

**J M Goldson**

community preservation  
+ planning

**TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER**

# **Community Preservation Plan**

**FY2020-2024**

**PREPARED FOR:**

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

**PREPARED BY:**

JM Goldson LLC

**Adopted: April 22, 2020**

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***Music Alley, Legion Field, Bridgewater Library (top row); Bridgewater Academy Building (center); Keith Homestead, Crescent Street Softball Fields; McElwain School (bottom row)***

***All Photos: Anna Callahan, JM Goldson LLC 2019.***



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## **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

Harry Bailey, Jr., Conservation Commission Representative  
Jean Guarino, Planning Board Representative  
Gina Guasconi, Chair, Parks & Recreation Commission Representative  
Carlton Hunt, Vice-Chair, Citizen-At-Large  
Kevin Mandeville, Open Space Representative  
Joan Neumeister, Housing Authority Representative  
Stephen Rogan, Historical Commission Representative  
William Smith, Historic District Commission Representative

## **WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF PLANNING CONSULTANTS**

Jennifer M. Goldson, AICP, JM Goldson LLC  
Anna Callahan, Community Planner, Project Manager, JM Goldson LLC

Unless noted, all photographs provided by JM Goldson LLC.

## Acronyms

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



## 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 FY2019, the HUD median family income (MFI) for the Brockton MA HUD Metro FMR Area (which includes Bridgewater) was \$93,400.<sup>1</sup> AMI is also referred to in the document as median family income (MFI).

**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.

**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.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *FY 2019 Income Limits Summary*.

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2019/2019summary.odn> (accessed October 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Bridgewater's estimated median household income is \$88,640 (2017 median family income was \$112,409) per the 2017 American Community Survey.

**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).<sup>3</sup> The AMI is determined 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 income of \$74,000 or less is considered low-income under the CPA definition.<sup>4</sup> A one-person household with a gross household income of \$51,800 or less is considered low-income.

**Moderate-income Housing** - housing for persons or families whose annual income is less than 100 percent of the areawide median income (AMI). The AMI is determined 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 income of \$93,400 or less is considered moderate-income under the CPA definition.<sup>5</sup>

**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.

**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.

**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.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *FY 2019 Income Limits Summary*. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2019/2019summary.odn> (accessed October 2019).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *FY 2019 Income Limits Summary*. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2019/2019summary.odn> (accessed October 2019).



# Executive Summary

The Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee (CPC) developed this Community Preservation Plan to guide the allocation of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for the next five years (fiscal years (FY) 2020-2024). The principles and goals outlined in this Plan are not binding—rather they are meant to provide guidance for decisions on the use of CPA funds. In accordance with 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. As of December 2019, 176 communities have adopted the CPA (50 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. Since adoption, Bridgewater has collected close to \$8.492 Million. The state Community Preservation Trust Fund distribution for Bridgewater has ranged between 18 to 100 percent of local receipts.

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 also intends to annually budget 5 percent of total annual CPA revenue for administrative funds to ensure proper record keeping, grant management, and clerical support, as the CPA statute allows. Unused administrative funds at the end of each fiscal year revert back to undesignated funds. The remaining 65 percent of funds can be used for any allowable project within any of the CPA categories.

The Community Preservation Plan process helps determine how the remaining funds should be allocated based on 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 five representatives appointed by various boards and committees and four at-large members. 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 CPC, through the Town of Bridgewater, contracted with a planning consultant, JM Goldson LLC, to assist with the preparation of a Community Preservation Plan. The consultant worked with the CPC members, 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:

- **two focus groups** in September 2019
- **an online community survey** which ran from May to September 2019
- **a public hearing** in April 2020

The purpose of these community engagement efforts was to understand the needs and priorities in each of the three Community Preservation Act (CPA) categories. In total, close to 150 people participated in the CPC's

community engagement. For detailed documentation of these community engagement exercises, please see the appendices.

## Guiding Principles

The CPC developed the following overall guiding principles and specific category goals by carefully considering community feedback. These principles are designed to guide the CPC's evaluation of project requests for CPA funds in all four CPA funding categories and to establish funding preferences.

### 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 case 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.

## **Goals**

The goals, as summarized below, are intended to guide potential applicants for CPA funding and will be used to direct CPC funding recommendations.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

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**

1. Preserve Bridgewater's farms and agricultural lands.<sup>6</sup>
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.

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<sup>6</sup> This can include properties with prime farmland soils not be currently actively farmed for scenic, economic, and local food production value.

## **ACTIVE RECREATION**

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.

## **COMMUNITY HOUSING**

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.

# Chapter 1: Overview

## Introduction

The Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee (CPC) developed this Community Preservation Plan to guide the allocation of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for the next five years (fiscal years (FY) 2020-2024). The principles and goals outlined in this Plan are not binding—rather they are meant to provide guidance for 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 allocation of funds.

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.*

### Bridgewater Community History and Regional Context

Bridgewater is a bucolic small-town suburb with a historic downtown located midway between Boston, MA and Providence, RI on the Taunton River. With an area of 28.2 square miles, Bridgewater is one of the eight physically largest communities in Plymouth County. The Town is home to an MBTA commuter rail station; Bridgewater State University (BSU), the oldest and largest state college; and Old Colony Correctional Center. Like many communities in Plymouth County, Bridgewater was initially an agricultural community after being chartered in 1656. At the turn of the century, factories and industry opened, including Lazell-Perkins Iron Works (known today as Bridgewater Iron Works), who were attracted by the hydropower of the Taunton and Town Rivers. By the mid-twentieth century, Bridgewater became an increasingly suburban community as Routes 24 and 495 opened, providing easy access for commuters to major employment hubs.

## Background

### WHAT IS CPA?

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a state law, MGL c.44B, that was enacted in 2000 and signed by Governor Paul Cellucci. It creates a way for 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 December 2019, 176 communities have adopted the CPA (50 percent of the state's municipalities).

CPA 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. At least 10 percent of total revenue must be spent or set aside annually in the following categories—community housing, historic preservation, and open space and recreation. Prior to accepting any applications and awarding any funds, the CPC must solicit input from the community and create a Community Preservation Plan that reflects the community's priorities.

## WHO DECIDES HOW THE FUNDS ARE SPENT?

In April 2005, the Bridgewater Town Council established by ordinance a nine-member Community Preservation Committee (CPC). 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 Trust, Open Space Commission, Historic District Commission, and one citizen-at-large—who is appointed by the Town Manager with ratification by the Town Council.

The role of the CPC is to:

- 1) study the City'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 is required to 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 choose to hold an annual public hearing to solicit feedback on funding requests prior to 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. Town Council is bound to act only upon an affirmative recommendation of the CPC and cannot consider requests that do not receive a CPC recommendation.

## HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

Bridgewater generates CPA funds through a local property tax surcharge of 2 percent 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.

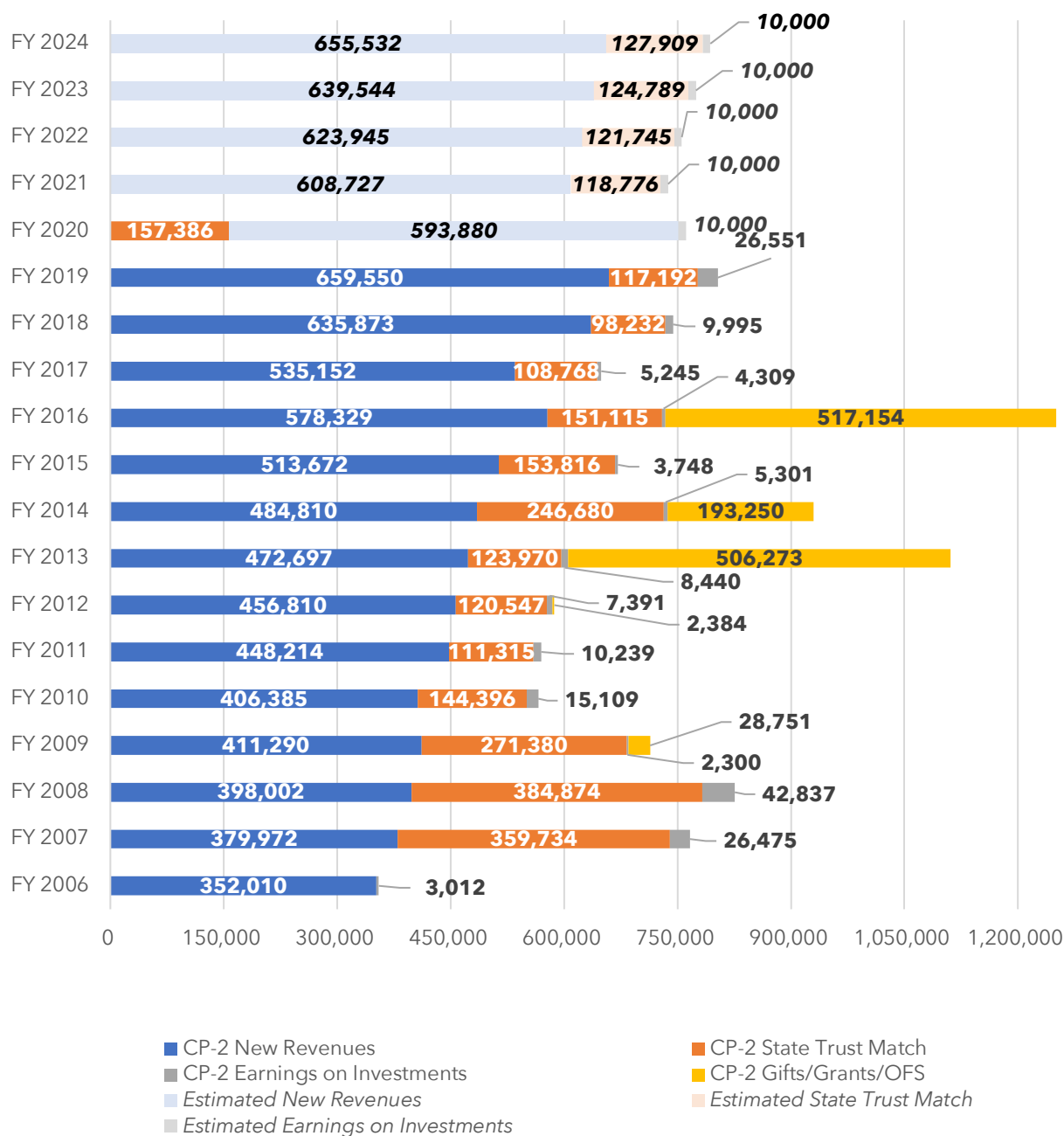
Since adoption, Bridgewater has collected close to \$10.5 million in local collections and state matches. The average annual household contribution to CPA in FY2019 was \$87.50. The state Community Preservation Trust Fund distribution for Bridgewater has ranged between 18 to 100 percent of local receipts.<sup>7</sup> In FY2019, the local property tax surcharge generated roughly \$660,000 and the state Trust Fund distribution was a little more than \$117,000. Bridgewater is anticipated to generate about \$3.8 million for CPA projects between FY2020 and

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to local surcharge collections and state Trust Fund distributions, Bridgewater has received almost \$1.3 million in gifts and grants (represented in the yellow). This includes land grants and grants from the state.

FY2024, assuming a state Trust Fun distribution of 20 percent<sup>8</sup> and a 3 percent annual growth in local surcharge collections.

**Figure 1: Bridgewater CPA Revenue FY2006 – FY2024 (actual and estimated)<sup>9</sup>**



## AVAILABLE FUNDING

<sup>8</sup> This number may be conservative as projections were made prior to legislation increasing the state's CPA Trust Fund. For example, FY20 state trust match was estimated to be 14 percent but will be closer to 24 percent with the release of additional state budget surplus funds. The state surplus funds of \$64,851 have been added to the original Trust Fund match of \$92,535 (a total of \$157,386 for FY2020).

<sup>9</sup> Bridgewater Finance Department and DOR reporting.

The Bridgewater CPA Fund had a total fund balance of \$3,661,790 at the end of FY19.<sup>10</sup> This includes appropriated (approved and set aside) funds for projects, including the McElwain Redevelopment Project, Broad Street Property Purchase; and the Preservation Assessment for the Old Bridgewater Historical Society.

**TABLE 1: Estimated CPA Funds Available for Appropriation FY20<sup>11</sup>**

<b>Revenue Budget</b>	
FY19 Fund Balance	\$3,661,790
FY20 Anticipated Collections (Local + State Trust Fund)	\$761,266 <sup>12</sup>
<b>Expense Budget</b>	
Keith Homestead and Academy Building Debt Payments (Principal + Interest)	\$422,180
Administrative	\$31,700
Appropriated Reserves <sup>13</sup>	\$1,865,000
<b>Estimated Available for New Project Appropriations</b>	<b>\$2,104,176</b>

With anticipated FY20 collections and projected expenses, the total of funds available for new project appropriations at the end of FY20 will be \$2,104,176. This balance is allocated across four reserve accounts in addition to undesignated funds, as seen in the tables below.

**TABLE 2: Reserve Fund Balances (as of 3/31/2020)<sup>14</sup>**

Open Space/Recreation	179,377
Historic Preservation	355,962
Community Housing	146,800
Appropriated Reserves <sup>13</sup>	1,865,000
Undesignated Funds ( <i>can be spent in any category</i> )	1,961,086
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,916,471</b>
<b>Current available for New Project Appropriations</b> ( <i>excludes Appropriate Funds</i> ) <sup>15</sup>	<b>2,051,471</b>

## 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's

<sup>10</sup> This is reflected in Table 1 and Table 2 as "Appropriated Reserves."

<sup>11</sup> Bridgewater Finance Department.

<sup>12</sup> Includes DOR-recalculated CPA state match of additional state budget surplus funds (\$64,851). Added to the original \$92,535 match.

<sup>13</sup> These are funds that have already been appropriated (approved and set aside) for projects. This includes the Broad Street Property Purchase, the McElwain Redevelopment Project, and Preservation Assessment for the Old Bridgewater Historical Society. 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."

<sup>14</sup> Bridgewater Finance Department.

<sup>15</sup> This total only includes revenue that has been collected to date.

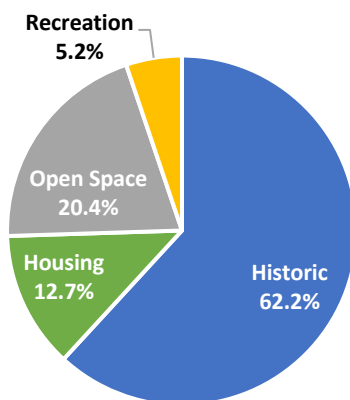


CPA fund balances must account for existing debt payments for the Keith Homestead and Academy Building (both of which mature in 2036).

