish related initiatives and community goals established in the Town's *Master Plan*, *Housing Production Plan*, and *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. Some example community goals and initiatives are listed below each goal in subsequent chapters.

The CPC also continues to support CPA-eligible initiatives from existing organizations in all of the CPA categories. Some examples are outlined below:

Housing-Oriented Organizations: Bridgewater Housing Partnership Committee, Bridgewater Housing Authority, Bridgewater Affordable Housing Trust

Historic Preservation Organizations: Historic Commission; Historic District Commission; Old Bridgewater Historical Society

Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Organizations: Agricultural Commission; Conservation Commission; Parks & Recreation Commission; Open Space Committee; Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater; Nunckatessett Greenway Committee; Town River Fishery Committee; Taunton Wild & Scenic River Study Committee.

2. Leveraging Funding

The CPC encourages projects which utilize both CPA funds and other public and private funding, including donations and bargain sales. The CPC will prioritize projects where CPA funding will fill a gap or provide a critical need where funding is otherwise unavailable or provide an opportunity that would not be possible—if not for CPA funding. Leveraging can include in-kind donations or sweat equity to reduce project costs.

3. Compatibility between CPA Categories

The CPC encourages projects that include eligible activities in multiple CPA areas, such as affordable housing and recreation. The CPC will prioritize projects that reinforce or are compatible with both the CPA goals within a project's funding category(ies) and goals in other CPA categories.

4. Longevity

Projects are required to demonstrate long-lasting benefits to the community. As part of this, applicants must demonstrate their ability to maintain the value of the CPC's investment through ongoing self-funded maintenance. CPA funds cannot be used to support ongoing maintenance on the site. Applications must include a clear maintenance plan for the project, including financial and staffing needed to carry-out proper care to protect the resource and community's investment.

In addition to a robust and comprehensive maintenance plan, the CPC may require a restriction to protect the nature of their investment for some improvements, such as a new roof, windows, accessibility, and other code compliant improvements. For private properties, applicants must demonstrate a public benefit which may be accomplished through a public access easement or deed restriction. Section 12(a) of the Community Preservation Act requires that a permanent restriction be placed on any "real property interest" acquired using CPA funds to ensure that the property continues to be used for the applicable CPA purpose. Deed restrictions are most commonly required for *Historic Preservation* or *Open Space and Passive Recreation* projects.

5. Connecting the Town to the Gown (Bridgewater State University)

During the outreach process for this plan, participants expressed a desire for better connection between BSU students and faculty and the Town. With 11,024 students and 357 faculty, Bridgewater State University (BSU) contributes a significant share of Bridgewater's population during the school year. Although CPA funds cannot be used directly for projects by the University, the CPC supports projects with components that foster relationship-building between BSU and the Town of Bridgewater.

Historic Preservation Goals

1. Preserve and restore historic properties to improve public accessibility, use, and awareness of the town's local historic resources, such as Town Hall or the Memorial Building, and privately held buildings with public access.
2. Preserve the Town's historic artifacts and documents through digitization and the creation of permanent facilities to house these resources.
3. Preserve historic resources from development or deterioration through increased local, state, and federal historic designations and other mechanisms to encourage and support preservation.
4. Rehabilitate commercial facades and other historic resources, such as Town Hall or the nearby Memorial Building, to boost downtown economic revitalization.
5. Preserve and restore outdoor public historic places and public monuments

Open Space and Passive Recreation Goals

1. Preserve Bridgewater's farms and agricultural lands.⁴¹
2. Preserve and restore existing natural open space and passive recreation facilities—specifically enhancing safety and public access.
3. Preserve and acquire strategic private open space properties along water resources and river corridors to improve water quality and to protect priority wildlife habitats and critical natural landscapes from development.
4. Create, preserve, and acquire neighborhood-level open spaces for pocket parks, community gardens, and other outdoor gathering spaces.

Community Housing Goals

1. Create and preserve affordable housing options for older residents to allow them to stay in the community as they age—prioritizing locations that provide easy access to services and other resources.
2. Create affordable and community housing through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, specifically historic properties.
3. Support a variety of affordable and community housing options, specifically for young individuals; young families; and entry-level housing.
4. Preserve long-term affordability for existing affordable and community housing units and preserve them through eligible repairs and improvements.

Active Recreation Goals

1. Rehabilitate or restore existing parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities, such as Jenny Leonard Park or Marathon Park.
2. Rehabilitate existing or create new facilities to improve safety and public access to active outdoor recreational facilities, such as Stiles and Hart.
3. Create a comprehensive and connected bike and walking path network.
4. Create and restore access to the Town River or other water bodies for canoes/kayak access.
5. Create outdoor recreational facilities that cater to older residents and individuals with special needs, such as pickleball courts and ADA-accessible facilities.

⁴¹ This can include properties with prime farmland soils not currently actively farmed for scenic, economic, and local food production value.

Town of Bridgewater COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARY

Prepared by JM Goldson, 21 October 2024

INTRODUCTION

This memo provides a summary of key findings from the focus groups facilitated by JM Goldson LLC, a planning consultancy, on behalf of the Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee (CPC). The consultant interviewed community members at four focus groups in September 2024, held virtually via Zoom. One virtual focus group was held for each CPA funding category, two each on the evenings of September 12th and 23rd. The focus groups were part of a broader community engagement program designed to understand the needs and priorities of the Bridgewater community in each of the four Community Preservation Act (CPA) categories. The CPC will integrate these findings into their Community Preservation Plan to guide, prioritize, and allocate funding from the CPA over the next five years. In total, 19 people participated in the focus groups, including three members of the CPC.

FOCUS GROUP OUTREACH

Focus group attendees were invited to participate in discussions based on their interest and connection with the CPA funding process. Invites were sent out via email to community leaders and known interested parties as identified by the CPC, as well as Town Boards, Committees, and Commissions that the CPC determined to hold a direct stake in CPA funding priorities and projects. In total, nineteen people participated in the focus groups, including three members of the CPC.

DISCUSSION FORMAT

In each focus group, planning consultant Jenn Goldson, AICP led a discussion about the current needs and resources relevant for each funding category, as well as an overview of eligible types of projects for each category. Information was presented and ideas were recorded through a Miro board, a digital platform for visual note-taking and organization. Ideas were recorded on digital sticky notes during the discussion on-screen.

JENN'S FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."
- Margaret J. Wheatley, American Writer

What is the topic area of the focus group you are attending? Open Space & Passive Recreation

Thank you for accepting our invitation to participate in a focus group with the JM Goldson Team! You should expect the focus group to be a small group of seven or fewer people who have a special knowledge or perspective on this topic area. By speaking with the project team, you, as a community stakeholder or municipal official, will help our team understand the issues and opportunities in your community better. If you find it helpful, please use this questionnaire to help you gather your thoughts before we speak. We look forward to speaking with you soon! - Jenn & the JM Goldson Team

J M
GOLDSON

EMPOWERING PEOPLE.
CREATING COMMUNITY.

What are the greatest opportunities and challenges related to this topic area in your community?



DISCUSSION THEMES

Participants were invited to identify the greatest opportunities and challenges related to the topic area of discussion. Key themes from each funding category focus group are highlighted below:

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Opportunities

- **Funding restoration of private period homes** (such as the Paul Revere House, the Tory House and the Flora Little House)
- **Preservation of buildings and sites** (96 Main Street, Old Bridgewater Nursing Home, the Mitchell Block and Virginia Blocks downtown, and historic cemeteries throughout town)
- **Preservation of historic documents, artifacts, and equipment** (such as the brick wall and remnants at Stiles and Hart, the historic sluice gate at Iron Works Park, equipment from the Perkins Foundry, and the Historic Pole Wagon)
- **Combining preservation with reuse** (such as leveraging Cultural Council grants for the Town House, and converting historic properties to affordable housing like at the McElwain School)

Challenges

- [none recorded in the meeting notes]

OPEN SPACE & PASSIVE RECREATION

Opportunities

- **Planning and collaboration** (including an update to the Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2025, identifying and preserving key ecological private land, increased collaboration with neighboring towns, as well as working with non-profit and state entities that own key properties or have conservation restrictions)
- **Connecting parklands and trails** (this includes both land and water trails on the Taunton, Town, and Satucket rivers, as well as prioritizing connections and parkland in each neighborhood)
- **Leveraging programming** (such as by creating outdoor classrooms to increase connections to open spaces, and exploring opportunities to support agribusiness to draw visitors to open spaces)
- **Leveraging funding** (such as with private funding to raise money and create maps)

- **Open space preservation of particular parcels** (including the new fire station site and the property on the corner of North and Pleasant Streets, which both could connect to the Murray Needs farm with trails, as well as the golf course which has no conservation restriction)

Challenges

- **Management of existing resources** (including expansion of staff for trail and park stewardship, and proposals to create a Town department or oversight committee to manage open spaces). It is noted that Parks and Recreation has one of the smaller budgets, and they need more people)
- **Wayfinding and clarity at sites** (including mapping, welcoming entrances such as at Iron Works Park, and consistency in management across town-owned sites)
- **Allocating responsibility** (including between staff and volunteers, more clarity desired for the Town River Fishery Committee, and the Tree Committee)
- CPA cannot fund maintenance (though this was noted as a key challenge)

COMMUNITY HOUSING

Opportunities

- **Affordable housing in historic/existing buildings** (including the Nursing Home, Mitchell and Virginia Blocks downtown, and a dilapidated house on Main Street)
- **Preserving existing affordable housing** (particularly at Housing Authority units)
- **Staffing and governance** (including reactivation of the Affordable Housing Trust and support through funding and training for members, and support for a Housing Coordinator position that could be shared with another town)

Challenges

- **Affordability for seniors** (including the need for additional supply within Bridgewater)
- **Water capacity and infrastructure** (including concerns over the ability to support new housing, though it was noted that a long-term plan for water improvements exists and that a new plant was recently built)
- **Location of affordable housing** (including a desire to have downsizing options in walkable areas)

ACTIVE RECREATION:

Opportunities

- **Utilization and accessibility study at the Scotland property** (noting the poor condition of the basketball facilities, needs for a playground and walking trails, and the quantity of new residents on that side of town)
- **Improvements to Legion Field** (including a potential utilization and accessibility study, as well as improvements to the fencing, addition of another pavilion closer to the baseball fields, additional parking, and exploration of options to separate football and baseball facilities by constructing new fields or managing shared use agreements with schools)
- **Supporting shared facilities at schools** (including tennis/pickleball courts at the middle school, lacrosse fields at the middle school, and sharing football/baseball fields with the high school)
- **Water access at Stiles and Hart** (it was noted that a bridge was not possible due to cost and environmental constraints, but clarity around which areas are appropriately used for boat launches versus picnics was noted)
- **Creating new parks** (including at the old Mobile station, as well as creating dog parks)
- **Support for existing or previous parks** (including Flora T. Little Park, through indigenous plantings, and Jenny Leonard Park through revitalization)

Challenges

- **Management of existing resources** (including inadequate staffing and structure for maintenance, particularly in Parks and Recreation, as well as a desire to prioritize projects that minimize or ease future maintenance)
- **Communication and awareness** (some people may not know about existing resources)
- **CPA cannot fund maintenance** (though this was noted as a key challenge)

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES

Historic Preservation

Opportunities

- Paul Revere house - restore - near Cumberland Farms - next store
- Display artifacts at public places as a way to preserve those artifact while enabling people to see them (such as schools in Bridgewater and the Town House (Old Town Hall))
- Stabilize/preserve Stanley Iron Works park - walls and other remnants and complete work started years ago - consider restoring to display historic artifacts relevant to the Iron Works, Shoe making, etc.
- Town House (Old Town Hall) - Support Reuse and Rehab - Leverage MA Cultural Council Grant
- Historic period homes, privately owned: fund restoration of these
- Tory House on the commons
- Stiles and Hart - near river - brick wall falling down (though not sure if private or town property) - possibility to restore these remnants (possibly of when fairgrounds or the brick company was there)
- Historic cemeteries - need preservation and restoration
- in general - combine historic preservation and affordable housing projects (like at the McElwain School)
- Old Bridgewater Nursing Home - older building - vacant
- Preservation of historic documents
- 96 Main St - purchased by a developer - preserve (at risk of demolition)
- Identify and evaluate historic equipment for restoration (such as at the Perkins Foundry)
- Mitchell Block and Virginia Block in Central Square tough shape - restoring them as part of downtown redevelopment
- Restore the historic sluice gates (from the Iron Works park)
- Flora Little House - owned privately - in future negotiate to preserve
- Such as restore the Historic Pole Wagon (original fire wagon) in storage now
- Could buy to restore and put affordable housing in

Challenges

- [no comments recorded]

Open Space and Passive Recreation

Opportunities

- Support Agri-business to draw to areas near the conservation area - look for this opportunity (they come for ice cream and farm products but love the open land and trails and get involved & support the trails, etc)
- Leverage CPA funds with private opportunities (trustees, for example) to raise money
- Including in collaboration with neighboring towns
- ID and preserve most significant ecologically privately-owned open space
- Add signage for trail heads when using CPA for eligible preservation activities
- Leverage CPA with other funds to create maps (not eligible for CPA)
- Open Space & Recreation Plan identifies priorities
- OSRP needs to be updated in 2025
- Golf course does not have a Conservation Restriction
- TC member Moore did analysis with mapping re: remaining private open space parcels (possibly sourced from the OSRP)
- Property on corner of North & Pleasant Street (for sale) - connects to trails - if left undeveloped can be a safer connection to the back trails - abuts the Murray Needs CR (Open Space Committee been advocating) - \$2-3M listed price
- Connecting trails - land and water trails - NPS wild & scenic on Taunton River - Town River, Satucket River - forming rivertrail w/ parklands (could become town-owned) or easements over private land - effort Nuckettesett/Satucket Greenway - create well-cared for land & water trails - this can also be an economic benefit to downtown by drawing people to the community
- long-term vision & sustainability; outdoor classrooms to create educational component
- Toole Property (building fire station) - \$100K for parks and rec - agreement was for parking area in back - want to connect area for playground/rec with back of Murray Needs with a trail.
- Harmony with non-profit and state entities that owns property or have CRs
- Prior plans have stated a goal of creating passive parkland in each neighborhood - connecting parklands and trails in every precinct

Challenges

- Need oversight committee to manage conservation lands already town owned
- town manager turnover - uncertainty for future town manager and priorities - want to make sure has CPA as a priority
- Structure of town gov't - should we have a Dept. of Natural Resources
- More attractive entrance to Iron Works park - also clarity on how to portage a canoe down there
- Expand staff for stewarding of trails and parks - can't always be volunteers
- Preserve passive recreation
- want something to happen with remains of stone building - some talk ask trailhead for AMC (land & water trail would come together at that park)

- Want more definition for the town river fishery committee (bi-town committee with W. Bridgewater) - marine fishery (part of MA Fish & Wildlife) - there are management plans for upper town river & lower town river - Fish ladder dam decommissioned - still have to make sure herring can go up and down the river - expand fisheries committee to teach/promote and have programs
- Old State Farm trail when comes online will be town's job to manage and sustainably steward it & consistent across all town properties
- Parks & Rec has one of the smallest budgets in town - needs more people
- tree committee to encourage trees and forests (natural resource elements)

Community Housing

Opportunities

- Reactivate the Housing Trust - appoint the board, allocate CPA funds, and support training for the Board of Trustees
- Town Manager must appoint members so may take a while until the permanent town manager is selected
- Continue preserve Housing Authority units to protect them from decay
- Restore and reuse Mitchell and Virginia blocks in Central Square as affordable housing
- Nursing home - convert to affordable housing
- Support a housing coordinator position (could be shared with the another town)
- House on Main Street (falling apart) - could it be converted to affordable housing

Challenges

- Concern about seniors - they are not being taken care of (only a little less than 200 units for seniors)
- Water capacity & infrastructure conditions issues - need to address this to support new housing
- Need for more senior housing. Housing Authority wait list is long - people wait years to get a unit
- New plant was built recently
- significant issues - seniors being forced out of town - too expensive to stay here
- One of the new wells have not been tested yet
- Affordability is an issue
- Seniors have to leave their homes because they can't afford their taxes. Not sure how to address this.
- Long-term plan exists for water improvements
- Where do we put affordable homes? How do we stay above the 10% on the SHI as we develop houses?
- Want to move more CPA funds toward housing.
- Then the homes they move out of could be opened up for families
- Need homes for people to downsize especially in walkable areas

Active Recreation

Opportunities

- Long list and have limited resources and staff
- Capital plan - have one that is submitted to the town already - continuous, rolling capital plan
- Working on a plan (5-year capital plan) with Parks & Rec Dept.
- Dog parks needed
- Connecting parks with walkways and greenways - connect the whole system - connect the business community with parks
- Legion field - hub people are at 7 days a week - looks worn down - needs upgrades - want it to be a centerpiece sports complex
- Jenny Leonard Park - not taken care of - developers cleared it and tore down the structure
- High school has open fields that were cleared and don't seem to be as utilized - could that be an opportunity to address the field usage issues - complicated since managed by schools - but they are used in appropriate seasons
- Possibility for updating 2015 Parks & Recreation Assessment
- Would likely need a different location for football for practices (still use legion for games)
- Need parking at Legion - could move basketball courts to another part of Legion
- Legion field - cross usage (football, baseball, etc) - want to get facility for football and separate one for baseball
- Need tennis courts - can rehab old courts on side of middle school (near Crane St) - could also be used as pickle ball courts
- Legion has resources that need to be rehabbed - Hayes building - storage for baseball
- Legion field space utilization & accessibility plan
- Scotland field - basketball courts - need new courts there
- Lacrosse field needed - possibly at Middle school (it is owned by the Town); the high school property is owned by the school district
- though owned by the town it is still managed by the school district (had spoken about building a lacrosse wall but didn't seem likely)
- Legion - fencing needs to be updated and rehab on multiple fields - safety issues due to inadequate fencing (is this maintenance or rehab?)
- At the middle school - west entrance off center - grassy area - make into a music venue (like music alley)
- Flora T. Little park (non-profit owned BIA) - plant indigenous plantings; accessible pathways
- Girls softball fields on crescent st - mowing there - attempt to put a trail - only a fragment of a walking trail - more opportunity to make the mowed perimeter (on north side of field) available for walking and even a small picnic area
- Need another pavillion - closer to the baseball fields - in case of inclement weather
- Scotland property - basketball beyond maintenance
- can use a park utilization and accessibility study for the Scotland property as well
- only park on that side of town and a lot of new residents out there

- Spring St launch - people using lawn for picnics. Wanted to put bridge into Stiles & Hart and canoe launch. Need access land. the parking lot in tough shape.
- Bridge is a non-starter - cost of bridge too much and it's in wetlands - the Stiles and Hart access from another area. Was a huge environmental issue at the riverbed
- Town acquired the Mobile station - taking - 2/3rds paid by CPA - want to be official park to get Parc grant - there is a draft plan - potential to use CPA funds to create the park. (the plymouth street park/summer street property)
- needs a playground and walking trails going around the perimeter
- use admin funds for the studies for Scotland and Legion field

Challenges

- trail maintenance is an issue due to lack of staff and resources.
- There is no structure in the town to support open space and parklands - not even clear who is supposed to do what (John only 13 hours a week) - staffing is inadequate. Nobody seems to be officially responsible for open space and parklands - town relies on volunteers - but not consistent
- For a town Bridgewater's size, they have very inadequate staff for parks and rec
- Vast amount of trails but not all maintained - lack of communication - people don't know we have these and don't know about parks like Jenny Leonard and funding is a huge issue
- Lots of what we are hearing are maintenance issues and CPA can't fund maintenance
- tough to maintain the recreation resources - we can't keep up with maintenance - lack of funding and lack of staffing - need to do things now that we can maintain in the future so don't get in a position again to rehab 20-30 years down the road

Town of Bridgewater COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

Prepared by JM Goldson, 30 October 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction	90
Survey Outreach.....	90
Summary of Key Findings	91
Survey Results	92
Participants	92
Funding Category Prioritization.....	96
Evaluation Criteria	96
Historic Preservation Priorities	98
Open Space and Passive Recreation Priorities.....	99
Community Housing Priorities.....	100
Active Recreation Priorities.....	101
Appendix	103
Open-ended Survey Comments	104
Potential Evaluation Criteria	103

INTRODUCTION

This memo provides a summary of key findings from the community survey prepared by JM Goldson LLC, a planning consultancy, on behalf of the Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee (CPC). The survey was part of a broader community engagement program designed to understand the needs and priorities of the Bridgewater community in each of the four Community Preservation Act (CPA) categories. The CPC will integrate these findings into their Community Preservation Plan to guide, prioritize, and allocate funding from the CPA over the next five years. In total, 177 responses were recorded to the survey, including 173 from online responses and four (4) from physical submissions.

SURVEY OUTREACH

The Bridgewater Community Preservation Plan survey was available online via JM Goldson's SurveyMonkey platform, as well as in-person via paper copies at the Town Clerk's Office, Library, Senior Center, and Housing Authority between September 17th and October 16th, 2024. The survey was advertised through a variety of virtual and physical outreach methods, including email outreach, social media, a press release from the Town, and links on the front page of the Town's website as well as the CPC's website. Copies of the postcard shown at right were distributed by CPC members.