## CPA-Funded Projects

The CPC funded 10 projects between FY14 and FY19 (see figure 2).<sup>16</sup> The majority of CPA funds (67 percent) were appropriated for historic preservation projects (4 projects).<sup>17</sup> About 17.6 percent were appropriated for two housing projects<sup>18</sup> and 11.1 percent were for open space and passive recreation projects. Less than 4 percent were for active recreation projects.

**FIGURE 2. Bridgewater CPA Allocations FY2014-FY2019 by CPA Category<sup>19</sup>**



## Planning Process

The Town of Bridgewater directed its community planning consultant, JM Goldson LLC, to assist with the preparation of a Community Preservation Plan in Spring 2019. JM Goldson worked with the CPC members and studied existing plans, including the *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*; *2017 Housing Production Plan*; *2015 Recreation Needs Assessment*; and the Town's last *Community Preservation Plan (2014)*, to identify Bridgewater's community preservation needs and resources.

Soliciting community input is an important component of the planning process. The CPC sponsored focus groups; held interviews with community members; and distributed an online survey. These community engagement efforts helped derive the goals and priorities outlined in this plan.

### Focus Groups and Statutory Boards

The consultant interviewed community members at two focus groups held on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 5PM and 6PM. The event was advertised on the CPC's website and on the Town's website. Invitations were also sent out through public, professional, and personal networks. In total, thirteen people participated in the focus groups—6 CPC members and 7 non-CPC members. They also conducted phone interviews and met with the five CPA

<sup>16</sup> Note: This does not include the November 2019 approval of the Broad Street Property to increase access to the Stiles and Hart Conservation Area.

<sup>17</sup> This includes the 30-year bond (\$4,780,000) for the Academy Building project (total project cost of \$5.15 Million)

<sup>18</sup> The McElwain Redevelopment Project and a housing coordinator position

<sup>19</sup> CPA Projects Database. Community Preservation Coalition Website.

<https://www.communitypreservation.org/databank/projectsdatabase/access>.

statutory boards—Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Housing Authority, Historic Preservation Commission, and Conservation Commission. These interviews helped the CPC further refine its understanding of community preservation needs and resources. Participants also helped to brainstorm possibilities for use of CPA funds.

### Online Survey

To obtain broad community input, the CPC also sponsored an online survey that was online from May 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019. It was advertised using a variety of virtual and physical outreach methods, including email outreach, social media, flyers, and a link on the CPC's website. Yard signs with a QR code and the survey link were distributed throughout town at previously funded CPA sites. The survey contained demographic questions and questions regarding priorities for the use of CPA funds. In total, 133 people responded to the survey.

The CPC posted the draft plan on its website and distributed copies for review and comment in February and March 2020. They presented the draft plan at a public meeting on February 26, 2020 and public hearing on April 22, 2020 for public comment. The CPC voted to adopt the plan on April 22, 2020.

## 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 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 Web Site: <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/1353/Community-Preservation-Committee>.

# 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).<sup>20</sup>

**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.

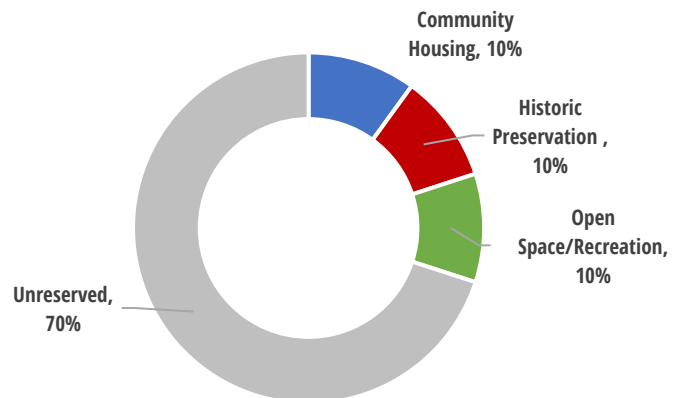
While the statute provides a generous amount of flexibility for CPA communities to determine the portion of CPA funds allocated to each of the four categories, the statute requires that a minimum of 10 percent of total revenue be spent or reserved for projects in the following categories: community housing,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

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 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 CPC requires professional staff support to ensure proper record keeping, grant management, and clerical support. Therefore, the CPC intends to budget 5 percent of total annual CPA revenue for administrative funds, as the CPA statute allows. 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, 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 City Council approval. Unused administrative funds at the end of each fiscal year revert back to undesignated funds.

**CPA - Minimum Spending/Reserve Requirements**



<sup>20</sup> For the Brockton MA HUD Metro FMA Area, which includes Bridgewater, the MFI/AMI is \$93,400.

# Chapter 2: 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. 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, or Open Space and Recreation Plan. Stronger applications will accomplish initiatives and goals in more than one plan and CPA category. 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 should include a clear maintenance plan for the project, including financial and staffing needed to carry-out proper case to protect the resource and community's investment, and to ensure safe public access to the project, resource, or site.

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 improvements, 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.





## Chapter 3: Community Housing

*Bridgewater McElwain School Project*

### 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.<sup>21</sup> 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 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).

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<sup>21</sup> For the Brockton MA HUD Metro FMA Area, which includes Bridgewater, the MFI/AMI is \$93,400.



# 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).<sup>22</sup>
- 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 older residents to allow them to stay in the community as they age—prioritizing locations that provide easy access to services and other resources.*

Between 2010 and 2017, Bridgewater saw a 32 percent increase in residents 65 years and older. MAPC's population projections suggest that this segment will continue to grow.<sup>23</sup> The share of residents age 55 or older is projected to increase from 16.0 percent of the total population in 2010 to 34.1 percent of the total population in 2030.<sup>24</sup> 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 by the *2017 Housing Production Plan (HPP)*, there is a need for more smaller units in Bridgewater. The majority of households (51 percent) are one- or two-person households while two-thirds of Bridgewater's housing stock have four or more bedrooms. American Community Survey (ACS) 2017 estimates that 11 percent of Bridgewater's residents living alone in non-family households are 65 and older.

A variety of housing options for seniors, such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and options incorporating Universal Design Standards, near the Town Common could increase the number of residents who could walk to goods, services, and other activities. As seniors age, they often need a higher level of services and may seek housing options that are 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."

<sup>22</sup> For the Brockton MA HUD Metro FMA Area, which includes Bridgewater, the MFI/AMI is \$93,400.

<sup>23</sup> 2017 Housing Production Plan, p 15.

<sup>24</sup> 2017 Housing Production Plan, p 15.

## 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.

**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; and entry-level housing.*

According to the 2017 HPP, a household earning Bridgewater's 2016 median household income (\$84,697) could afford to purchase a home costing \$278,000. Yet, the 2016 median sales price of a single-family home was \$350,000—requiring an income of \$104,912, or 130 percent of the AMI. Bridgewater's housing prices are out of reach for young families—many of whom are first-time homebuyers.

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 structure of the program. Ownership-oriented housing assistance programs could include a first-time homebuyer program, 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, with the exception of 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."

## GOAL 4

*Preserve long-term affordability for existing affordable and community housing units and preserve them through eligible repairs and improvements.*

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 that was 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 to 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 at Year-End FY19	\$66,800
Estimated Community Housing Reserve (10% of Estimated FY2020-FY2024 Revenue)	\$375,485
<b>Total Actual + Estimated Community Housing Reserve</b>	<b>\$442,285</b>

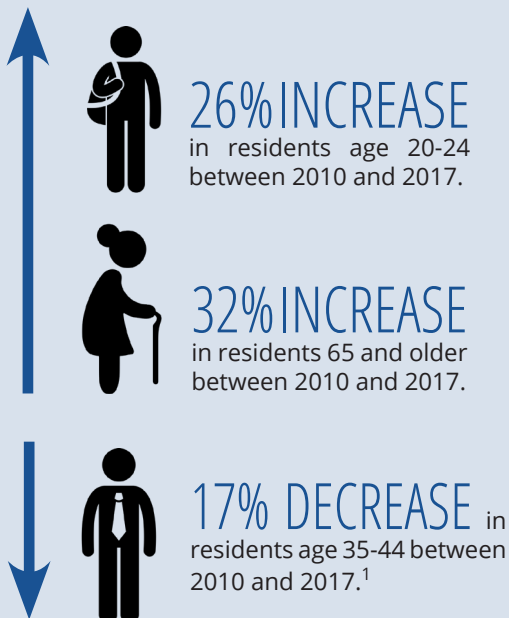
# BRIDGEWATER HOUSING NEEDS AND RESOURCES

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) 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. “Senior housing” is housing for persons 60 years old or over, who also meet the qualifications for low- or moderate-income.

## Abbreviations:

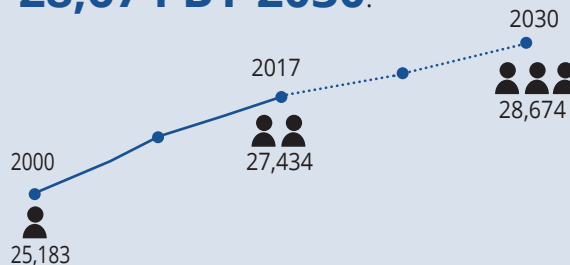
AMI - Area Median Income (set by the Federal Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD))  
DHCD - MA Dept of Housing and Community Development  
MFI - Median Family Income (set by the Federal Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD))  
SHI - MA Subsidized Housing Inventory

## AGE COMPOSITION CHANGE



## POPULATION

Bridgewater's population is **27,434**, which grew 3 percent between 2010 and 2017 (9 percent growth from 2000). MassDOT projections estimate that the population will grow to 27,997 by 2020 and **28,674 BY 2030**.



Plymouth County grew at a similar rate—growing 3 percent between 2010 and 2017 and 8 percent from 2000.

## AGE

**31.1 PERCENT** of households have children under 18 years old.

**11 PERCENT** of non-family householders living alone are 65 and older.

In 2017, the largest age segments of Bridgewater's population are 45-54-year olds and 20-24-year olds (both 14 percent of total population). Bridgewater's median age decreased from 2010 from 36.7 to 35.

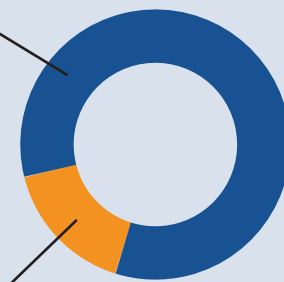
## RACE AND ETHNICITY

Bridgewater's population is predominantly white

**83.7 PERCENT<sup>2</sup>** of the population.

Non-whites, including African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic or Latinx, comprise **16.3 PERCENT**

The Asian population in Bridgewater grew from 223 in 2010 to 541 in 2017 (a growth of over 142 percent).



<sup>1</sup> 45-64 decreased by 4 percent

<sup>2</sup> White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latinx.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

Bridgewater has an estimated **8,435** total housing units. Of the 7,897 occupied units:

**owner-occupied** **73.8 PERCENT**  
(5,828 units)

**renter-occupied** **27.1 PERCENT**  
(2,069 units)

This portion of rental housing is higher than most communities in the region except Raynham.

## VACANCY RATES

A low vacancy rate often indicates that demand exceeds current supply, placing pressure on housing prices. According to the 2017 Greater Boston Housing Report Card, a 2 percent vacancy rate for ownership and 5.5 percent vacancy rate for rental units are considered natural vacancy rates in a healthy market.

**For ownership units, the vacancy rate was 1 PERCENT.**

**For rental units, the vacancy rate was 2.4 PERCENT.**

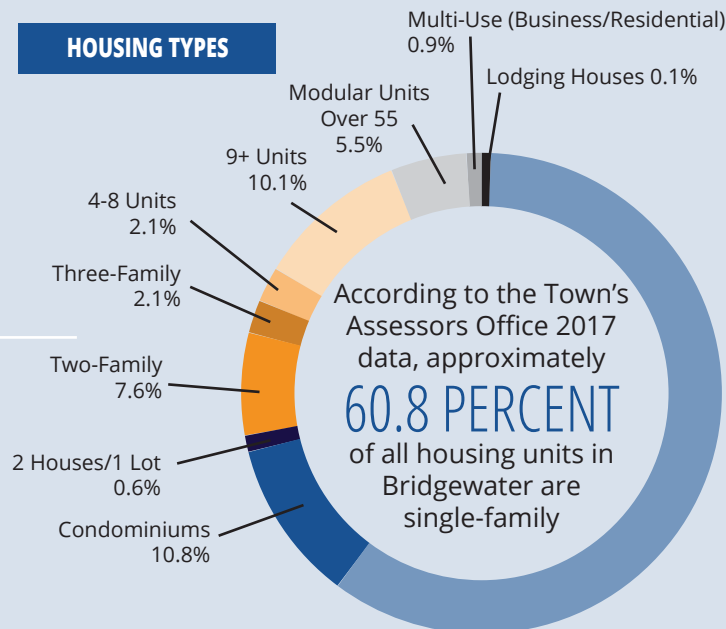
Between 2010 and 2017, the number of vacant units in Bridgewater nearly tripled, from 341 to 538 vacant units—from 4 percent to 6 percent of total housing units.

## AXIS AT LAKESHORE



Between 2013 and 2016, **523** new homes were constructed in Bridgewater, with the 289-unit Axis at Lakeshore apartment complex accounting for little more than half (55.3 percent).

## HOUSING TYPES



## VIVA AT LAKESHORE



Under MAPC's "Status Quo" Scenario, Bridgewater has a projected demand for a total of **1,430** new housing units between 2010 and 2030.<sup>3</sup> Opening in 2019, VIVA at Lakeshore by Claremont Corporation will add **300** units.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Bridgewater's median household income per 2013-2017 estimates was **\$88,640** (\$112,409 median family income). (2017 ACS)

This is almost a **36 PERCENT INCREASE** from the 2000 estimated median household income, which is one of the highest compared to many communities in the region and state as a whole. (2017 ACS and 2000 Census)

## COST OF HOUSING



The median sales price of single-family house in 2016 was **\$350,000**—unaffordable to a household earning the area median income (AMI) (\$93,400) or Bridgewater's median income (\$88,640). This is the second highest in the county after Easton (\$395,000). In 2016, the median sales price of a condo was **\$226,400**, which is a 41.6 percent increase over the 2010 median.



## AFFORDABILITY

**23.2 PERCENT** of homeowners in 2014 and **43.1 PERCENT** of renters spent more than 30 percent of their monthly income towards housing-related costs. (HPP 2017)

## MODERATE-INCOME

A household earning 80 percent to 100 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). A moderate-income four-person household would earn between \$74,000 and \$93,400 could roughly afford a home that costs less than \$265,000.

## LOW-INCOME

A household earning at or below 80 percent AMI. A low-income four-person household would earn at or below \$74,000 and could roughly afford a home that costs less than \$213,000.