Survey Representation

An analysis of demographics indicated that younger and non-white residents were underrepresented in the survey. It is possible that low- and moderate-income residents were also underrepresented, however the number of respondents that chose not to answer the question on household income makes a determination here not possible. In general, many of the demographic questions saw significant numbers of survey takers choose to skip demographic questions or select the "Prefer not to answer" option, making comparisons to Census data difficult.

Charts comparing survey data to Census data, where applicable, are available in the Survey Results section.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

HOLISTIC PLANNING AND MEETING MULTIPLE GOALS

In responses across all categories, respondents highlighted the overlaps seen in the interests affected by funding projects. There was a desire to see projects that meet multiple goals, such as rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings to provide more affordable and senior-targeted housing. This was also seen in a desire for accessible and age-friendly infrastructure across project types, particularly in Open Space and Passive Recreation, Active Recreation, and Community Housing projects.

"More affordable/subsidized housing like McElwain school"

"Acquire land for the dual use of stormwater detention basins and native plant prairie meadows in/near the center of town"

PROACTIVE AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

In the responses regarding *Open Space and Passive Recreation*, *Active Recreation*, and *Historic Preservation*, there was a desire to plan ahead. This applied to both preservation and ongoing maintenance of key properties and assets. This was seen as a way to preserve Bridgewater's New England feel while keeping a pulse on community desires and being cost-effective. Prioritizing ongoing maintenance of existing properties was a key theme in each of these categories.

"The [Parks & Recreation Department] should oversee a team of trained volunteer stewards.... CPA might help pay for this needed training"

"Be more proactive in approaching landowners (including commercial developers)"

TARGETING HOUSING FOR AFFORDABILITY AND SENIORS

Prioritizing support for more affordable housing options showed up as a key theme in *Community Housing* responses, as did age-targeted housing options for seniors and those with special needs. Support was seen for fully-restricted projects as well as intergenerational and mixed-income projects.

"Definitely more senior housing. They are getting priced out"

"Smaller, efficient, easily maintainable units. Everything built is big and expensive"

FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN

Emphasis on downtown development was seen particularly in *Historic Preservation* and *Community Housing* categories. This included prioritization of downtown for historic preservation projects, as well as new housing projects. Seeking opportunities where these projects could contribute to downtown revitalization and locate housing close to amenities came up multiple times as well.

"Rehabilitate the facades of buildings downtown"

"[Age 55+ housing] in the center would make it convenient for older people to get out and walk for coffee, library, etc."

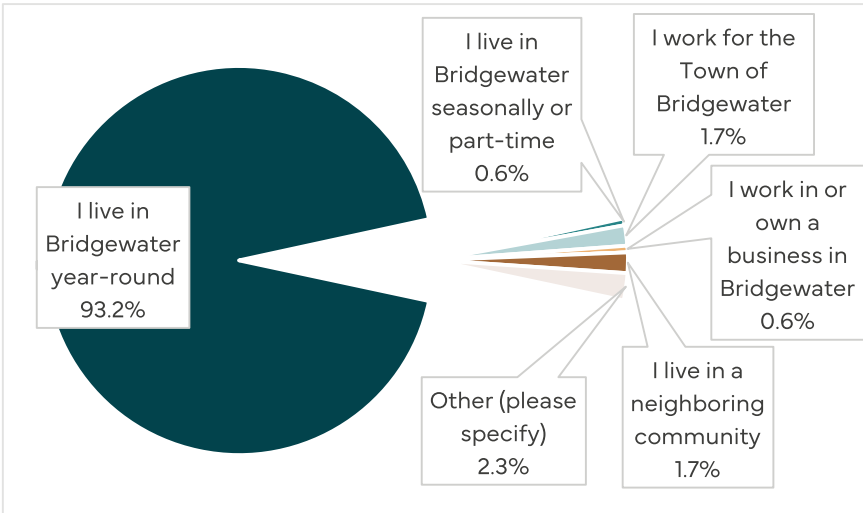
SURVEY RESULTS

PARTICIPANTS

Of the 177 participants in the survey, most participants answered most questions⁴², though open-ended questions inviting proposals for specific projects were mostly skipped by respondents.⁴³ Two-thirds⁴⁴ of respondents chose to answer demographic questions at the end of the survey. Below is a breakdown of answers to those demographic questions. These responses are compared to US Census data where applicable.

Connection to Bridgewater

Most respondents (165, or 93 percent) indicated that they live in Bridgewater year-round. Smaller numbers of respondents indicated that they work in the Town or live in a neighboring community (each 3, or 1.7 percent). Those that chose to specify were associated by connection to a land trust or nonprofit (3, or 1.7 percent) or work part-time in Bridgewater (1 respondent).



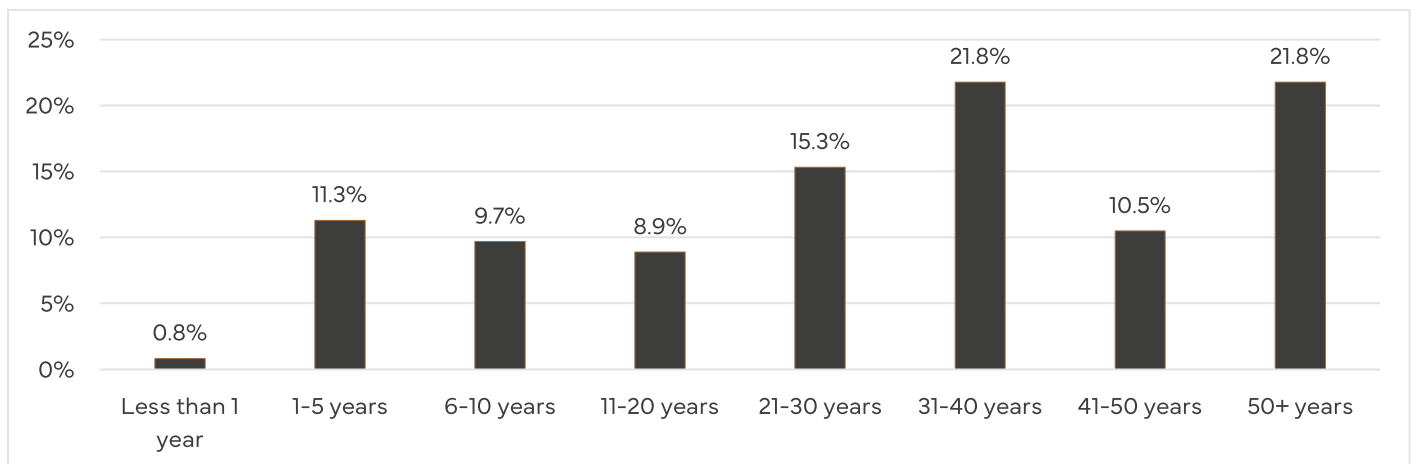
⁴² SurveyMonkey reported a 63 percent completion rate.

⁴³ Between 125 and 159 of the 177 respondents skipped these questions.

⁴⁴ Either 123 or 124 of 177 respondents, depending on the question.

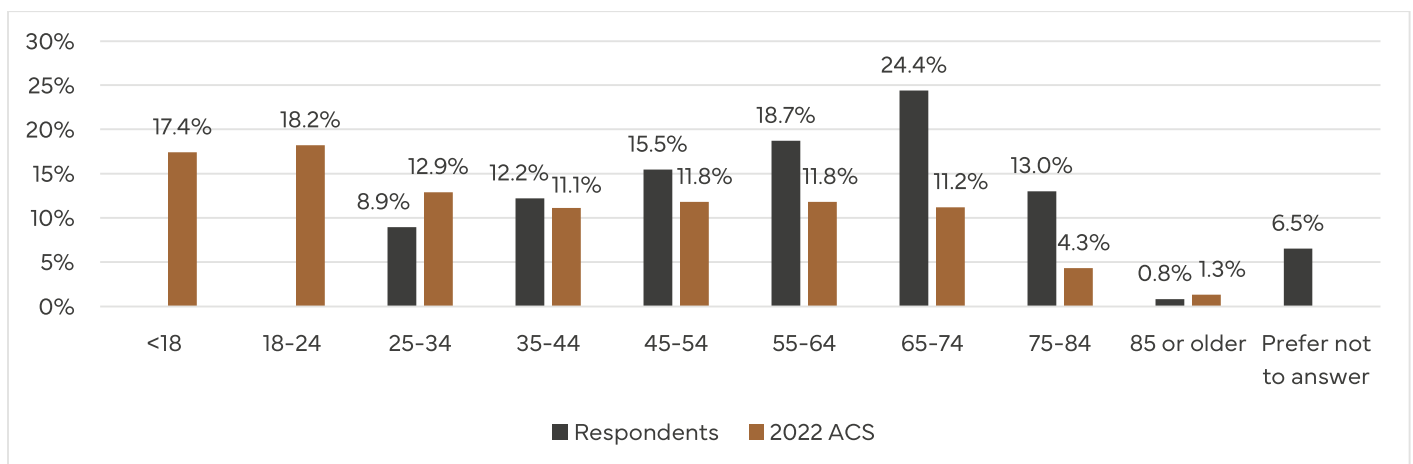
Length of Association

Long-term Bridgewater residents, those having lived in Bridgewater for over twenty years, made up over two-thirds (86, or 69 percent) of respondents.