### Income Limit Category (for Family of Four)

100 percent AMI	Moderate-Income	\$93,400
80 percent AMI	Low-Income	\$74,000
50 percent AMI	Very-Low Income	\$46,250
30 percent AMI	Extremely-Low Income	\$27,750

## OTHER HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to the Housing Authority, Bridgewater has an **AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST**, which has the authority to acquire property for the purpose of affordable housing creation or preservation; and **HOUSING PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**, which advises the Town Manager on the Town's policies and programs to reach the state's subsidized housing requirements and helps coordinate factors that may affect equal access to housing, in addition to any other issues relating to the development of affordable housing.

**Sources:** Town of Bridgewater Website (Town of Bridgewater)  
Town of Bridgewater, 2014-2018 Community Preservation Plan (2014 CP)  
2000 and 2010 Census (Census)  
2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (ACS)  
2017 Bridgewater Housing Production Plan  
2017 The Greater Boston Housing Report Card, November 2017, pages 38 and 46.

4 419 are out-of-town seniors and 88 are Bridgewater seniors



Cost of rental housing increased by **26 PERCENT** from 2010 to 2017 from a median gross rent of \$1,097 to \$1,385.

This is almost an **84 PERCENT INCREASE** from 2000 when the gross median rent was \$754. To afford the median gross rent, residents would need to earn an annual income of **\$49,860**.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK

**11 PERCENT** (912 units) of Bridgewater's total housing stock is counted as affordable on the State's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), which is above the State's minimum affordability goal of 10 percent. Of these 884 (almost 97 percent) are rental units and 28 (3 percent) are ownership units. (DHCD, December 2018)



## BRIDGEWATER HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Bridgewater Housing Authority currently oversees **166** public housing units.

As of June 2017, there are more than **1,500 HOUSEHOLDS** on the waiting list for Bridgewater Housing Authority—507 households waiting for the 154 elderly or disable units and over 1,000 for the 12 family units.<sup>4</sup>





## Chapter 4: Historic Preservation

*Bridgewater Academy Building Rehabilitation Project*

### Eligible Activities

The CPA Act, as amended July 2012, 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 Summer 2012). 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](http://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 or 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.*

The 2014 *Community Preservation Plan* prioritized the rehabilitation of the Academy Building and Memorial Building—and residents supported historic preservation rehabilitation plans through a \$2.3 million debt exclusion ballot in 2013. Now, with the Academy Building rehabilitation complete, the future of the old Town Hall building is also unclear. Both the Memorial Building and Town Hall are highly-visible and easily-accessible in their prominent downtown location on the Common. The CPC encourages projects that preserve, restore, and/or rehabilitate these properties.

As the community's population ages, accessibility improvements that accommodate people of all ages and abilities will grow in importance. The CPC supports accessibility improvements 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 appropriate historic advisory board as designated in the 2010 ADA Standards (for Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Historical Commission), and

interested persons should be invited to participate in the decision-making process. Note that any corrective actions needed to ensure program accessibility would also have to 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.

## GOAL 2

### *Preserve the Town's historic artifacts and documents through digitization and the creation of permanent facilities to house these resources.*

Preservation of historic archives and artifacts is important to protect the community's legacy. 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 Mrs. Little. All of these resources are important to protect and preserve for current and future generation's understanding of the community's roots. Protection of archives includes physical preservation, restoration of documents themselves, including proper climate control and secure storage, digitization, and online accessibility.

## 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 378 documented historic resources, only two are listed on the National Register—Lazell Perkins Iron Works Park as a historic district and the McElwain School.

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 three individual buildings with preservation restrictions (PRs)—the Keith Homestead, First Parish Church, 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 or restore commercial facades and other historic resources, such as Town Hall or the nearby Memorial Building, to boost downtown<sup>25</sup> economic revitalization.*

Bridgewater can support economic revitalization and other community goals through redevelopment of underutilized sites and adaptive reuse of downtown properties, such as Town Hall or the Memorial Building. Development of properties into mixed-use developments could also achieve *Community Housing* goals by locating more people close to services while also increasing the amount of foot traffic to businesses downtown. Participants saw Bridgewater's downtown and its historic structures as critical to maintaining the community's sense of place.

**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

## GOAL 5

*Preserve and restore outdoor public historic places and public monuments*

Bridgewater has a number of historic cemeteries dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> 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. The CPC will prioritize projects which support the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of outdoor public historic places, such as historic cemeteries, memorials, and/or public monuments. The preservation of these resources is important to protect the Town's character and public understanding of local history.

**CPA Category Compatibility:** Open Space and Passive Recreation

## Five-Year Budget

Amount Available at Year-End FY19	\$275,962
Projected Historic Preservation Reserve (10% of Estimated FY2020-FY2024 Revenue)	\$375,485
Total Actual + Estimated Historic Reserves	<b>\$651,447</b>

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<sup>25</sup> "Downtown" is defined as roughly ½ mile of Central Square.



# BRIDGEWATER

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Bridgewater has **378 documented historic resources** including buildings, cemeteries, objects, and structures. (MACRIS)

#### NATIONALLY-DESIGNATED RESOURCES

Lazell Perkins Iron Works (aka Bridgewater/Stanley Iron Works) is Bridgewater's only National Register historic district. First permitted in 1695, by 1865 it was the second largest steel rolling mill in America. The masonry-ruins of the Storehouse, constructed circa 1835, still stand at 131 High Street. (MACRIS)



**LAZELL PERKINS IRON WORKS**

The McElwain School, constructed in 1912, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. In 2018, the building was purchased and plans to be developed into 57 mixed-income apartments by 2021, funded in part with CPA funds. (MACRIS)



**MCELWAIN SCHOOL**

#### ARTIFACTS AND DOCUMENTS

Historical documents include collections in the 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.

There is no historical society but the Old Bridgewater Historical Society (OBHS), established in 1894, is a regional leader in collecting, preserving, and publishing material relating to the history and the families of the original 1649 settlement, which included present-day Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, Brockton, among other communities.

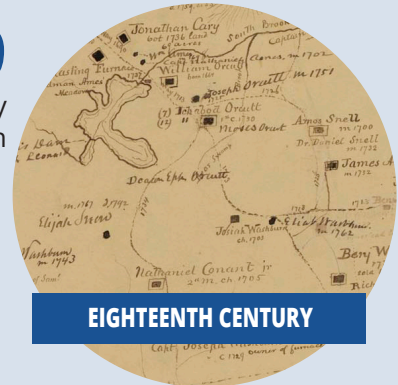
#### Abbreviations:

BSU: Bridgewater State University  
MHC: Massachusetts Historical Commission  
MACRIS: Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System  
NPS: National Park Service

#### EARLY SETTLEMENT

Bridgewater was the first inland settlement in Massachusetts, settled in 1649 when Massasoit of the Wampanoag tribe and iconic Pilgrim Myles Standish signed the original Bridgewater land deed—and chartered in 1656. (Town of Bridgewater)

There are **49** eighteenth century resources listed on MACRIS. (MACRIS)



#### EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Deacon Joseph Alden House at 768 High St. and Keith-Wilbur-Packard House 1776 South St are thought to be the two oldest houses in Bridgewater, both built c. 1700.



**JOSEPH ALDEN HOUSE**



**TORY HOUSE**

The Tory House (a.k.a. Joseph Leonard House) at 57 Central Square is a Federal-style house built c.1710. It has had multiple uses in addition to residential including a tavern and doctor/dentist office.

#### BRIDGEWATER OLD GRAVEYARD



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).

Other notable eighteenth-century resources include the Weston-Mitchell House on Auburn Street constructed c. 1720; the Henry Perkins Office Building (170 Broad Street) constructed in 1750 as a single-family residence; and the Deacon John Fobes House (615-617 Pleasant St), a first-period Georgian-style house, built c.1704.

#### KEITH HOMESTEAD



The Keith Homestead, a Georgian style house, at the end of Lakeside Drive constructed c.1783, was protected through town acquisition funded with CPA funds.

The majority of the town's historic resources date the 19th century. MACRIS lists

**263** resources

from the 19th century including a number of significant historic homes, such as the Cornelius Holmes House (524 Conant St) and Bridgewater Iron Manufacturing Company Superintendent's House (171 High Street), both federal-style homes built c. 1800.<sup>(MACRIS)</sup>

## NINETEENTH CENTURY



Bridgewater Common in Central Square was laid out in 1822, the same year that the Scotland Trinitarian Congregational Church (1000 Pleasant St) was constructed.

Many residences in Central Square and surrounding neighborhoods date to the 1850s and 60s including the Gammons House at 38 South Street (c. 1850) an Italianate style house with Colonial Revival alterations, Bassett-Conant House at 46 Main St (c.1860), a Second Empire style house/hotel, and Leonard House at 10 Union Street in the Gothic and Greek Revival styles (1865).

## CENTRAL SQUARE



### NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH

The New Jerusalem Church, a prominent Gothic Revival church on Bedford Street in Central Square, was built in 1871.



### BRIDGEWATER ACADEMY

The Town's Academy Building at 66 Central Square is an Italianate style building with a large Colonial Revival front addition that was built in 1868 as a private high school.



### BRIDGEWATER TOWN HALL

First Parish at 50 School Street is a Greek Revival style church constructed in 1845 by Solomon Keith Eaton who also designed the Bridgewater Town Hall as Eaton and Bartlett two years earlier in 1843.

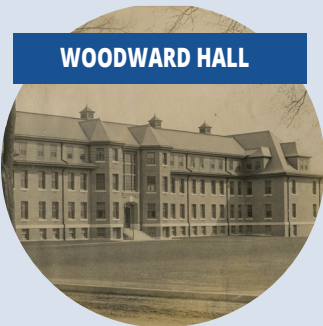


### MEMORIAL BUILDING

Other prominent 19th-century buildings include the town-owned Memorial Building, a Romanesque-Revival-style building built as the public library in 1881, and the McElwain Shoe Factory (a.k.a. Walkover Shoe Factory) on Perkins Ave built c. 1898.

MACRIS lists **41** twentieth-century resources including worker housing on Summer Street (565-579) built c.1900; the industrial property, Bridgewater Shoe Corporation at 42 Spring Street (c.1915), the McElwain School built 1912 and the School Street School built c. 1918.<sup>(MACRIS)</sup>

## WOODWARD HALL



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

## TWENTIETH CENTURY



### TOWN RIVER DAM



The Town River Dam at the Perkins Iron Works was built c. 1919.





# Chapter 5: Open Space and Passive Recreation

*Murray-Needs Farm Conservation Easement*

## 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 City 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 CPA Coordinator 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.*<sup>26</sup>

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 and twenty acres of private agricultural land are protected under Chapter 61A<sup>27</sup>, including the Murray-Needs Farm. The largest agricultural properties not permanently-protected include 176 acres on Curve Street; 55- and 35-acre parcels on Auburn Street; 31 acres on North Street; and 29 acres on Pleasant Street. The CPC encourages projects which protect Bridgewater's agricultural legacy.

**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

#### *Preserve existing natural open space and passive recreation facilities—specifically enhancing safety and public access.*

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 better optimize their use—rather than acquiring more conservation land. With the July 2012 amendments to the CPA statute, rehabilitation of existing parks and playgrounds are eligible CPA activities.

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 historic resources that are open to the public for public enjoyment and use. According to the *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, roughly 8 percent of Bridgewater's total civilian noninstitutionalized population has some level of disabilities—ranging from vision or

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<sup>26</sup> This can include properties with prime farmland soils not be currently actively farmed for scenic, economic, and local food production value.

<sup>27</sup> 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>.

hearing limitations to reliance on wheelchairs or crutches. 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.

Additional changes and improvements to open space and passive recreation facilities identified in the *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update* to increase ADA-accessible recreation facilities include:<sup>28</sup>

- 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."

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<sup>28</sup> 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, pp. 114-115

### 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 ancient 70-mile Native American waterway) in Massachusetts—and is also nationally 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.

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). As listed in the 2017 OSRP, priority land for wildlife corridors and critical habitats include: Jolly Meadow between Flagg, Mae Ave. and Alexander Dr. from Bridgewater Correction Complex connect to Winter St and Carver's Pond Habitats).

The 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (OSRP) identified several ongoing 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.

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.

**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."

## GOAL 4

### *Create, preserve, and acquire neighborhood-level open spaces for pocket parks, community gardens, and other outdoor gathering spaces.*

As communities grow, open space is under increasing pressure to perform important ecosystem services, such as providing urban habitats, mitigating stormwater runoff, and offering additional health benefits. Public natural areas and open space, often protected by community land trusts in other Massachusetts's communities, typically provide these critical ecological functions.

Although small in size, green spaces on private property make up large parts of the urban land base and provide important roles for habitat and ecosystem services. The CPC will prioritize neighborhood-oriented projects which explore opportunities to improve vacant or underutilized spaces, such as lots or greenspaces shared by an apartment complexes and community gardens, through greening infrastructure. Open space should help tie areas of Bridgewater together, provide buffers against incompatible uses, enable growth of local food sources, and add value to surrounding properties.

**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."

## Five-Year Budget

Amount Available at Year-End FY19	\$99,377
Estimated Open Space Reserve (10% of Estimated FY2020-FY2024 Revenue)	\$375,485
<b>Total Actual + Estimated Reserve</b>	<b>\$474,862</b>

# BRIDGEWATER OPEN SPACE NEEDS AND RESOURCES

## PERMANENTLY PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

Approximately

# 15.7PERCENT

of the total land area of Bridgewater is permanently protected open space.

## 370

Over **370** acres of town-owned properties are managed by the Conservation Commission in 10 properties, with an additional 19 acres of protected town-owned land at Toole park and Auburn Street Cemetery.

## 830 ACRES

The Commonwealth owns over **830 ACRES** of protected open space in Bridgewater including land managed by the departments of Fish and Game and Conservation and Recreation.

## 82.14ACRES

Conservation restricted lands totals **82.14ACRES**.

### Abbreviations:

BSU: Bridgewater State University  
DCR: MA Department of Conservation and Recreation  
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency  
FIRMs: Flood Insurance Rate Maps



**KEITH HOMESTEAD**

The Town approved use of CPA funds to acquire the Keith Homestead property on Lakeside Drive for permanent protection as conservation and historic land in August 2011.



**STILES AND HART  
CONSERVATION AREA**

The Stiles and Hart Conservation Area, with 69 acres protected, has historic significance as an agricultural fairgrounds between 1820-1875 and a brick manufacturing site 1895-1938.



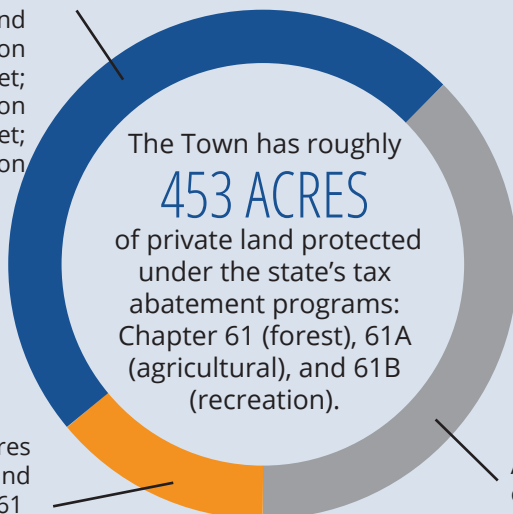
**CARVER'S POND**

Carver's Pond area, with just over 70 acres protected, is the largest parcel of conservation land owned by the Town.