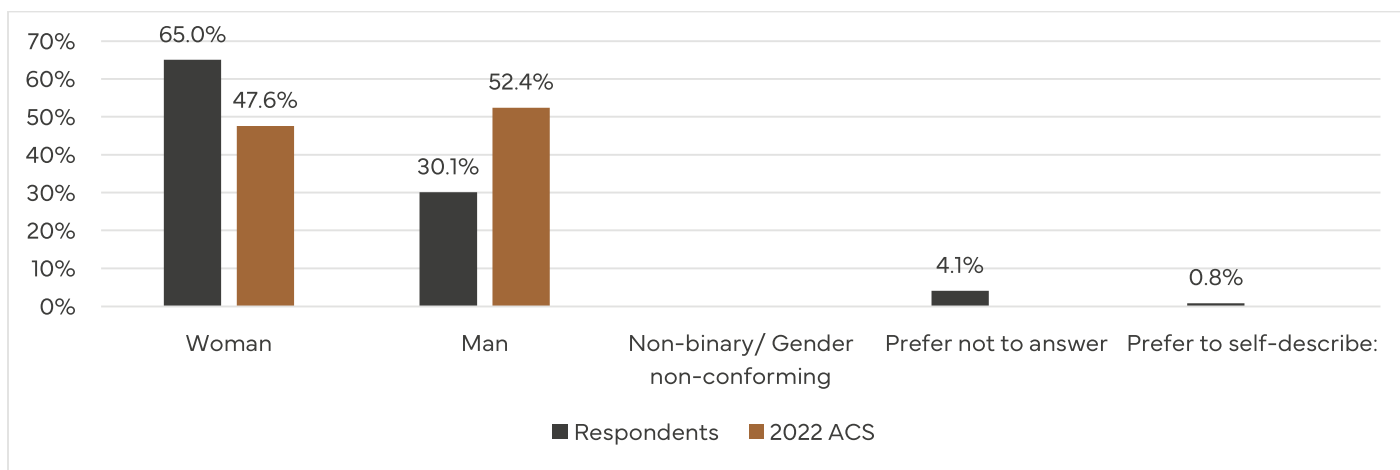
Age

Most respondents (68, or 55 percent) were 25-64 years old. Older adults, those aged 65 and up, made up just over a third (47, or 38 percent) of responses, compared to being only 17 percent of the Town's population (2022 ACS S0101). No respondents were under 25 years old, despite this group making up over a third (36 percent) of the Town's population (2022 ACS S0101). Fifty-four survey-takers skipped this question and eight selected the "Prefer not to answer" option.



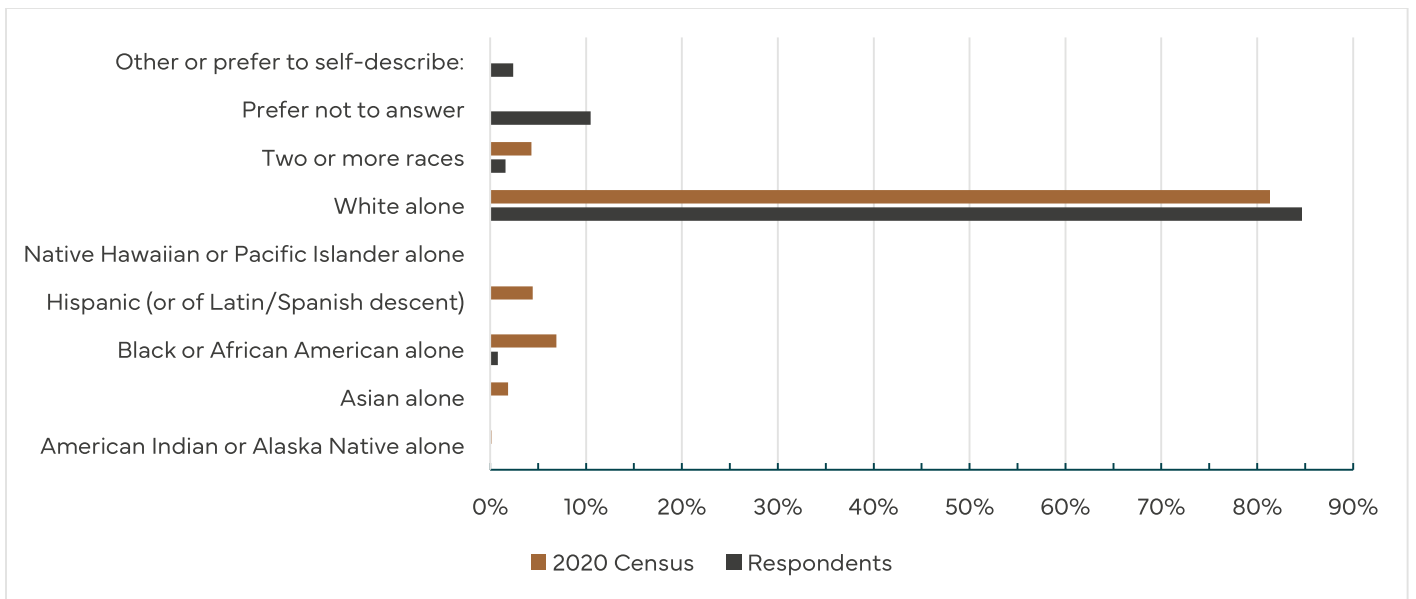
Gender

Nearly two-thirds (80, or 65 percent) of respondents identified as women, and just under one-third (37, or 30 percent) of respondents identified as men. This compares to the Town's population of 48 percent women and 52 percent men (2022 ACS S0101). Five survey-takers selected the "Prefer not to answer" option and 54 skipped the question, making comparison to census data less strong.



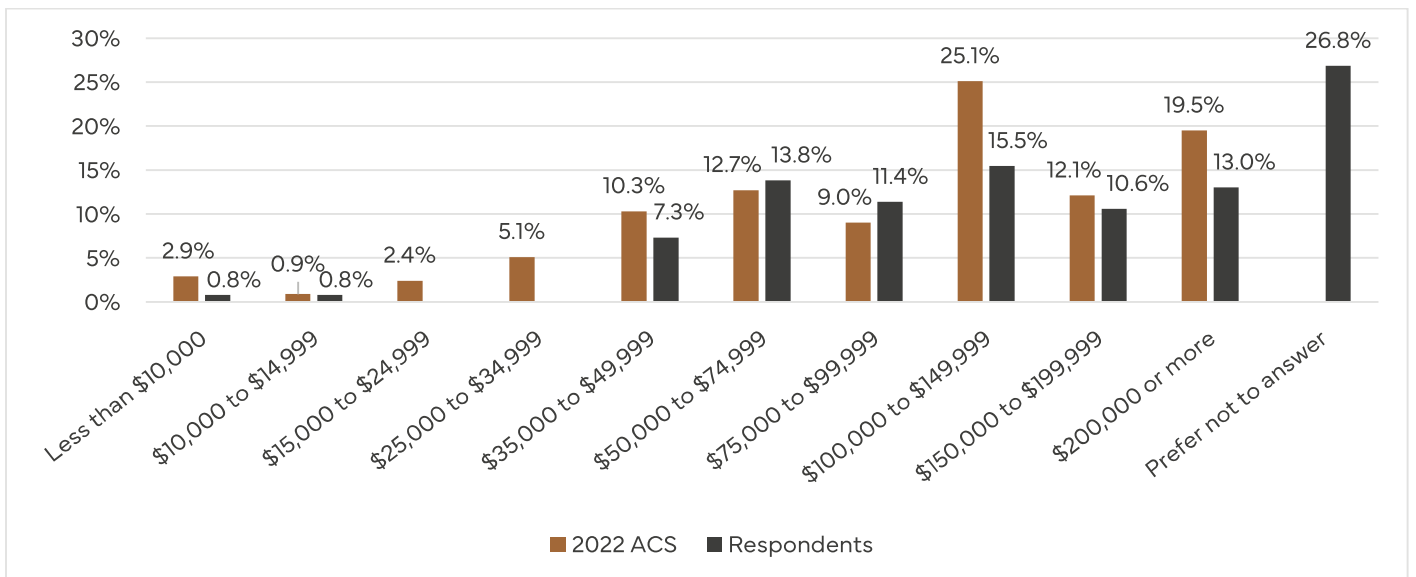
Race & Ethnicity

More than four in five respondents identified as White alone. Three respondents (2 percent) chose to self-describe. Thirteen respondents (10 percent) selected the "Prefer not to answer" option and 53 skipped this question, making comparison to census data less strong.



Household Income

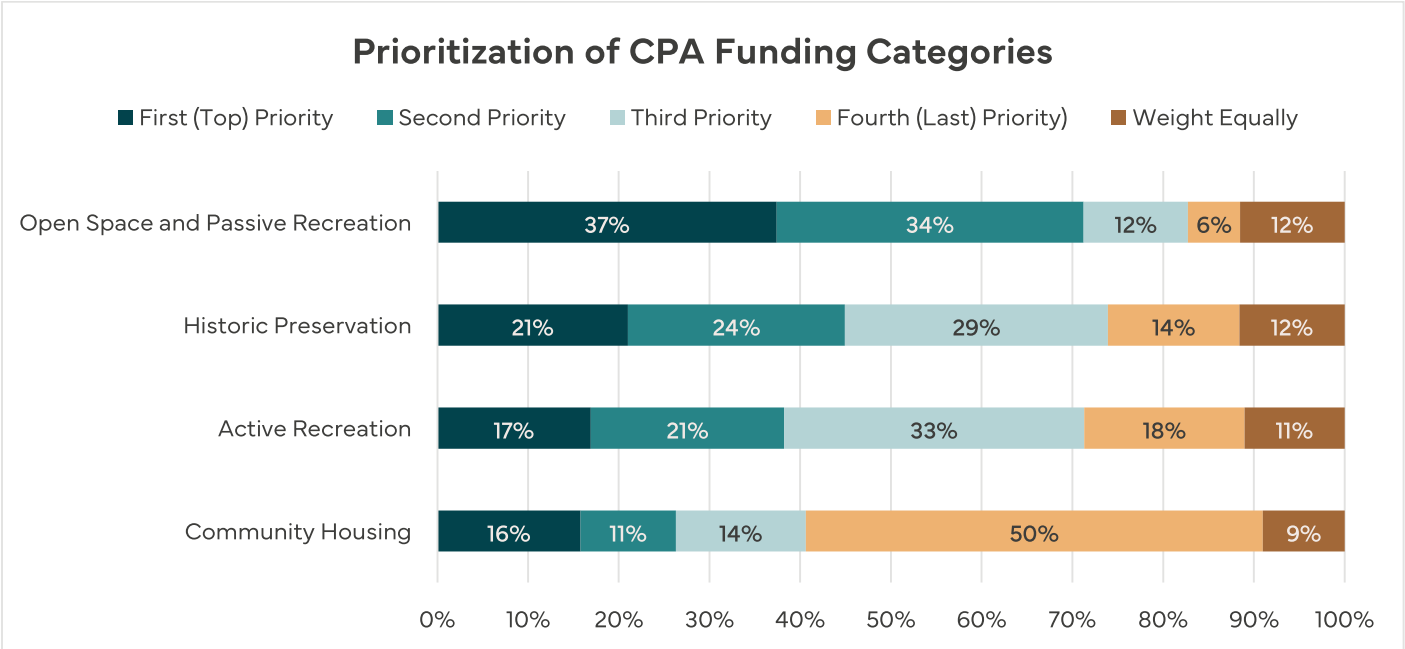
Over one-third (39 percent) of respondents indicated that their annual household income was over \$100,000. Nearly one in ten (9 percent) of respondents indicated that their annual household income was less than \$50,000. Thirty-three (27 percent) of respondents selected the “Prefer not to answer” option and 54 skipped this question, making comparison to census data impractical.