## CHAPTER 61 PROPERTY

220 acres of private agricultural land under Chapter 61A. The largest agricultural properties not permanently protected include 176 acres on Curve Street; 55- and 35-parcels on Auburn Street; 31 acres on North Street; and 29 acres on Pleasant Street.



Almost 63 acres of forested land under Chapter 61

Almost 170 acres of recreation land under Chapter 61B

## SCENIC VISTAS

One of Bridgewater's most compelling landscapes is its open fields. Previous Open Space plans have proposed a number of potential scenic landscapes, 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. If officially designated through Town Council, these character-defining roads would be subject to a mandatory Planning Board hearing prior to any alterations (such as tree or stonewall removals).

Great Hill on the BSU Campus and Sprague's Hill, the town's two main hills, are both covered by trees and dominated by large water supply tanks—and were identified in the 2017 Open Space Plan as potential viewing point opportunities.



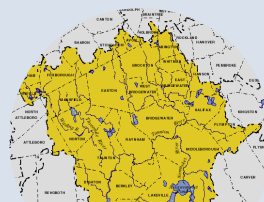
**SPRAGUE'S HILL**





## WATER RESOURCES

Bridgewater is nestled between the 14-mile Town and Taunton River—both designated as priority protection areas by the Town of Bridgewater and regionally by the Old Colony Planning Council in 2013.

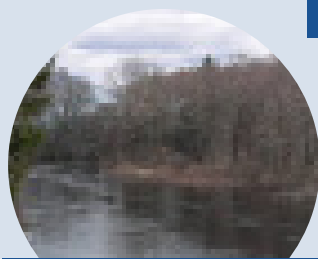


## TAUNTON BASIN WATERSHED

Bridgewater is located within the **562-SQUARE MILE** Taunton Basin, the second largest watershed in Massachusetts. It contains the headlands of the Taunton River—where the 14-mile Town River originating at Lake Nippenicket and Hockomock Swamp and draining in West Bridgewater, meets the Matfield River.

The Taunton River, a federally designated Wild and Scenic River, originates in Bridgewater. It's recognized nationally as the longest undammed coastal river in New England as there are no dams on the river itself—apart from a small deteriorated one in Paper Mill Village Backwater. It is also the state's designated Wampanoag Commemorative Canoe Passage (an ancient Native American waterway of over 70 miles).

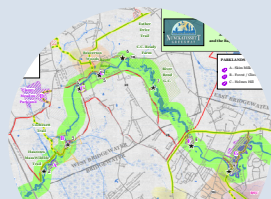
Water quality and flooding in Bridgewater are affected by upstream pollution and storm water, including effluent from Brockton's Advanced Waste Water Treatment plant.



## TAUNTON RIVER

Aquifer recharge is important to maintain the groundwater table and water supply, particularly in the Zone II and III areas of the Aquifer Protection Zoning district.

There are **13** Certified Vernal Pools and approximately 300 Potential Vernal Pools in Bridgewater, which provide habitat for a variety of species.



## NUNCKATESSETT GREENWAY

Nunckatessett Greenway connects open space along the Town River in Bridgewater and West Bridgewater to form a greenway and blue-way canoe trail.



## LAKE NIPPENICKET

The Town's major water body is the 500-acre Lake Nippenicket, a natural lake that offers boating and fishing opportunities. Other water bodies include the 25-acre man-made Carver's Pond, 5-8-acre Skeeter Mill Pond, and nine-acre Sturdevant's Pond, among others.



## HOCKOMOCK SWAMP

Bridgewater has an estimated **3,048 ACRES** of wetlands (roughly 17 percent of total land area)—including the state's largest fresh-water swamp, the 16,800-acre Hockomock Swamp. Hockomock was identified as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), a classification that identifies unique and significant natural and cultural resources.



## HABITAT & BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES

Bridgewater's rare and endangered plant species are generally found in wetlands. Diverse wildlife habitat exists along the rivers, brooks, streams, and varied upland areas. The greatest natural setting in Bridgewater is the land surrounding Lake Nippenicket. However, improved and continuous wildlife corridors could be created along the Towns' streams and waterways to permit the free movement of larger wildlife. As listed in the 2017 OSRP, priority land for wildlife corridors and critical habitats include: Jolly Meadow between Flagg, Mae Ave. and Alexander Dr. from Bridgewater Correction Complex connect to Winter St and Carver's Pond Habitats).



## Chapter 6: Active 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.<sup>29</sup>

### GOAL 1

#### *Rehabilitate or restore existing parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities, such as Jenny Leonard Park or Marathon Park.*

Age and design of recreation facilities can impact the 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 resources on managing and maintaining its existing facilities and resources to better optimize their use—identifying Rainbow’s End and Marathon Park as particular sites.

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

### GOAL 2

#### *Rehabilitate existing or create new facilities to improve safety and public access to active outdoor recreational facilities, such as Stiles and Hart.*

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. According to the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, roughly 8 percent of Bridgewater’s total civilian noninstitutionalized population has some level of disabilities—ranging from vision or hearing limitations to reliance on wheelchairs or crutches.

Additional changes and improvements identified in the *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update* to increase ADA-accessible recreation facilities include:<sup>30</sup>

- Conventional ramps to bathrooms, bleachers, public spaces
- Modification of picnic tables to allow people in wheelchairs to sit close to the table

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<sup>29</sup> For example, open space or land for recreation can be created through demolition of structures and/or clean-up of polluted sites.

<sup>30</sup> 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, pp. 114-115

- 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 oversized 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."

## GOAL 3

### *Create a comprehensive and connected bike and walking path network.*

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). During the outreach for this plan, participants expressed a need for a more connected biking and walking path network—particularly one which reaches Bridgewater's open spaces.

**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."

## GOAL 4

### *Create and restore access to the Town River or other water bodies for canoes/kayak access.*

Bridgewater is nestled between the 14-mile Town and Taunton River—both designated as priority protection areas by the Town of Bridgewater and regionally by the Old Colony Planning Council in 2013. There are currently four existing river access points along the Nunckatessett Greenway which forms a greenway and blue-way canoe trail along the Town River. The CPC encourages projects which improve or create public access to the waterfront.

**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."

## GOAL 5

### *Create outdoor recreational facilities that cater to older residents and individuals with special needs, such as pickleball courts and ADA-accessible facilities.*

With the segment of residents age 55 years and older growing to almost a third of all residents, the recreational needs of the community will also change.<sup>31</sup> During this plan's community outreach process, community stakeholders expressed a desire for a facilities oriented towards older adults. There are many health benefits from daily moderate physical activity, including lower blood pressure and healthy bones and joints.<sup>32</sup> 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 in the *2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update* to increase senior-friendly recreation facilities include:<sup>33</sup>

- Improvements to trails and greenways town-wide to create safe walking opportunities near every neighborhood.
- Increase opportunity for accessible swimming within the town.

<sup>31</sup> 2017 Housing Production Plan, p 15.

<sup>32</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Physical Activity and Health: Older Adults." *A Report of the Surgeon General*. <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/pdf/olderad.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, pp. 113-114

- 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.



# BRIDGEWATER RECREATION

## NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Bridgewater has a total of approximately **522.2 ACRES** of publicly accessible recreation land in public ownership, including land owned by the town and the state.



**PASSIVE RECREATION**

Tuckerwood Conservation Area on High Street provides 32 acres of pine and oak woods with a walking trail and path to the Town River.

Wyman Meadow Conservation Area includes 35 acres of meadows and woods along the Taunton River and abuts the roughly 40-acre North Fork Preserve, held by Wildlands Trust of Southeastern MA (WTSM). It also contains 20 acres for water supply protection.

The Titicut Conservation Area provides close to 28 acres and includes a campground and a canoe/kayak put in.



**KEITH HOMESTEAD**

The **13.6-ACRE** Keith Homestead conservation land which borders Lake Nippenicket acquired in 2012 through Community Preservation Act and MA Department of Fish and Game funds.



**AND HART  
CONSERVATION AREA**

The roughly 70-acre Stiles and Hart Conservation Area located along the Town River provides walking trails as well as areas along the river with shallow banks that allow car-top boat access and fishing.



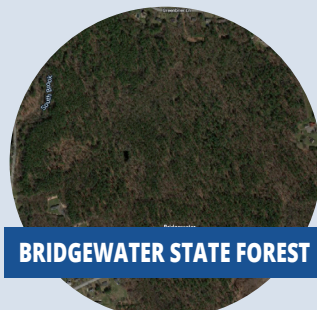
**CARVER'S POND**

Carver's Pond, 66 acres conservation land, includes **3,285 FEET OF TRAILS**.



**IRON WORKS PARK**

The Iron Works Park, 16 acres, provides a portage point for canoeing/kayaking and fishing.



**BRIDGEWATER STATE FOREST**

Various open space properties 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 (formerly held by WTSM). Bridgewater also has multiple areas along rivers for car-top boat access in addition to the Lake Nippenicket boat ramp for larger boats.



### BRIDGEWATER'S POTENTIAL RECREATION NEEDS

Outreach during the 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) identified some of the following as potential recreational needs:

- Expanding town-wide walking paths; hiking trails; biking; and other multipurpose pathways.
- Increase access to the Town's rivers and ponds for water sports and activities, including canoe and kayaking; swimming; and fishing.
- Increasing the number of small-scale neighborhood parks with picnic areas
- Improving camping areas at Wyman Meadow and Titicut Conservation Parkland

#### Abbreviations:

ALS: Acreage Level of Service  
BSU: Bridgewater State University  
DCR: MA Department of Conservation and Recreation  
OSRP: Open Space and Recreation Plan

## ACREAGE LEVEL OF SERVICE

Acreage Level of Service (ALS) is a standard which determines whether a community has “enough” parkland for the community’s population. For Bridgewater, the benchmark is 9.5 acres per 1,000 population. Based on current population projections, the Bridgewater’s will remain around 17 acres per 1,000 population—above the average benchmark.

There are more than **4,000** participating members across various sports leagues—including 1,500 in youth soccer; 600 in boys baseball; 500 in youth lacrosse; 500 in softball; 500 in youth basketball; 275 in football; and 200 in track and field.

Leagues indicate that the majority of their field needs are currently met by existing facilities with no scheduling issues—however, an increase in lacrosse over recent years indicates that there may be a need for additional dedicated facilities.

## ACTIVE RECREATION

Summer recreation programs offered by the Town typically receive 50-100 participants per week.

Bridgewater has close to **380 ACRES** of land dedicated to active recreation including the 210-acre Olde Scotland Links Golf Course.

The matrix below details the active recreation facilities:

Facility	Basketball	Baseball/ Softball	T-Ball	Football	Soccer	Playground	Multipurpose	Boat Launch	Golf
Legion Field	..	.....	..						
Scotland Field									
Crescent Street Fields		...							.
Rainbow's End									
Jenny Leonard Park									
Town River Landing									
Olde Scotland Links									
Lake Nippenicket Boat Ramp									
Flagg Street Soccer Fields					.....				
Marathon Park									

**Note:** This table does not include facilities of the Regional School District nor Bridgewater State University, although residents benefit from use of recreation facilities at these locations as well. These facilities include tracks, tennis courts, playgrounds, and various athletic fields.

# 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
<b>DEFINITIONS</b> (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
<b>ACQUISITION</b> 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
<b>CREATION</b> To bring into being or cause to exist. <i>Seidenman v. City of Newton</i> , 452 Mass. 472 (2008)	Yes		Yes	Yes
<b>PRESERVATION</b> Protect personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>SUPPORT</b> 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
<b>REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION</b> 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. Project Schedule

**J M Goldson**

community preservation  
+ planning

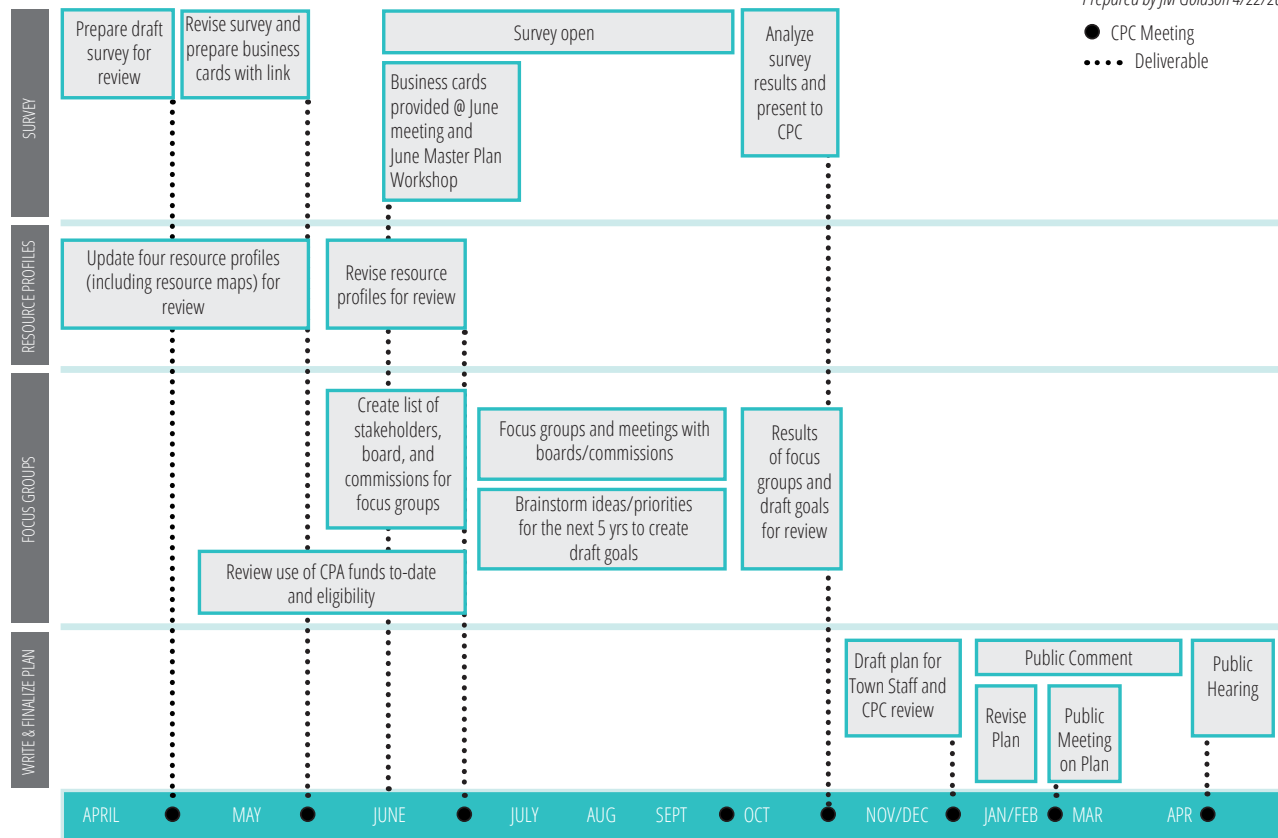
**BRIDGEWATER CPC**

**PROPOSED CP PLAN SCHEDULE FOR FY19-FY20**

*Prepared by J M Goldson 4/22/20*

● CPC Meeting

.... Deliverable



## C. Community Engagement Results

### **FOCUS GROUP MEMO**

### **ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY OF RESULTS**



## MEMO

To: Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee (CPC)  
From: JM Goldson LLC  
Date: October 2, 2019  
Re: Focus Groups Summary of Results

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The purpose of this memo is to provide a summary of the focus groups hosted by the Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee and led by project consultant JM Goldson LLC as part of the update to Bridgewater's Community Preservation Plan Update. Two one-hour sessions were held in Bridgewater's Academy Building on Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 5PM and 6PM. The event was advertised on the CPC's website and invitations sent out through professional and personal networks. In total, thirteen people participated in the focus groups—6 CPC members and 7 non-CPC members.

### DISCUSSION THEMES

Participants were asked to provide feedback on goals and priorities from the last CP Plan (2014) and other relevant community goals. Key themes are highlighted below:

#### OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

- **Devote more resources and build awareness around what we already have:** There is need for dedicated staff people for sustainability initiatives and open space/conservation efforts. The Parks and Recreation Department is understaffed. Town should not buy any more open space until existing facilities are better maintained, e.g. Rainbows End. A need to inventory what we already have before getting more.<sup>1</sup> Participants noted sites with historical issues, including Rainbow's End and Jenny Leonard Park.
- **Need for a user-friendly comprehensive and sustainable trail network—not just disconnected site-specific trails**
- **Improved Safety and Access:** There are lots of trails and acres of open space—people just don't know about them. Need for better wayfinding and branding and need increased safety in parks, physical (like facilities, lights, or signage) and also insects. Need for more parking and better signage to make entrances more visible/accessible.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants explicitly stated that they have no problem with the proposed Stiles and Hart purchase because it would increase ADA access—and improve parking/signage at the entrance.

- **Desire to see Town River Landing transformed into a functioning community hub connected to trails that attracts students at BSU**
- **Youth/Teen Spaces:** Kids are aging out of Bridgewater's playgrounds with nowhere else to go. Need for more youth-oriented/teen spaces.
- **Adult-Oriented Recreation Facilities:** There is a desire to see pickleball courts, outdoor exercise stations, playgrounds and other recreation facilities aimed at adults in Bridgewater. It is one of the fastest growing sports and could be appropriate for older adults. Need more opportunities for seniors to get active outdoors.
- **Golf course could be a potential site for cross-country skiing**

#### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- **More protection of private structures, including roads, houses, and stone walls**
- **Connect Economic Development with Historic Preservation:** Need to preserve Bridgewater's Sense of Place—particularly in the downtown. Should acquire more properties in historic districts and other historic areas to protect them and the community's character. Could CPA help with subsidizing efforts of Bridgewater's Façade Improvement program?
- **Increase Awareness:** People don't know about the historic fabric of Bridgewater. Need to promote better. As part of that, should increase official state and federal designations for inventoried historic properties in MACRIS (add more protections)
- **Historic Documents/Artifacts:** Need for better protection of historic documents, artifacts, and other ephemera, including digitization efforts and creation of an artifact repository or historical room that is accessible to the public. David Moore, from Bridgewater Historical Commission, also submitted a formal letter to CPC outlining this.
- **Town Hall Building:** Participants stated it was frustrating to see a historic building in a prominent location sit unused. Academy Building project rendered this other building obsolete with no game plan or next steps on reusing/restoring the building. Is this something the CPC should consider going forward in applications? Some participants suggested transforming the space into an arts/community hub.

#### COMMUNITY HOUSING

- **Relationship between BSU and Town of Bridgewater:** Enrollment at BSU is going up. There needs to be better connection between students at BSU and the town. Is there a way to get more students at local businesses downtown as the campus is only a few blocks away? There are also ongoing maintenance/quality/absentee landlord issues for student housing stock—and many residents feel that student demand is increasing rents for other residents.
- **Housing is out of control**
- **Need for senior/older adult housing near Town Center**

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

# Community Preservation Plan Community Survey

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

OCTOBER 2019

**PREPARED FOR:**

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

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# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarize the key findings of the online community survey prepared by JM Goldson community preservation + planning in May through September 2019. The survey was part of a broader community engagement to understand the needs and priorities in each of the four Community Preservation Act (CPA) categories. The final plan will help guide, prioritize, and allocate funding from the Community Preservation Act over the next five years. In total, 133 people responded to the survey.<sup>1</sup>

## Survey Outreach

The Bridgewater Community Preservation Plan Survey was distributed over five months (May to September 2019) by the Community Preservation Committee using a variety of virtual and physical outreach methods, including email outreach, social media, flyers, and a link on the CPC's website. Yard signs with a QR code and the survey link were distributed throughout town at previously funded CPA-sites (shown below).



## SURVEY REPRESENTATION

Preliminary analysis, shown below, indicates that the following groups may have been underrepresented in the survey: youth/students; non-white residents; and renters.

- According to 2017 ACS five-year estimates, 20-24 year olds are one of the largest age segments (14 percent of the total population) and grew 26 percent between 2010 and 2017. However, no responses identified as this age category. Youth and students are traditionally a difficult segment to capture. Many of these residents counted in the ACS estimates may be students at Bridgewater State University (BSU) and the survey was administered over the summer when BSU was not in session which may have led to lower participation rates.
- Although Bridgewater's population is predominately white (almost 84 percent), non-white residents comprise 16 percent of its population, according to ACS 2017 five-year estimates. Of survey participants, 98 percent self-identified as white.

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<sup>1</sup> With only 133 participants, there is a relatively high margin of error (8 percent). To achieve a 95 percent confidence interval, there would need to be 379 responses (with a margin of error of 5 percent).



- The majority of survey participants were homeowners (over 88 percent). According to 2017 ACS five-year estimates, only 74 percent of housing units are owner-occupied. Rental units make up 27 percent of the market. Yet, only 10 percent of survey responses identified as renters.

## Summary of Key Findings

### **DIVISION IN PRIORITIES**

Although participants ranked *Open Space and Passive Recreation* and *Historic Preservation* as the higher importance for project funding over the next five years, many comments were also passionate about the need for maintaining/improving *Active Recreation* facilities and *Affordable Housing*—specifically for older adults. Comments overall showed a division between participants on the category or categories which were most important for Bridgewater.

### **MAINTAIN CHARACTER THROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION**

*Historic Preservation* and *Open Space and Passive Recreation* were seen by survey participants as important components to preserving the town's character—particularly its historic properties, farmland, and forested areas. Specific properties identified by participants included the Iron Works Buildings; Town Hall; Central Square; Bridgewater's historic churches; and Mt Prospect Street Cemetery. Participants were also concerned about preserving the quality of Bridgewater's water bodies, including Town River, Lake Nippenicket, Carvers Pond, and various wetlands.

### **HELP SENIORS STAY IN BRIDGEWATER**

In *Community Housing*, most responses focused on the need for more affordable housing for seniors/older adults. The older adult population (65 and older) grew between 2010 and 2017 (32 percent) and is projected to continue growing—suggesting there may be a need for housing for this age group. However, seniors (65 and older) also made up a little over a third of survey responses—and there were no responses from residents 18-24, another age group with a need for affordable rental units.

### **IMPROVE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Many participants voiced a need for the creation of bike trails and facilities designated to specific age groups, such as youth groups or seniors. But there was an even stronger focus on improving existing facilities and improve awareness and access of existing facilities.

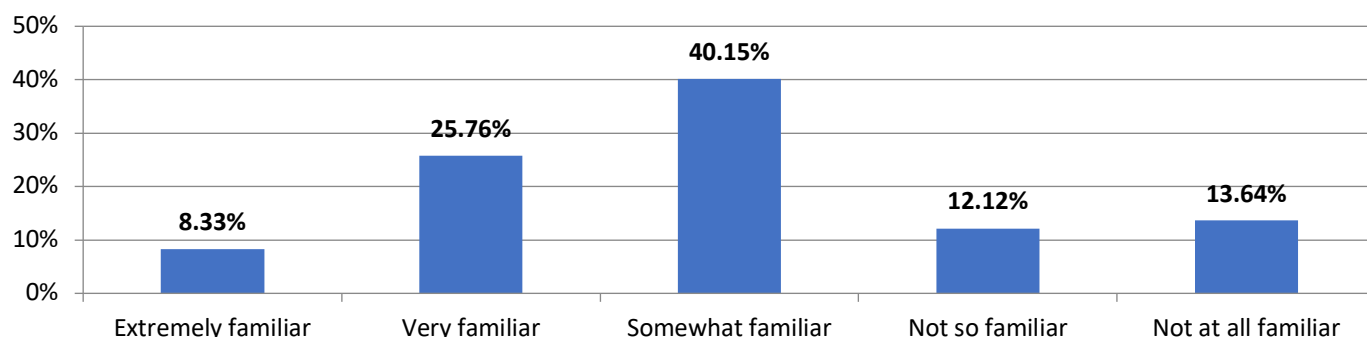
# Survey Results

## Survey Participants

Of the 133 participants reported by SurveyMonkey, most completed the majority of questions on the survey.<sup>2</sup> Two-thirds of participants<sup>3</sup> selected to complete additional demographic questions. Below is a breakdown of participants' characteristics based on these responses.

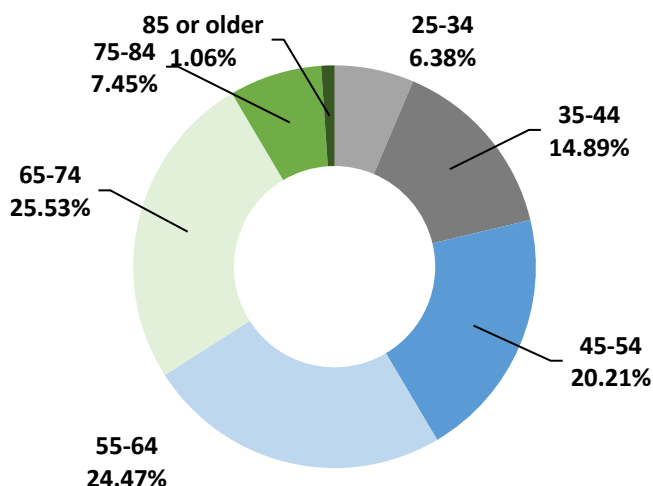
### FAMILIARITY WITH CPA

Most participants (40 percent or 53 responses) reported that they were “somewhat familiar” with the Community Preservation Act (CPA). About a quarter of responses said that they were “not so familiar” or “not at all familiar” with CPA.



### AGE RANGE

The majority of participants (almost 70 percent) fell within the 25-64 age range. Seniors (65 and older shown in green shades) made up a little over a third of responses. This is a good response rate as senior participation can be low for surveys that are primarily online. Paper copies of the survey and other targeted outreach at the senior center may have helped boost numbers for this age range. There were no youth (24 and below) participants.

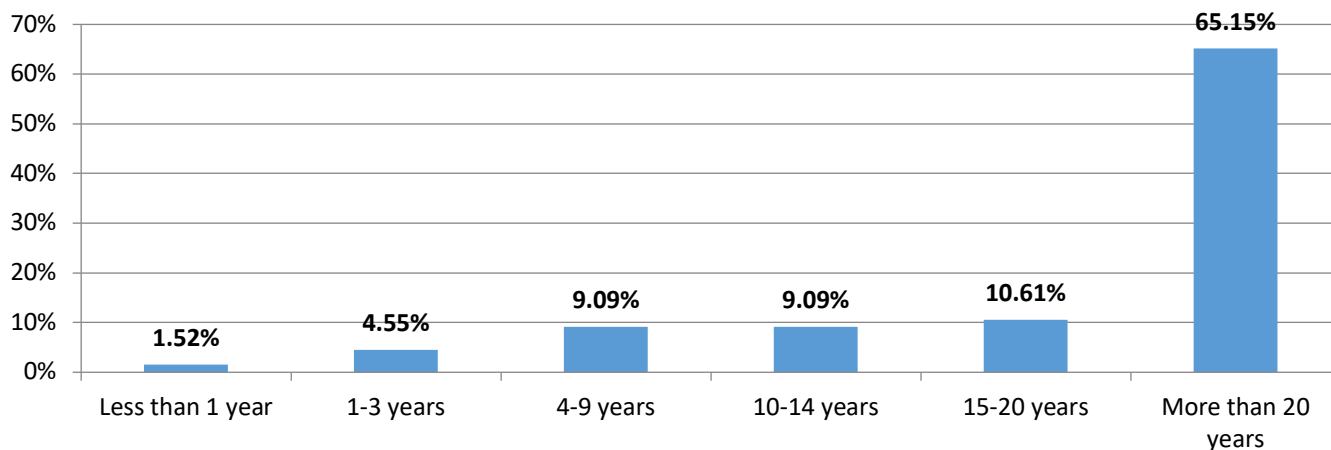


<sup>2</sup> 77 percent response rate

<sup>3</sup> Between 80-95 people depending on the question. Income had the lowest response rate (80 participants).

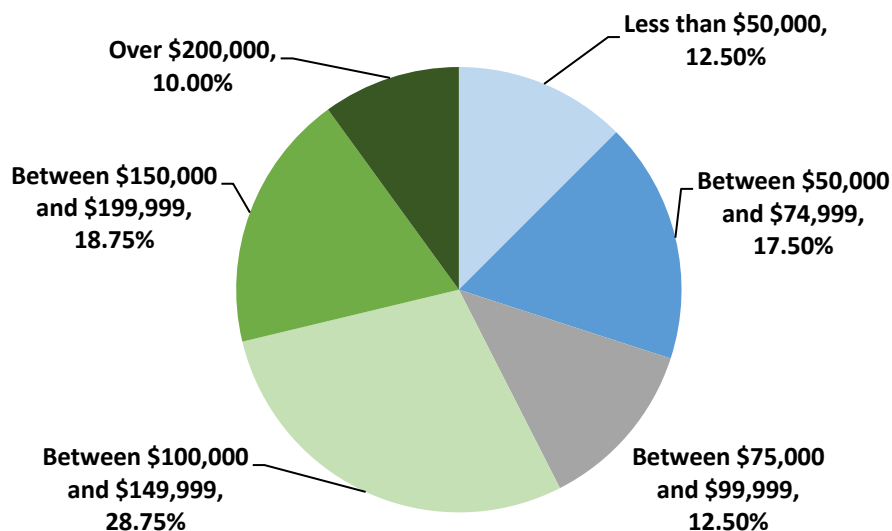
## TIME AND ASSOCIATION WITH BRIDGEWATER

The majority of respondents (about 65 percent) were long-time residents—having lived in Bridgewater for over twenty years. The majority of participants (123 responses or 93 percent) were residents of Bridgewater. Four participants said they worked in Bridgewater and five stated that they had another connection.<sup>4</sup>



## INCOME

The largest percentage of survey participants (57.5 percent or 46 responses) reported incomes over \$100,000 (shown in green). An eighth of responses (12.5 percent) reported incomes below \$50,000.