FUNDING CATEGORY PRIORITIZATION

When instructed to “rank the four eligible CPA project categories below based on how you would like the CPC to prioritize allocating the funds over the next five years,” and offered the option to weigh project categories equally, strong support was seen for Open Space, Historic Preservation, and Active Recreation projects. Half of the responses indicating a preference for Community Housing ranked it as their lowest priority.

The following chart shows the CPA funding categories ordered by weighted average ranking, with priorities ranked higher at the top.



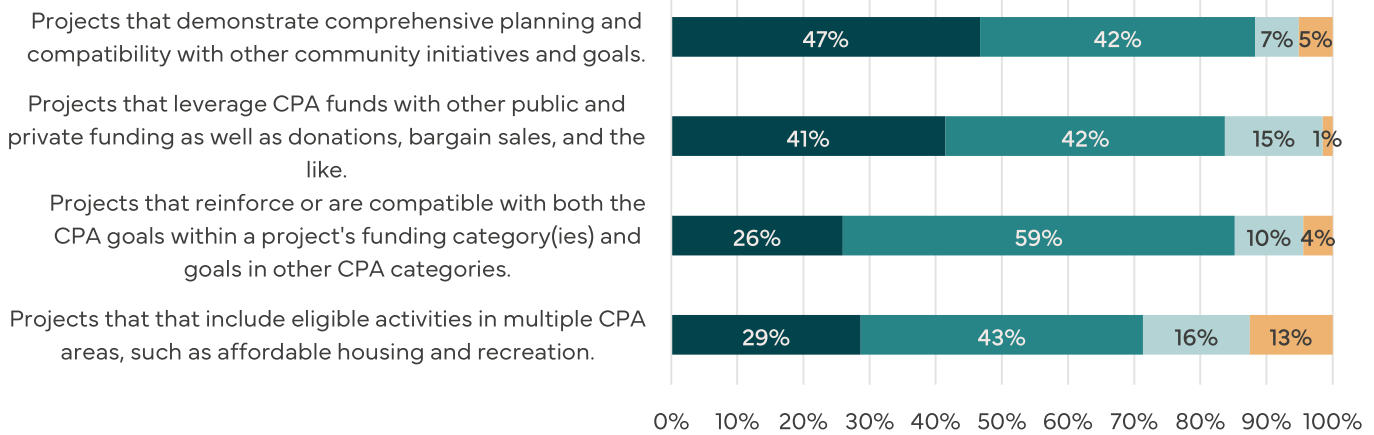
EVALUATION CRITERIA

When given a paraphrased selection of existing evaluation criteria from the previous Community Preservation Plan and asked to rank the importance of each along a scale including “Not important,” “Somewhat unimportant,” “Somewhat important,” and “Very important,” some priorities stood out.

The following chart shows the given evaluation criteria ordered by average ranking, with criteria ranked as more important at the top.

Importance of Evaluation Criteria

■ Very Important ■ Somewhat important ■ Somewhat Unimportant ■ Not important



Proposed New Evaluation Criteria⁴⁵

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to suggest other ideas for evaluation criteria. In response to this, 22 comments included ideas such as prioritizing project impact, fiscal and environmental sustainability, area-specific focuses such as downtown, consideration of long-term maintenance needs, and prioritizing essential “needs” over amenity “wants.”

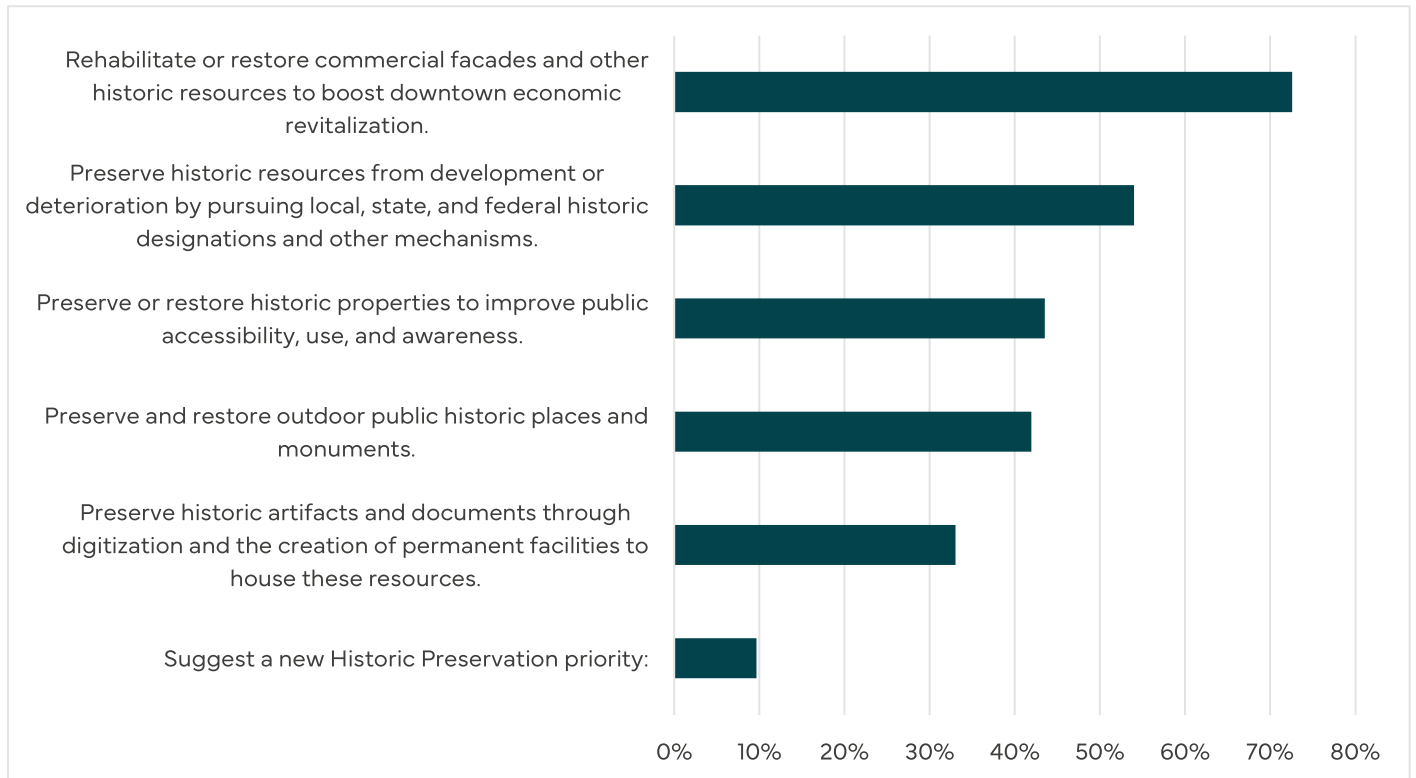
“Projects that revitalize downtown.”

“What are the greatest and most pressing needs for residents, including low-income? For example, housing is essential for all. Other categories support amenities, which are less essential.”

Number of residents the project has the potential to impact. Rate of return on investment. How long a project will last.”

⁴⁵ Comments below are edited for grammar and clarity. Original responses as submitted may be found in the Survey Summary appendix.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PRIORITIES



Proposed Historic Preservation Priorities and Projects

This list compiles suggestions from all CPA categories, reworded and consolidated for clarity. Some proposals were submitted under categories different from their intended focus. For the original, unedited responses to each question, please refer to the Appendix.

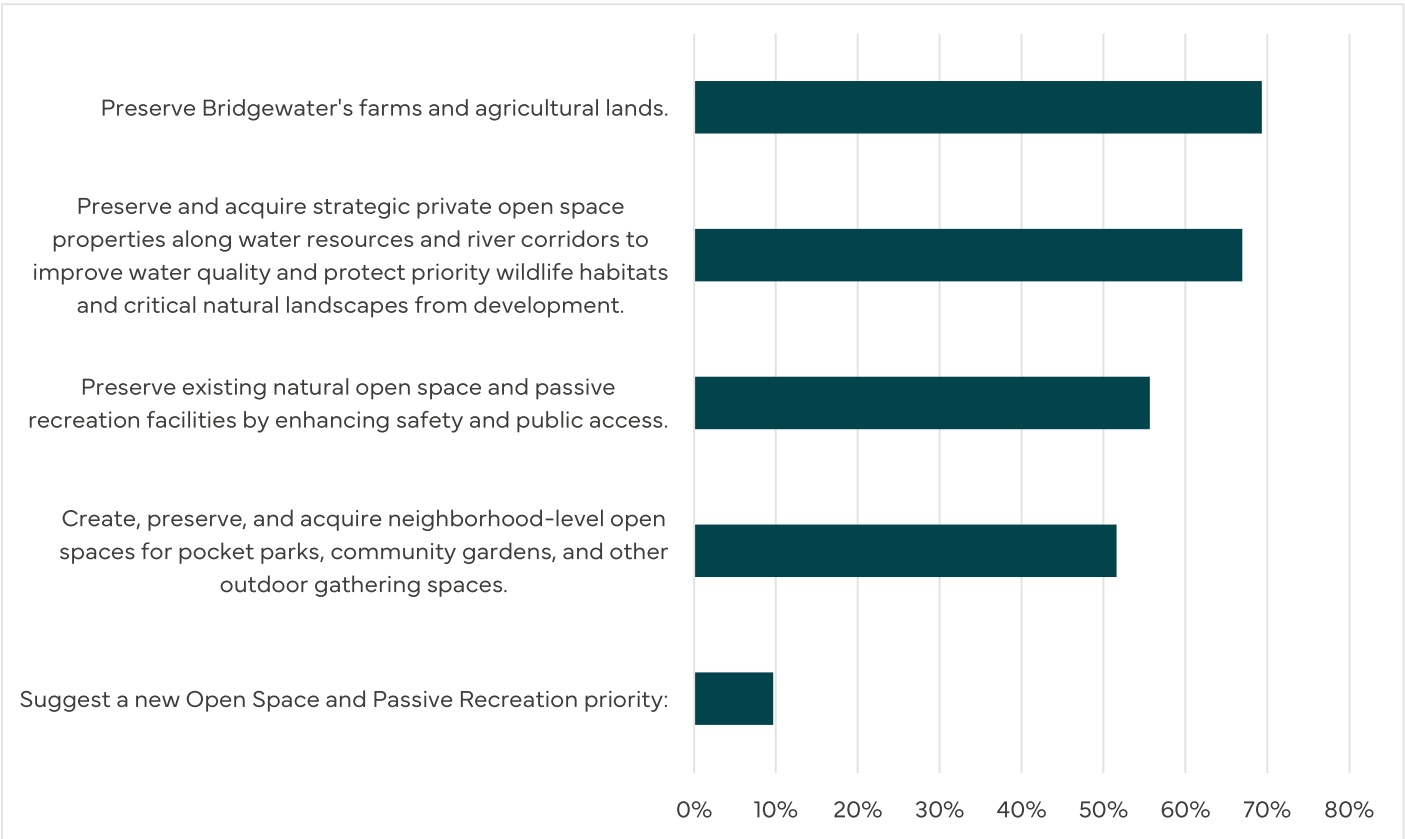
Proposed Priorities:

- Focus preservation efforts on downtown
- Support the preservation of Indigenous history, lands, and traditional sites
- Cost-saving measures in historic projects, like permitting the use of “non-historic” materials
- Pairing historic preservation of structures with provision of affordable housing

Proposed Projects:

- Rehabilitation of facades on historic buildings downtown
- Repair of columns at Bridgewater Public Library
- Support the incorporation of Indigenous history into Town historic events
- Renovation of old Town Hall/Town House
- Preservation and reuse of the remaining building at Ironworks Park
- Preservation of Scotland Church
- Preservation of the Tory House on the Common
- Preservation of the United Methodist Church on School Street

OPEN SPACE AND PASSIVE RECREATION PRIORITIES



Proposed Open Space and Passive Recreation Priorities and Projects

This list compiles suggestions from all CPA categories, reworded and consolidated for clarity. Some proposals were submitted under categories different from their intended focus. For the original, unedited responses to each question, please refer to the Appendix.