<sup>4</sup> Some participants responded that they had grown up in Bridgewater or attended BSU but moved away. These responses also stated that they visit family or friends who still live in town frequently and/or for extended periods of time.

## OTHER PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

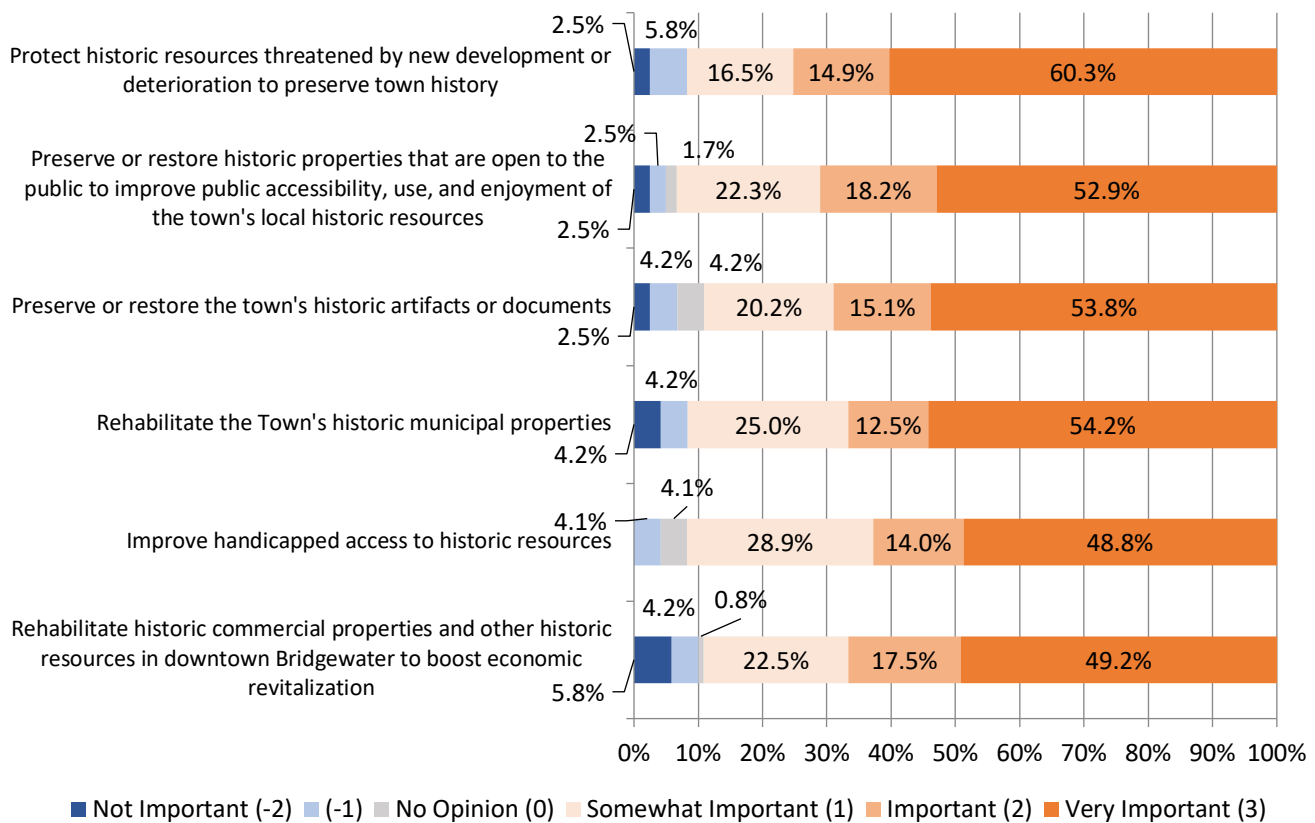
- Almost all participants self-identified as White/Caucasian (almost 98 percent). Two responses were from participants who self-identified as Black or African-American. Hispanic or Latinx; American Indian or Alaskan Native; Middle Eastern or North African; and Multiple Ethnicity each had one response.
- The majority of participants self-identified as male (53 perecent). The remainder self-identified as female.
- The majority of survey participants (68 percent) were did not have children 18 or below living with them.

## Historic Preservation

While many historic preservation projects were considered “important”<sup>5</sup> among participants, the top two projects were “*Protect historic resources threatened by new development or deterioration to preserve town history*” and “*Preserve or restore historic properties that are open to the public to improve public accessibility, use, and enjoyment of the town's local historic resources.*” The majority of respondents (about 71 to 75 percent) ranked them as *Very Important* or *Important*.

PROPOSED PROJECT	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Protect historic resources threatened by new development or deterioration to preserve town history	2.17
Preserve or restore historic properties that are open to the public to improve public accessibility, use, and enjoyment of the town's local historic resources	2.10
Preserve or restore the town's historic artifacts or documents	2.03
Rehabilitate the Town's historic municipal properties	2.00
Improve handicapped access to historic resources	1.99
Rehabilitate historic commercial properties and other historic resources in downtown Bridgewater to boost economic revitalization	1.89

### HOW IMPORTANT TO YOU ARE THE FOLLOWING HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECTS IN BRIDGEWATER?



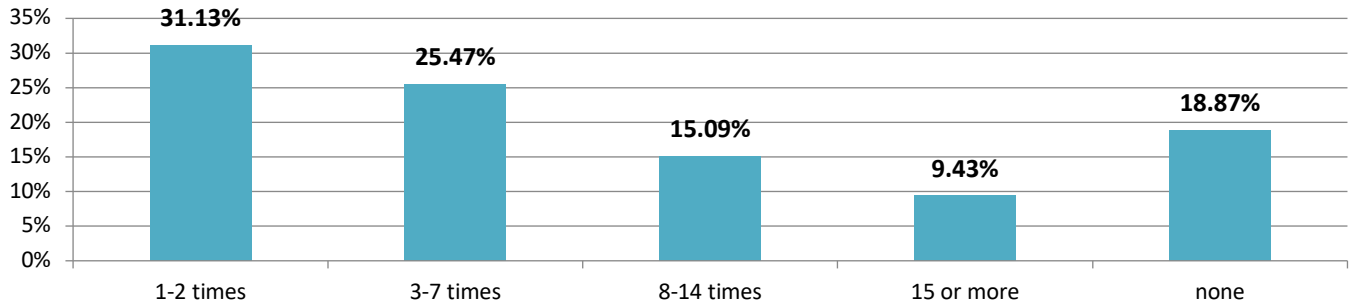
<sup>5</sup> All of the project ideas in historic preservation had weighted averages close to 2 or higher than 2.



# Open Space and Passive Recreation

Survey participants are sporadic users of Bridgewater’s open space and natural conservation areas—more than half (56 percent) visit conservation areas a few times in a year.<sup>6</sup>

## HOW OFTEN IN A YEAR DO YOU VISIT CONSERVATION AREAS IN BRIDGEWATER?



While the majority of open space and passive recreation projects were considered “significantly important”<sup>7</sup> among participants, the top three projects in this category were:

1. *Preserve/protect Bridgewater's farms and agricultural lands*
2. *Protect wildlife habitats and critical natural landscapes*
3. *Improve water quality of rivers and other water bodies, such as Lake Nippenicket or the Matfield River*

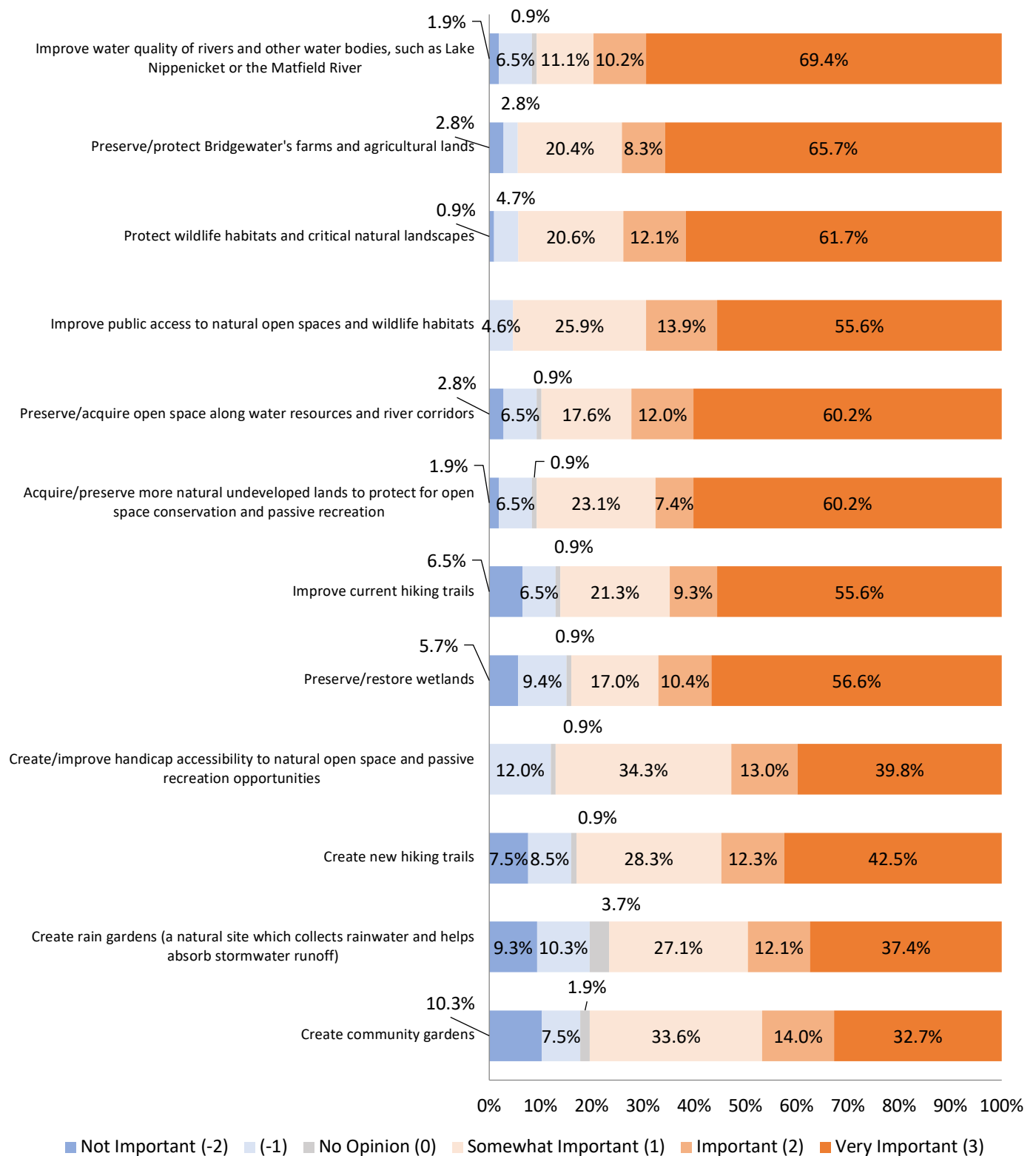
The majority of respondents (about 74 percent) ranked them as *Very Important* or *Quite Important*. Other top projects were “*Preserve/acquire open space along water resources and river corridors*” (72 percent) and “*Improve public access to natural open spaces and wildlife habitats*” (69.5 percent).

PROPOSED PROJECT	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Improve water quality of rivers and other water bodies, such as Lake Nippenicket or the Matfield River	2.30
Preserve/protect Bridgewater's farms and agricultural lands	2.26
Protect wildlife habitats and critical natural landscapes	2.23
Improve public access to natural open spaces and wildlife habitats	2.16
Preserve/acquire open space along water resources and river corridors	2.10
Acquire/preserve more natural undeveloped lands to protect for open space conservation and passive recreation	2.08
Improve current hiking trails	1.87
Preserve/restore wetlands	1.87
Create/improve handicap accessibility to natural open space and passive recreation opportunities	1.68
Create new hiking trails	1.57
Create rain gardens (a natural site which collects rainwater and helps absorb stormwater runoff)	1.35
Create community gardens	1.32

<sup>6</sup> Includes responses “1-2 times” in a year and “3 to 7 times” in a year

<sup>7</sup> “Important” indicates that fifty percent or more of participants identified the issue as *Very Important* or *Quite Important*. The weighted average for most projects were 4 or greater.

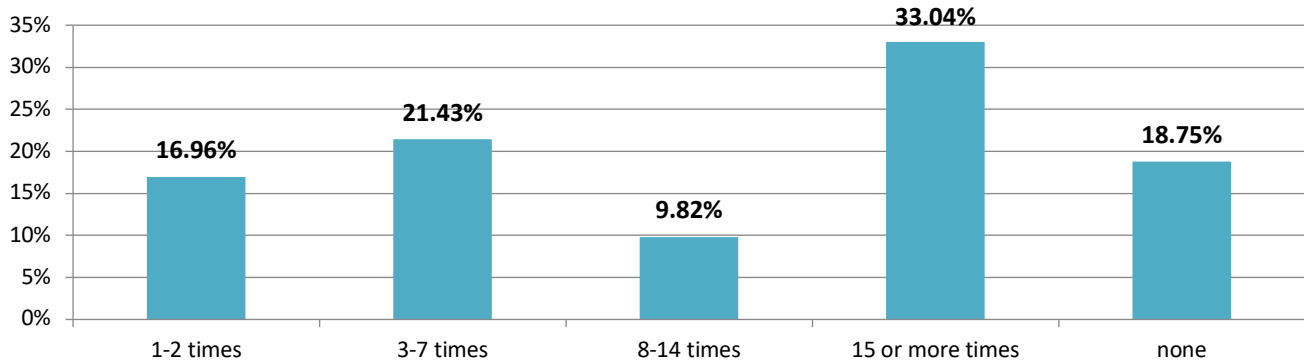
## HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING OPEN SPACE AND PASSIVE RECREATION PROJECTS ARE IN BRIDGEWATER?



## Active Recreation

Survey participants are frequent users of Bridgewater’s parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields— a third (33 percent) use these facilities fifteen or more times in a year.<sup>8</sup>

### HOW OFTEN IN A YEAR DO YOU USE ANY OF THE PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, OR ATHLETIC FIELDS IN BRIDGEWATER?



While many of active recreation projects were considered “significantly important”<sup>9</sup> among participants, the top three projects in this category were:

1. *Improve or upgrade existing parks*
2. *Improve or upgrade existing playgrounds*
3. *Improve public access to recreation opportunities, such as trails and conservation areas*

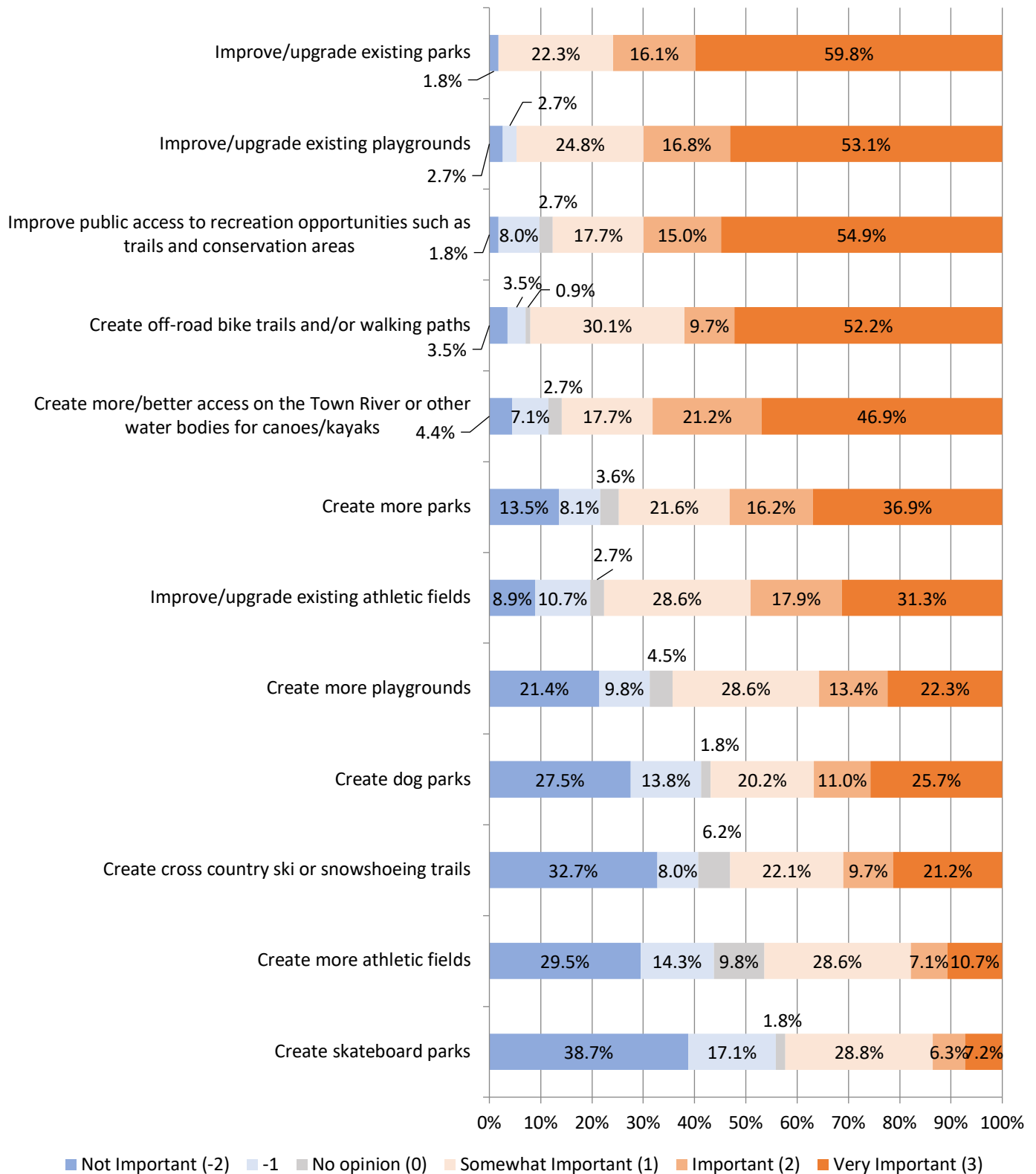
The majority of respondents (70 to 74 percent depending on which project) ranked them as *Very Important* or *Quite Important*. Other top projects were “*Create off-road bike trails and/or walking paths*” (62 percent) and “*Improve access to the Town River and other water bodies*” (68 percent).

PROPOSED PROJECT	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Improve/upgrade existing parks	2.30
Improve/upgrade existing playgrounds	2.10
Improve public access to recreation opportunities such as trails and conservation areas	2.01
Create off-road bike trails and/or walking paths	1.96
Create more/better access on the Town River or other water bodies for canoes/kayaks	1.85
Create more parks	1.30
Improve/upgrade existing athletic fields	1.29
Create more playgrounds	0.70
Create dog parks	0.50
Create cross country ski or snowshoeing trails	0.32
Create more athletic fields	0.02
Create skateboard parks	-0.32

<sup>8</sup> Includes responses “1-2 times” in a year and “3 to 7 times” in a year

<sup>9</sup> “Important” indicates that fifty percent or more of participants identified the issue as *Very Important* or *Quite Important*. The weighted average for most projects were greater than 1—indicating a desire for these projects.

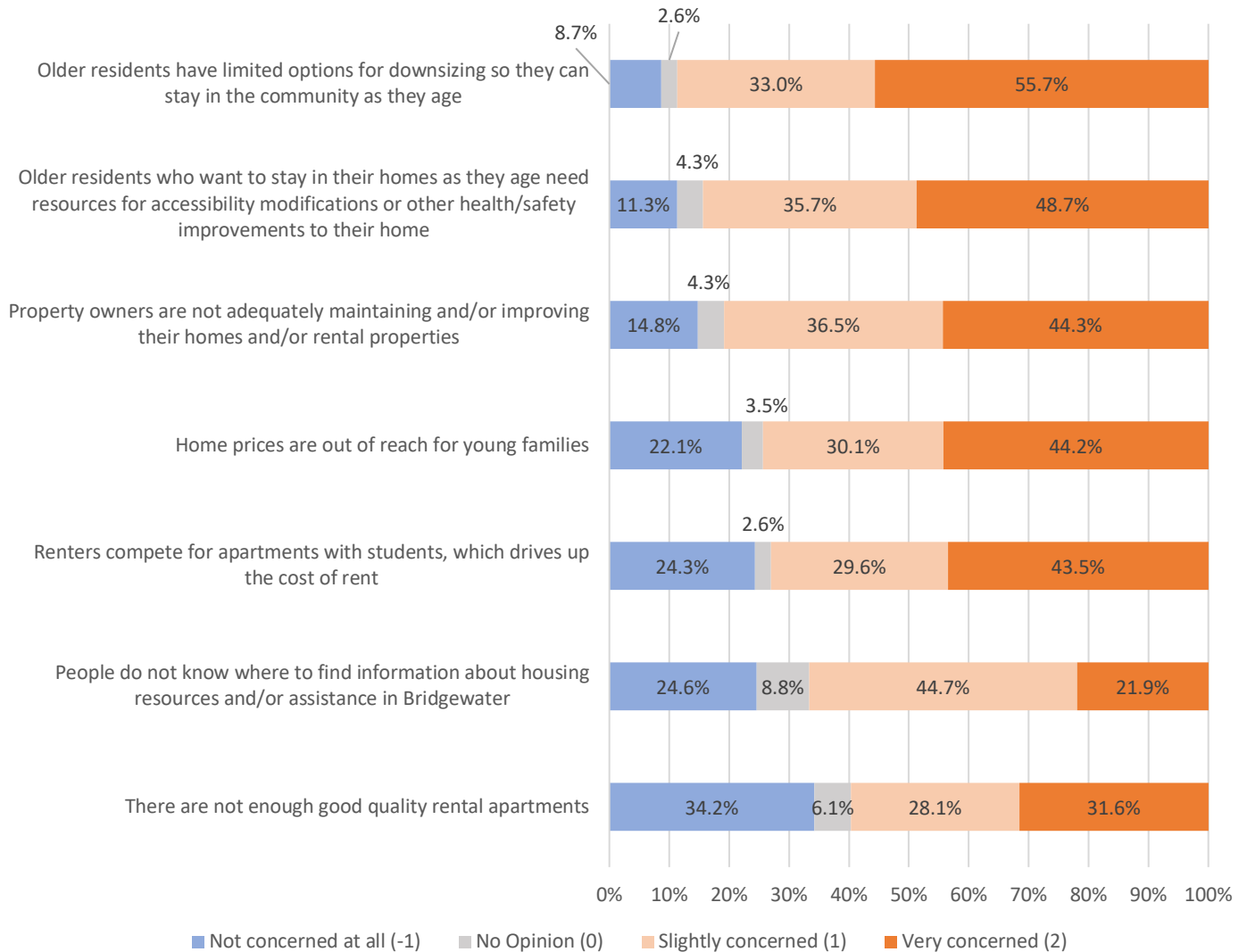
## HOW IMPORTANT ARE THESE OUTDOOR RECREATION PROJECTS TO YOU?



## Community Housing

The majority of participants identified themselves as homeowners (88.3 percent). Almost 10 percent of participants said they rented their current home. Two percent responded “neither”—identifying in the comments that they live with their in-laws. Participants were asked to rank their housing concerns—ranging from rising rents, changing neighborhood character, and difficulty purchasing a home in Bridgewater.

### WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS BEST REFLECTS YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT HOUSING IN BRIDGEWATER?



Perhaps due to the strong representation from residents 65+ years, the top two concerns were “*Older residents have limited options for downsizing so they can stay in the community as they age*” and “*Older residents who want to stay in their homes as they age need resources for accessibility modifications or other health/safety improvements to their home.*” About over 80 percent ranked these as *Very Concerned* or *Slightly Concerned*.



*“Elder subsidized rentals are needed so they can remain citizens of a town they love without the upkeep and maintenance of owning a home.”*

*“Help seniors stay in their homes.”*

Few responses expressed concern around rental housing in Bridgewater—but this is also perhaps unsurprising due to the low response rate from renters. For survey responses that identified as “renters,” their top concerns were *“Home prices are out of reach for young families”* and *“Renters compete for apartments with students, which drives up the cost of rent.”*<sup>10</sup> In the comments, there was a clear division between participants about whether or not there is a need for more rental housing.

*“I am very concerned about the amount of multifamily dwellings on minimal space that have been permitted and are planned. They draw on our municipalities and offer little to no service for elderly and existing residents. We need to attract businesses to increase revenue and stop building affordable/low income housing - I think we have met our requirement.”*

*“As a single graduate student with a dog it is impossible to find affordable housing. It’s like the community does not support higher education while it’s the host of an amazing university. Growth and independence is needed for a younger adult community yet the ability to move out of home with parents, obtain an education and work still does not meet the needs of affordable housing. I’d be better off not working and apply for section 8 housing. I’m hopeful Bridgewater as well as growing towns can make a change.”*

Many comments suggest that the lack of appetite for additional housing may be due to a feeling that many of the current properties in Bridgewater are being neglected by homeowners/landlords.

*“We do not need more housing in Bridgewater. Rather, we need to invest in improving the housing options that are already available. There are many multi-family housing units that look like blights on the outside that hinder the look of Central Square and the general downtown area.”*

*“Renter apartments and homes need to be maintained inside and outside as does the associated property. The town and college need to work closely to ensure rentals for students are clean and safe and up to code. Same for elderly and for single parent families.”*

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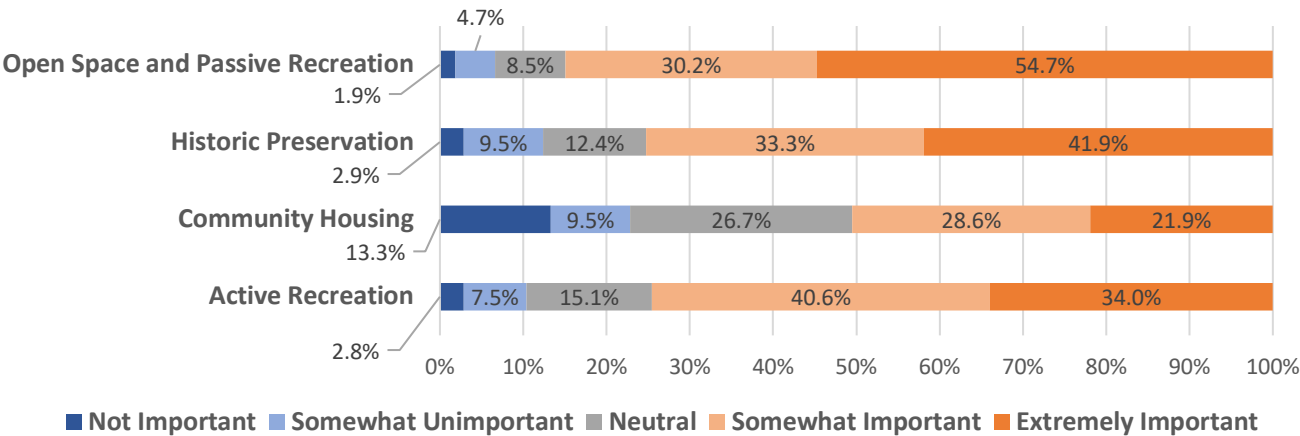
<sup>10</sup> Renters also ranked *Community Housing* and *Open Space and Passive Recreation* as their two highest overall CPA priorities.

# Overall Allocation

Participants rated funding *Open Space and Passive Recreation* as the most important priority for Bridgewater (58 responses or almost 55 percent rated it as *Very Important*). *Historic Preservation* was the second-most important with 44 responses (42 percent) identifying it as *Very Important*.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING FOR PROJECTS IN EACH OF THE FOUR ELIGIBLE CPA-FUNDING CATEGORIES OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

CATEGORY	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Open Space and Passive Recreation	4.31
Historic Preservation	4.02
Active Recreation	3.95
Community Housing	3.36



However, comments showed that participants were strongly divided over which category or categories were the most important and most pressing for Bridgewater.