Proposed Priorities:

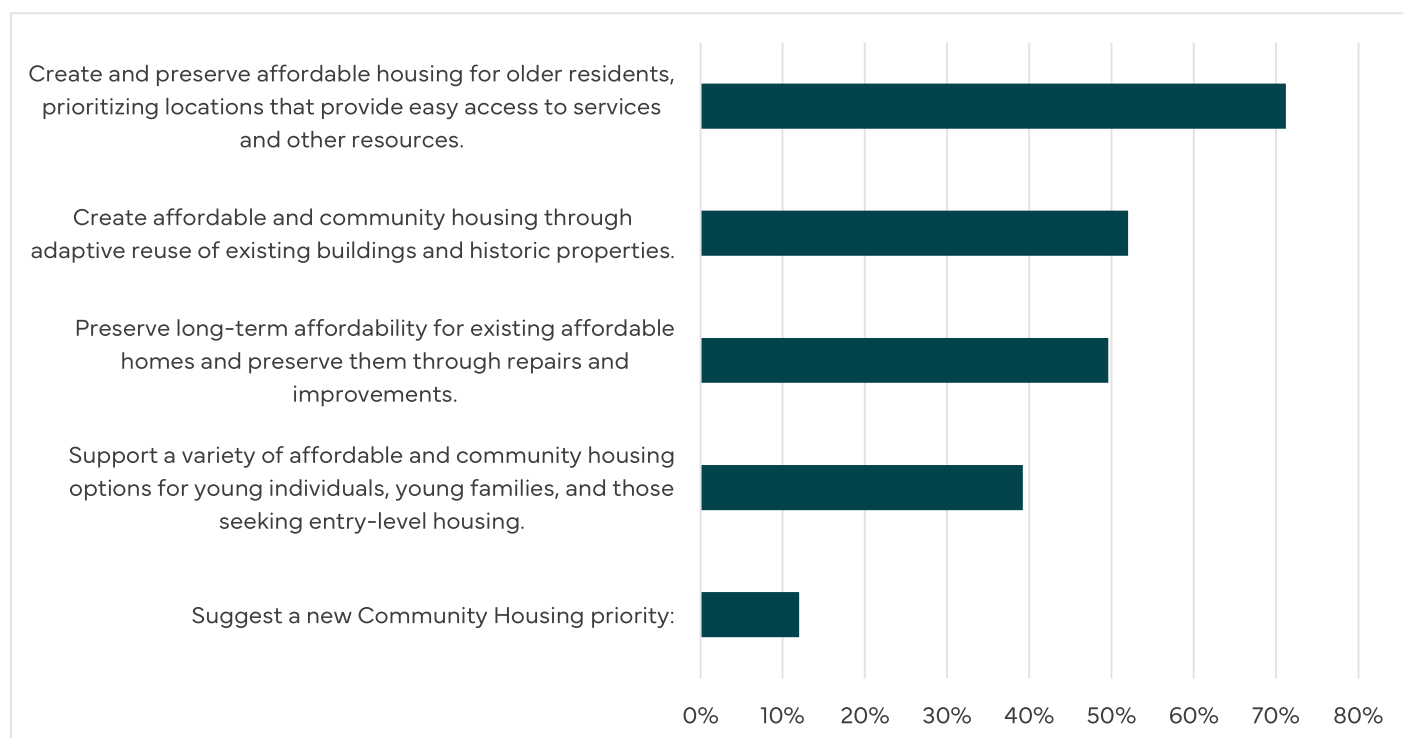
- Addressing climate change
- Expansion of priority areas beyond those officially designated “priority wildlife habitats” and “critical natural landscapes”
- Transition of agricultural lands to open space conservation
- Maintenance of existing sites and facilities (where eligible)
- Promote the use of green infrastructure through open space conservation, including on the small scale

Proposed Projects:

- Support creating a native plant nursery on conserved open space land
- Acquire small open spaces in strategic locations for climate resilience and green infrastructure, like stormwater detention
- Support a training program for volunteer open space stewards

- Purchase the property at 1300 Vernon Street to preserve open space and protect Snows Brook
- Provide funding support for easements to connect new open space access behind the new fire station to other nearby open spaces, like the Murray Needs farm
- Purchase additional land around the Murray Needs farm to create an “agricultural preserve”, including along Pleasant Street
- Purchase additional land around Carver’s Pond and create a loop trail
- Purchase additional land around Lake Nippenicket
- Support community gardens
- Dedicate funding to create a community center in a park
- Restore the walking paths in the Titicut Conservation area and the adjacent Water Department property
- Continue to fund improvements at Stiles & Hart, including work on trails

COMMUNITY HOUSING PRIORITIES



Proposed Community Housing Priorities and Projects

This list compiles suggestions from all CPA categories, reworded and consolidated for clarity. Some proposals were submitted under categories different from their intended focus. For the original, unedited responses to each question, please refer to the Appendix.

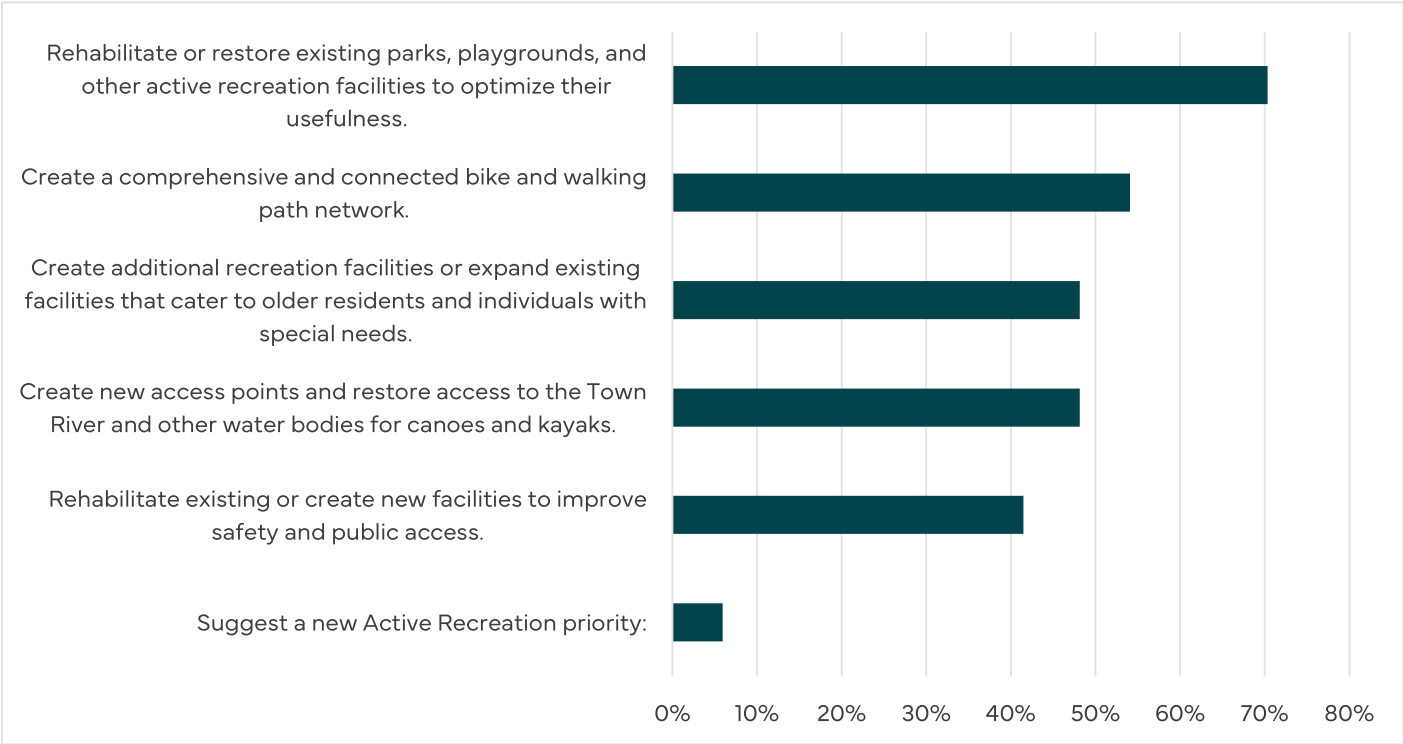
Proposed Priorities:

- Prioritize housing projects that also serve historic preservation goals, including
- Support activation and funding of the Affordable Housing Trust
- Create additional 55+ and disabled housing, and consider advocating for mixed-generational housing projects to provide for younger families seeking entry-level housing and older and disabled adults in the same housing project
- Prioritize the downtown area for new housing projects
- Prioritize accessibility best practices exceeding the minimum accessibility requirements in housing projects
- In affordable housing, explore resale value restrictions to maintain affordability
- Prioritize smaller housing units that are easier to maintain for residents and more affordable

Proposed Projects:

- Purchase existing buildings (e.g., historic homes and the old nursing home) to create new affordable housing and simultaneously meet historic preservation goals
- Create age-restricted 55+ housing that allows pets
- Support programs to help people enter the housing market
- Additional renovation support at the Bridgewater Housing Authority’s low-income elderly and disabled housing on Hemlock Drive

ACTIVE RECREATION PRIORITIES



Proposed Active Recreation Priorities and Projects

This list compiles suggestions from all CPA categories, reworded and consolidated for clarity. Some proposals were submitted under categories different from their intended focus. For the original, unedited responses to each question, please refer to the Appendix.

Proposed Priorities:

- Maintenance and upkeep for existing facilities (where eligible)
- Water access, including parking for cartop boats
- Trail construction and maintenance throughout the Town

Proposed Projects:

- Preserve and rehabilitate Jenny Leonard Park
- Build tennis courts
- Create a skate park
- Create a new playground at Rainbows End, and consider additional facilities like basketball courts and street hockey
- Rehabilitate the playground at Marathon Park, including more shade/cover from the sun
- Create additional bike and walking paths
- Create additional access points for active water recreation like kayaking
- Update and expand the basketball courts at Legion Field, and consider expanding the parking
- Acquire the area next to the parking lot currently owned by Claremont on Lake Nippenicket to expand active recreation space and access to the lake
- Create another location of pickleball courts that caters to younger players
- Create an area for outdoor fitness equipment for older adults
- Create a public putting green at the Senior Center
- Create a public bocce court
- Create a public swimming pool
- Create a dog park and improve existing areas that allow dogs with clarified on-leash and off-leash areas
- Fund maintenance of ball fields at Marathon Park and at Prospect Street
- Create a children's recreation area at the Flagg Street recreation area

SURVEY SUMMARY APPENDIX

POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Respondents were asked to rank the CPA project evaluation criteria sourced from the previous CPA plan by importance to them. An additional option asked *“What other evaluation criteria ideas do you have?”* Comment to that question are provided below.

- what are the greatest and most pressing needs for residents, including low income. For example, housing is essential for all. Other categories support amenities, which are less essential.
- 96 Main St. Boys & Girls Club; old Town Hall becomes an art/music center
- Please save 96 Main Street for Preservation; actually, most of Main Street, slowly. I would like to see a Boys&Girls Club located at 96 Main, because of its location. We need to make our old Town Hall into something to do with art and music.
- Improve outdoor space at the Bridgewater Veterans Center.
- Specifically I would like to see more done for Bridgewater’s veterans. A more viable Veterans Center for example. The current center needs a lot of work.
- I don't fully understand this question.
- all goas should be consistent with the original charter of such an organization, and should not be spent on pet projects or immigration housing or amenities. This money should be spent on historical and recreational conservation and preservation on behalf of the Bridgewater residents.
- Number of residents the project has the potential to impact. Rate of return on investment. How long a project will last/project life cycles. Ease of maintenance.
- We are growing as a community, and we need to improve our recreational spaces, parks, hiking trails, picnic areas by lakes, etc. Also improve downtown area to make it more walkable, have pretty flowers and ornamental bushes, remove blight ((1) corner gas station/car repair shop Lucky as it is hideous right in the downtown intersection and it's the first thing you see when you drive in; (2) out of use gas station across from the university on Summer Street, etc.). Let's use the available funds to make Bridgewater more beautiful, so we can be proud of our town.
- projects that have sustained upkeep and funding
- I don't fully understand these questions Affordable housing is not my priority More services to the town members is example sidewalks good roads, clean water, low taxes
- Duration to complete projects in 3 yrs or less. Projects that revitalize downtown.
- Growth and development of the town and business
- Help to fund projects that also include other funding resources, and also have a built - in sustainability

- Open Space is the most important. Bridgewater is losing its open space at a rapid rate. Please prioritize.
- Percent of population impacted by project
- Convert Rainbows end into street hockey rink and basketball courts. There is nothing for kids to do on that side of town. Fix our water, streets and create sidewalk on main roads.
- Projects need to make sense for the town and preserve it's character. Also we need to be mindful of limited resources such as water. There is already a problem with that.
- The needs of the community and the importance of those initiatives to the future of the town.
- stop sending or procuring money for weirdo. leave them in the cities and out of my town. their pill combo wont set well with our dirty water
- Projects that best represent the community's interest
- This is just a comment. Without definitions, I'm not sure what the difference is between active and passive recreation, and I'm also not sure how the last 2 potential considerations are different. Unclear questions (at least to me) make for unclear answers.

OPEN-ENDED SURVEY COMMENTS

For each CPA funding category, respondents were asked to select their top one to three priorities from choices that included goals from the previous CPA plan. One option invited respondents to *"suggest a new [CPA category] priority."*

Respondents were also shown the CPA project eligibility chart, and asked *"Are there any specific [CPA category] projects/programs that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?"*

Comments to those questions are provided below, by CPA category.

Suggest a new Historic Preservation priority:

- The Scotland Church is a historic building in town that needs the towns help before it is too late.
- Downtown abandoned buildings need to be renovated or demolished and new businesses need to be encouraged to come to town
- Rehabilitate facade of buildings in downtown area to make our town look beautiful. Remove blight whenever possible. Downtown area should be for restaurants, coffee shops, flower shops, etc. (no need for ugly gas station or car repair shop).
- Add outdoor seating in the common green and change traffic patterns and parking in center to expand outdoor seating in front of businesses.
- include general recognition and respect for our centuries old Native American history, culture, and tribal settlements in this region, and also the European colonists history. We should acknowledge the residential hamlets and diverse cultural contributions for all groups of people who immigrated here.

- Allow for the use of "non-historic" materials in preservation to get more "bang for the buck" and make maintenance more affordable.
- Preservation restrictions for those parts of Bridgewater with older buildings and homes. We will soon lose the quaint, New England feel of the center of Bridgewater as no restrictions are in place. Developers will tear down and rebuild new structures.
- Jenny Leonard park
- Consider removing the Common in the center to help improve traffic flow. Have traffic flow straight through the center of the common. Businesses then can have bigger sidewalks where they can have outdoor seating and possibly parking. By doing this we can attract restaurants.
- Make the owners of the buildings on the common keep them up!!
- i find the streetlights to be very racist. Especially the green ones. why do the irish always get to go?
- Protect historic properties from being demolished. Developers are becoming greedy in Bridgewater and we should be protecting our historic properties.

Are there any specific Historic Preservation projects that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?

- Preserve older structures at town parklands (ie. remains of brick walls at Stiles and Hart closer to the sewer easement and the structures at the Stanley Ironworks Park).
- no
- Put the old town hall to good use.
- Town reports don't seem valuable, but they are very valuable to future generations. Read though the 1930 Bridgewater Town Report. Keep in mind "The Great Depression" did not yet have a name at that point, and the Town Common was not yet a rotary :)
- Historic preservation is very important since this is such a history-rich region. I would hope our understanding and celebration of historic events would include native peoples histories, and not just white, colonial history
- Please refer to previous entries.
- No
- No
- Rehabilitate facade of buildings in downtown area to make our town look beautiful. Remove blight whenever possible. Downtown area should be for restaurants, coffee shops, flower shops, etc. (no need for ugly gas station or car repair shop).
- Stabilize the old building by the highway department and allow open air restaurant, pop-up stores and/or craft fairs
- Bridgewater Ironworks Park. I would like to see the preservation of the last remaining building at its reuse as public meeting space. I would like to see the Memorial Building turned over to the library and the house behind it purchased as parking for its use.
- Focus on preserving center (esp Main Street and town center) and then branch out from there.
- No
- Rehab/use the town house
- "Downtown Storefront Facades are deplorable.

- Consistent signage would improve the look, and rehab all the old Facades. "
- The trees growing out of Friendlies Building's gutters are beautiful as they turn colors this time of year.
- The renovation of the old Town Hall (next to music alley - to create an artists space / stalls for permanent work space
- Is the Flora T. Little library historic? Because the columns are deteriorating & need repair.

Suggest a new Open Space and Passive Recreation priority:

- "Purposes of the first 2 goals above should be expanded to include broader needs to address 1.) climate change and 2) plant and animal species by preserving open space even if the space may not otherwise be considered a ""priority wildlife habitat"" or ""critical natural landscape."" Likewise, a parcel need not be ""strategic"" to have open space value. Research demonstrating the value of small natural areas (vs. pocket parks for people) even in the midst of developed areas supports this.
- Farms and ag lands are sadly so scarce as to not be a priority."
- Convert Bridgewater's farms and agricultural lands to native plant prairie meadows. Create a native plant nursery on land. Sell native plants to residents in seasonal plant sales.
- Restore Wyman meadow to a meadow. It has become overgrown in the past 15 years since the town purchased it.
- Find or improve places where dogs can safely be walked with an enforced leash rule (this is done well at Borderland Park with a firm leash rule and dedicated area for off leash dogs). Often feel Bridgewater's trails and parks are unsafe to bring our dog because of off leash dogs.
- Stop destroying land by building more Condo Complexes and Apartments. The town is over built.
- The town MUST adequately fund the Parks & Recreation Department to hire additional staffing to appropriately care for our expanding parks, parklands, and our land & water trail network. The P & R Dept. should oversee a team of TRAINED volunteer stewards to assist them. CPA might help pay for this needed training? We also need uniform parkland branding with posted rules, canine comfort stands throughout the passive network, and an enticing and updated page on the town website. Perhaps CPA funds could help to offset these needs?
- I feel that all four are very important but the most important is forcing the town to maintain what they currently have.
- CPC should be more proactive in approaching land owners (including commercial developers) and be supportive and work in partnership with residents who are trying to do the same.
- Purchase the property at 1300 Vernon ST to preserve open space and protect our water ways. Snows brook runs through it.
- Dog park
- Hopefully there will be accessibility to the woodland areas at the new fire station. I understand there are eskers back there but it is difficult to get to them via the Skim Milk Bridge in the Elm St. area. Work with West Bridgewater to make that area accessible.
- when you use the terms, "preserve and acquire strategic," makes you seem like a master's level survey maker overusing their thesaurus.

Are there any specific Open Space and Passive Recreation projects that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?

- Acquisition of at least part of North St property that has been for sale to provide better access to Murray Needs area. Thinking bigger, acquisition of all or most of this property to create an "agricultural preserve" that would include the Hanson property and create a larger conservation area adjacent to Murray Needs,
- Preserve the land around the Nip
- Convert Bridgewater's farms and agricultural lands to native plant prairie meadows. Create a native plant nursery on land. Sell native plants to residents in seasonal plant sales.
- Passive recreation spaces & open spaces are an important part of making living here more inviting & healthy.
- Any existing areas associated with Indigenous history, lands, traditional sites that can be identified, preserved and saved from development.
- No
- No
- I do not understand these charts.
- Maybe buy all land around carver pond and have a walking trail that goes around it? Preserve as much nature as possible, so much construction going on, too much loss of habitat.
- seek funding from farm act
- I would like to see the town administration finally shoulder the responsibility of adequately funding, staffing, and maintaining a passive recreation system of public parklands and land & water trails. User -friendly parking lots with informational kiosks, posted rules of use, way-finding signage, QR codes leading to more information. This should be a linked network of parklands & trails throughout Bridgewater and beyond.
- Forcing the town with the threat of no more open space money until you launch a program to maintain what you have received CPA money for already.
- Land surrounding and hydraulically connected to Lake Nippenicket.
- Cartop boat access is needed throughout town.
- Save the towns farm land and rural beauty
- Save the Nipp! Don't let greedy corporations wreck our beautiful lake with over-building!
- Yes, see earlier comments on Lake Nippenicket.
- North/Pleasant St. property, which would expand and give better access to the trails at the Murray-Needs property.
- Wally Krueger Way holds an ideal centralized open space location for accessible community gardens.
- Save the farms !!
- More access points for River use.
- anyone else get diarrhea when they go to Emma's?
- Town River access for canoe / kyack
- I like the idea of community gardens.

Suggest a new Community Housing priority:

- change zoning to allow in-law small houses on property of relatives or small apartments with separate entrances for residents so they can rent out an apartment and stay in their homes and afford high taxes.
- Have downtown housing that is Quality for retired folks. When they vacate their houses, then homes will open up in the market for young people.
- I think that affordable housing should be in the center of town. Improve walkability to the schools. Make sure there are recreation opportunities for these kids (and all kids), near the schools, during breaks, 1/2 day, and summer vacation. Kids with single parent or two parents working shouldn't be living four miles from the center of town.
- Maybe a community center in a park?
- To create affordable ADA accessible affordable housing with first floor bedrooms with walk-in showers and folding shower seats and long shower hoses. The present ADA available housing throughout the southeast of New England is antiquated. It makes day to day living near to impossible for productive daily living for people with various different abilities.
- Redevelop of sites (such as McElwain) for community housing. No new development.
- I don't support any housing in this town, we have too many houses we don't even have enough water for the houses we have
- "If developing housing make them affordable condos. Can sell them but only for 20 percent more than they purchased it for. This helps first time buyers afford a home.
- Apartment renters don't have any pride in the community or the property.
- But I also feel our water should be resolved prior to any new construction in town."
- Avoid over development in areas already overburdened or by which the development will threaten wetlands or other key environmental resources.
- Elderly and developmentally delayed ONLY
- "Smaller, efficient, easily maintainable units. Everything built is big and expensive.
- Over 55 units in the center would make it convenient for older people to get out and walk for coffee, library, etc."
- Supportive housing model (eg affordable and market rate housong with services) is a must in town.
- Take care of the old people. The whole center of town could use a tornado. Town hall referb was an absolute waste. Can any of this happen without town leadership? Have you ever eaten a snickers bar upside down?
- Stop building new homes and apartment buildings
- Rather than 100% 55+, I would like to see a mixed generational community that is weighted heavier on the senior poplulation - something like: 65% 55+, 20% young individuals, 15% entry-level housing. Housing that includes walkable services - cafe/restaurant & store.

Are there any specific Community Housing projects that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?

- Work with private owners to create affordable housing in existing buildings (ie. yellow house on Main Street and the old nursing home). Also, I'm not sure how programs noted in the

description above work but I think things such as interest rate write-downs and other assistance should be explored.

- no
- specific over 55 housing that allows people to keep their pets.
- Housing and Preservation.
- Acquire land for the dual use of stormwater detention basins and native plant prairie meadows in/near the center of town. Train DPW to actively manage these areas as they require a bit more than side flail mowing.
- Helping people to enter the housing market is essential. Rents are very high & are many are priced out of purchasing. A solution needs to be found.
- a program to link and find ways to link the elderly community with the elementary schools - both communities would benefit from such a connection. after school boardgame time, painting, coloring, etc
- The Tory House on the Common is in private hands, but may be sold in the future. That historic property should be preserved and not allowed to deteriorate once the current owner is no longer involved. Efforts to create a trust for the town may be possible.
- No
- No
- A mixed housing aimed at active older people and younger families to create community around supporting families with young children.
- Rehabilitation of existing property
- Consider parking as part of housing and ensure proper traffic flow and off-street parking spaces
- More apartments downtown near the common and move the train station towards the town center.
- No
- What about rehabbing abandoned properties instead of letting them fall down?
- As written above. This is vital in our present housing affordability and availability.
- refurbish the buildings on the Common that currently have apartments about the stores. The facades are pretty beat up.
- When historic properties are acquired for preservation and reuse as affordable housing they should be allowed to use "non-historic" materials such as vinyl siding to make maintenance more affordable.
- More Affordable/subsidized Housing like McElwin school.
- Incentive to builders to build affordable entry level simple homes!
- No
- Plan for an aging population!
- Do not build new homes. instead utilize town buildings and or vacant/under used BSU buildings for affordable housing.
- Honestly I am so tired of having to use my money to supplement others who do not choose to better themselves. Why can't these projects separate housing for elderly and developmentally

delayed (as those I fully support) and the 44B? I'm tired of working hard to have money taken away for people who don't care to work hard. I KNOW I am not alone in this thought.

- Historic
- Create recreation/openspace
- Takeover (not sure it could be done) and renovation of downtown buildings to make our center more attractive to varied business opportunities.
- Supportive housing model (eg affordable and market rate housing with services) is a must in town.
- Senior Housing (Hemlock) needs sprucing up.
- Tree forts would be cool. But not too high, my knees hurt
- Definitely more senior housing. They are getting priced out of the town where they've lived for years!
- Activate the Affordable Housing Trust

Suggest a new Active Recreation priority:

- swimming pool
- restore farms and make them working farms again with animals to produce milk
- Find an area for dog park
- Maintenance of recreational facilities other than Legion, and the ball fields at Marathon and Prospect Street has been very lacking. Maintenance of walking wooded trails and Marathon Park has been non-existent except for the work that volunteers perform.
- More open space - more trails - more emphasis on preserving land around water (ie: Town River, Taunton River, Lake Nippenicket)
- Some sort of activities for kids on the Flag street are. There is a playground Rainbows end that has been condemned for years. Remove the trees and put in paved facilities, basketball street hockey. There are 2 street hockey rinks in Weymouth that have 1400 kids participate in a league there. Saturday mornings are used for kids with disabilities to participate.
- I vote for a dog park!
- Our town is getting fat. Maybe treadmills by the cake shop. also, i think we need to bring back the DARE program to the 200 block of Main Street

Are there any specific Active Recreation projects that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?

- Preserve and restore/rehabilitate the Jenny Leonard Park. Build tennis courts.
- No, it appears to me that we have many ACTIVE recreation outlets for all ages in BW.
- keep historic buildings and stop tearing them down. Churches should remain churches not housing
- Housing that is affordable.
- Acquire and create open space
- Refresh the outdoor space at the Veterans Center on Orange St. A gazebo, fire pit, grilling station, etc. to support and encourage veteran outreach.
- No
- Replace areas of turf lawn with native prairie and meadow plants.

- create a dog park
- The land that the new fire station is being built on was donated to town with funds for a recreation space now a bit piece in the back is being called such instead of whole land as donated. It was presented that this piece would be connected to Murray lands. Now that is being backpedaled saying it will require many easements. I want to know why it was presented if not possible and what will be done with the money to create a passive recreation space as the Tooles intended. Hopefully this is the group that can make thei donation a reality.
- projects to cleanup and make more useful the areas that we have. Rehab of the rainbows end playground, and make areas handicap accessible.
- Historic cemeteries not affiliated with an existing religious entity. Preserve the legacy of the Flora and Walter Little history in town by arranging for a transfer of property from private hands to public conservation, when the time comes.
- No
- No
- Bike and walking paths
- Rehabilitate the marathon playground. Create more playgrounds. Extend and rehabilitate sidewalks from the center down Summer Street.
- Open space preservation
- New parks, connected walking pathways and kayaking paths would be wonderful.
- outdoor exercise area for adults and teens, teen hangout area, connection with BSU for pool access and swim lessons
- I don't fully understand the question
- Update and expand legion field basketball courts, consider expanded parking.
- Bike paths!!
- Jen, We do not understand why the above chart shows yes for preserve, yet says no to support anything but housing! Appreciate if you can respond. Thank you!
- Continue to develop walking trails.
- CPA funded project to preserve the last building of the Bridgewater Ironworks Park. We have miles of wooded trails that are not maintained by the town. All it would take is one or two passes a year on these tails to keep them open and usable. I realize that this is not allowed with CPA funding but the town father should be told unless they are going
- Increase accessible walking trails signage, and parking at Titicut Conservation Area.
- Be proactive in reaching out to landowners near and abutting water (Town River, Taunton River, Lake Nippenicket) to preserve existing open space.
- Jenny Leonard park and rainbow 's end park
- "The girls softball fields could use more lighting, covered dugouts for safety & the roadway into the fields redone.
- The ball fields in town could use a major rejuvenation for field, fencing and dugouts
- Cartop boat access for the bodies of water
- I'd love to see Jenny Leonard park on Cherry street restored. A skate park, more things for kids to do. We go out of town 6/7 days every week to other towns facilities
- See above.

- Dog park
- Clean up and restore walking paths in Titicut Conservation area and the adjoining water department property adjoining Titicut Conservation area.
- Yes, acquire the area next to the parking lot currently owned by Claremont on Lake Nippenicket and use to expand the open space available for public recreation.
- Acquire open space
- another location for pickleball courts that caters to the younger players coming onto the scene out of noise areas
- Stop with the Section 8 housing! Take care of what is here already.
- No
- Open space
- Create spaces for informal gatherings that don't require permits/organized sports/
- Grant for Bridgewater United Methodist Church
- Good safe walking trail for older adults with resting areas to help older adults improve their physical health. Not all older adults can play pickleball. They may only be able to walk 10 feet, but next week maybe 20 feet.
- Older adult outdoor fitness equipment, trails, & bocce, putting green at the senior center/pickleball court areas.
- Recreation, bike baths, restore walking paths along the River
- topless sunbathing and a ski lift in the winter
- Preserve, restore, and protect some of Bridgewater's historic properties.
- Outdoor workout area for older adults like Piers Park II in Boston.
- Purchase property at North and Pleasant and add to the Needs-Murray walking area.
- Please establish a dog park, and add more shade/cover to the playground at Marathon Park!
- Opening up Town River / Taunton for canoe / Kayaking from Town Landing
- Additional pickleball courts possibly at a different location where neighbors do not exist
- Additional trail work in the Stiles & Hart preserve. (It's a great start, but needs more work).
- Jenney Leonard Playground/Park.
- Expand recreational fields to include less mainline sports such as Lacrosse.
- Rehabilitate Scotland playground