*“The historic preservation and improvement of our downtown area should be the #1 priority as it is vital to the future of our town. The center should be our shining star and an attraction to our community.”*

*“There is a great need of active recreation. Other than the playground there is close to nothing. An outdoor exercise trail would be great and as already mentioned we need bike paths.”*

*“If we do not retain open space now, it won’t be there later.”*

*“...But of all the categories, Historic preservation is the one we cannot fix in the future if we do not preserve it now. Once lost, it is gone forever.”*

*“Community housing and historic preservation does not improve the quality of life for residents, simply gives money to a very select group. Active and passive recreation impacts many, and all who wish to partake. Thus, it helps everyone rather than simply giving a payday to someone who agrees to continue to farmland.”*

*“...Community housing should make housing available to the non-college occupants such as young and elderly residents....”*

# Appendix

Below are comment responses to the open-ended questions in the survey. The individual CPA categories are in response to the question *“Are there any specific [CPA category] projects that you would like to see funded in Bridgewater?”*<sup>11</sup> The overall allocation comments are from *“How would you rate the importance of funding for projects in each of the four eligible CPA categories over the next five years?”*

## Survey Comments by Category

### OVERALL ALLOCATION

- A lot of historic properties are such in disrepair they should be torn down for public safety.
- Active and passive recreation can touch and impact the quality of life for many individuals. Historic Preservation and Comm Housing impact a select few.
- Active recreation for small children priority. Historic preservation already explained in detail, but the projects should be managed in a way that they have a useful secondary function other than just being historic. Community housing should make housing available to the non-college occupants such as young and elderly residents. Open space and passive rec need equipment to maintain
- All are important in their own right.
- Bridgewater has spent a fortune on Historic preservation on property not worth preserving and privately-owned property.
- Bridgewater's historic and natural resources are incredible. They should be preserved, protected, restored, and promoted in order to attract further investment and revitalization.
- Community housing and historic preservation does not improve the quality of life for residents, simply gives money to a very select group. Active and passive recreation impacts many, and all who wish to partake. Thus, it helps everyone rather than simply giving a payday to someone who agrees to continue to farmland.
- Housing is in decent shape, open space and passive recreation needs improvement but does not cause tremendous harm if we delay for a little while. Active recreation is necessary to help businesses. But of all the categories, Historic preservation is the one we cannot fix in the future if we do not preserve it now. Once lost, it is gone forever.
- I don't think we should put funding toward new housing before preserving the land we have and protecting nature. Having more places for us to visit and be active outside in our own community would be amazing
- I miss the country/ farm/ forest feel of Bridgewater. Every time I drive to work there is another cookie cutter development popping up. It seems to be getting like the outskirts of Boston over developed... Bring the trees back. Build new houses if you must but leave a tree barrier between them for privacy and a woodsy feel. Let the new homeowner that can afford a \$400k+ house decide on tree removal. There's more of us who LOVE trees and nature!!!
- I think these are all important. I think CPA committee is doing a good job.

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<sup>11</sup> “No” responses were excluded unless followed by additional comments.

- I think we have enough people living here now. Let's take care of the open land we have and preserve the character of the town.
- I would like to be able hike and walk close to home. I value preservation. I have grandchildren. Community housing is a good idea.
- I'd have a hard time justifying public funding of privately-owned property/housing
- I'm still little confused on categories as walking trails seemed to be in both active and passive. I would like to see more trails, open areas for games, flying kites, etc. I am concerned about the number of projects that involve religious institutions as this does not seem to be the intent of the funds-I know it wasn't mine.
- If community housing is low/affordable housing – not [sic] important, we have done our share as a community. If it is about creating space for elder services or a community center to address the needs of our residents, then it is extremely important.
- If we do not retain open space now, it won't be there later.
- It is important to preserve the small town feel of Bridgewater even as we continue to grow. Preserving historic areas and open space is vital to reach that goal
- Market forces and zoning changes can address the other four areas, but the preservation of open space relies more on extra-market forces like the CPA to propel it.
- our senior center falls far below the quality of other area senior centers
- Skateboarders can still walk on bike trails, but pedestrians cannot utilize skateboard facilities. One is inclusive and the other excludes.
- The historic preservation and improvement of our downtown area should be the #1 priority as it is vital to the future of our town. The center should be our shining star and an attraction to our community.
- There is a great need of active recreation. Other than the playground there is close to nothing. An outdoor exercise trail would be great and as already mentioned we need bike paths.
- There is less and less open space to preserve. If we don't protect it now, it will be lost forever.
- These are areas of concern for me.
- To keep the community clean and supportive to an education environment we need to have areas for people to affordably love and spend their time with healthy body and mind coping skills.
- To us, active recreation brings families outside to enjoy exercising and being together, so [it is] important to a good family life. Community Housing to us is also important but can require other funding and should be a priority but can be attained not through usage of CPA funds. Historic preservation is directly tied to a community's history and should always be done. And the same with open space. Urban sprawl and overbuilding are threatening our natural wildlife and flora and fauna. The very way a town looks is what attracts people to live there. You want to take pride in where you live, not drag it downwards.
- Town needs to think about allowing so much building.
- We are losing open space to large housing developments. We need to preserve what we have.
- We need to stop building. Need more parking for businesses and college
- You need to secure grant money from all sources for all these programs. Lack of social resources had unlimited long term/lifetime impact on youth and families and our seniors. The investment in these areas will pay dividends in the long range or the community will pay in the negative form at a



higher cost to the community in a number of ways. I hate to see tax increase to provide for these opportunities/needs. I hate to see fees however; budget issues call for reasonable user fees to supplement the budget (user fees will never fully support public recreational facilities and services).

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

- Any native American artifacts, such as from King Philip's war.
- Boot & Shoe Factory facelift and any help to conservation land. Save the trees! We moved out of Boston to see trees, wildlife, farms and such. This area is becoming so over developed :(
- Bridgewater cemeteries should be kept up. The roads in Mt Prospect Street Cemetery are dangerous. My grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles are all buried at the top. I am afraid one of these days a car is going to go over the side. If the town is not responsible, they should still insist that roads are safe and passable.
- Burger king - train depot   Town square - rotary
- Central Square Congregational Church
- Complete restoration of the building at Ironworks Park.
- Easement to natural or open space, farmland that will allow farming and recreational use to continue w no fear of sale for commercial development for say 75 or 100 years. Bridgewater has grown tremendous amount at the expense of our natural and cultural resources. A lot of the cultural charm has been lost.
- Find a use for the town hall. Maintain/improve trees and landscaping on town common area.
- Help BGSL with their fields as you have done with Little League in town
- Help create affordable housing. Broad St. property should be prioritized as well as McElwain school.
- I feel that it is very important to restore the downtown area's historic sense of cultural importance in our community. Central Square once had a rich tradition of culture and was of importance to the Bridgewater community. Now it is most known as a pass-through for commuters on Rt. 18 and not a destination to stop and engage in community.
- I think it would be nice if the town center was preserved not redone and if the main strip where Friendly's used to be was redone so those buildings didn't look like unattractive dumps...meaning that the storefronts were required to have the same sign colors, and their windows kept clear of clutter and were inviting looking and pretty like the town. Public parking area would be nice. I'm really hoping that the rotary isn't redone. It makes the town look so sweet
- I would like to see a private public partnership in former town hall perhaps food/bar, entertainment venue. Affordable housing project/preservation McElwain.
- I would like to see a project that allows people to view and appreciate the old documents of the town beyond the library's historic room.
- Inside the old Town Hall
- Iron Works Building
- Iron works park, building restoration
- Ironworks Park - preserving locations of the iron works buildings and restoring the stone building
- Like to see the town buildings around the common stay true to form and definitely NOT change the common. So many newcomers primarily want to remove the common or change it even though it has been around for hundreds of years and with no issues. I cannot think of any specific project

but just hope historic sites are preserved. Also want land areas preserved. Open space to me means leave it alone-don't build a golf course, playground etc. open always meant to me that it would be left alone with no building.

- Memorial Bldg. - turn it into a Bridgewater Museum of History.
- Mt prospect cemetery
- Old Bridgewater Historical Society is always looking for help with the restoration of their buildings and holding from what I hear
- Old town hall would be a specific site to rehabilitate for public use--maybe a farmer's market, consignment crafters' store, town events, rent out to use funds for maintenance of the building. Check ?Stetson Hall in Randolph for an example.
- open space stop building purchase green space
- Parkland. Jenny Leonard
- Preservation of historic cemeteries
- Preservation work at churches, reopening and reuse of the Memorial Building
- Preserve all town documents
- Rehab Scotland Church.
- Restoration of the town hall
- Retention and preservation of land Grant's and open space/parks and water access for all able and non-able bodied.
- Some of your questions were very vague....Some of the downtown area buildings are owned privately. Are you talking about restoring them using the CPA funds? Which my understanding is the owners have a free renovation because they are a historical? Or just town owned buildings? How much is in the fund currently?
- stop spending money at the first parish church!! It's not a real religion it's a cult.
- The buildings at the Iron Works that are historic and falling apart.
- The creation of a revolving façade improvement low/no interest loan pool for private properties in the town center.
- Town Hall on corner of School St.
- Town Hall. The building cannot be allowed to remain unoccupied. Suggest uses [include] record storage, cultural arts Memorial Bldg. The building could be used as a library annex for all current library activities Ironworks Stone Building The Building is of immense historic value it's restoration and reuse is key to its survival.it could be used as public meeting space but also rented out for functions. It's location next to the park makes it a candidate an enterprise type funding scenario.
- Turn the McElwain School into a living Bridgewater Museum. Partner with BSU and the State to celebrate the history and evolution of Bridgewater. Perhaps turn it into a kind of Faneuil Hall - with history and shops, turn upstairs space into meeting rooms, etc...
- Working with the towns Recreation department to improve facilities.

## **OPEN SPACE AND PASSIVE RECREATION**

- Would love to have a park with open fields and lawns like they have at Borderland Park. Some place sunny and open. For instance, my husband liked Rainbows End playground. I avoided it as it was dark, and mosquito ridden.

- Would like to see CPC take a more active role in acquiring open space. Are there lots for sale that could be purchased preventing development and ensuring more open space?
- While there are areas for hiking, there is limited/no parking.
- Walking trails. Is there any access to land at Keith house? Anything being done with town land on Pleasant St 104? I remember when the Nip was a wonderful beach for children. And please no dog parks until we have more areas for humans
- There are already adequate trail properties in town between state and town land, but they have to be improved and maintained.
- The Town River is being polluted by a few businesses on 104 and the wetland species are suffering. Time to protect all of our natural resources not just some pet projects
- The constant loss of farmland and forested areas to real estate developments is extremely concerning.
- Stop eutrophication of Carvers Pond. It's nearly a swamp now. Dredge or find/stop excess nutrients running into it feeding the excess vegetation.
- Stop allowing houses to be built in open areas spaces that should not have houses and start working on getting businesses in the town of Bridgewater. Best example is a Curve Street project. It's disgusting that the town allow this to occur.
- Routine Cleanup of nips and other trash around recreation areas is necessary but not being done
- rainbow end
- Preserving any and all current open space is important to maintaining Bridgewater's charm. We moved here for the beauty and open feel of this community. We love the farm stands, the fields and the tracts of Forest. It must not be overbuilt like they are doing, and ruining, the natural beauty and attraction of other towns, like Scituate.
- Preserve it all!
- Improve hiking areas, including parking and lighting at entrances.
- I would rather leave the wildlife areas alone & undisturbed than to create trails in them. This is their land too. I am not familiar with the process but perhaps on cleared land some walking/hiking trails could be added followed by tree and shrub plantings. Give it an open yet country feel.
- I like the Murray farm project. I think a community garden could be pursued on prison property with permission or on curve street 40b if more development is planned with developer mitigation.
- I don't know if this would fit here--But some communities have school gardens and the food from those gardens is served within the schools and senior centers and sold at the garden farm stand.
- I am a retired National Park Service employee w Outdoor Recreation Resources Administration Degree. I am very much in favor for active and passive outdoor recreation opportunities. As life gets more stressful and electronics more involved in people's lives, we need to provide for outdoor activities for our physical and mental health. Need to provide these opportunities for people to find their activity - everyone is not a biker or swimmer or boater, so opportunity is critical for all ages and all physical and emotional needs. Land preservation is critical for watershed and flood control. We need woodlands for oxygen/air quality and wildlife habitat and to reduce wildlife intrusion into subdivision and residential areas. There are Federal Land and Water Grants, grant money from the NPS, HUD, Transportation Departments that can be used here. You need to get an experienced grant writer on staff for the sole purpose of researching and submitting grant

applications. Towns and cities that do secure grant money in this very competitive effort - hope I am preaching to the choir.

- Herring run park needs to be improved
- Dog Park
- Create an inventory and map out public owned open space. marked trails bike and walkways.
- Create a map linking trails.
- Connect students to preservation efforts where possible. Engage students with community farms also
- Clear the old beach at the Nip. Terrible that the public can no longer enjoy sitting by the lake.
- Any of the above [projects]
- All the town parks

### ACTIVE RECREATION

- A comprehensive plan for maintenance of properties
- Activities park directly dedicated to physical exercise for senior citizens
- Afterschool activities for teens
- Any outdoor projects where people can use the open land would be wonderful! It so much nicer to see people out walking the trails or kids playing at a playground rather than letting a builder build on it.
- Being back Rainbows End playground
- Better upkeep and maintenance of what we already have so we aren't forced to abandon or tear things down due to disrepair
- Bike lanes on streets!!! Playground by Police station in need of repairs! It is heavily used but not well maintained.
- Bike trails or bike lanes
- Canoe Kayak rentals would be awesome!!! It will NEVER happen in MA but a place to ride ATVs would be nice even if it was simply a figure 8 with hills.
- Children playgrounds. Dog park
- Common signage for our 6 town parks with parking access. Maintenance committee for park upkeep
- Create bike & separate walking trails in town. Perhaps in the area of the softball fields, or maybe on all the acreage of the High School.
- Create bike paths and possibly link them to other existing and other projects. There is nothing to safely cycle within less than a 25 min car trip (Myles Standish State Park; I exclude Massasoit because it's too small other than for walking and mountain biking), roads being generally poorly maintained are not safe in addition to unsafe driving habits, including widespread speeding being tolerated by default of very few speed controls being conducted in town.
- Create walking and cycling trails - perhaps either at the land behind the police station (ideal for safety etc.) or maybe around the grounds at the new HS. Lots of land, so why not make it useful.
- Cross country or snowshoe concept a great idea. Good family recreation and fun without dangers or liability of pond skating etc.
- do something about all the broken equipment at Marathon park!

- Dog Park
- Drive in movie theatre
- fix Rainbows end playground
- Frisbee Golf
- Help BGSL with some issue as has been done with little league
- I am very supportive of indoor and outdoor passive and active recreational facilities and areas that are accessible to everyone - young, families, and seniors, and those with emotional and physical special needs. Since this town has grown in areas that were undeveloped further out from town center and schools when I was a kid, more neighborhood parks with a field area, "playground" and walking/passive space is critical to accommodate the growing populations. I think the Nip and Carver's Pond can provide for the biking and winter activities as well as the boating activities. I see the Town River as a risk management issue and wouldn't spend resources there when you have the Nip and Carver's. The E. Bridgewater YMCA is busy all the time. My mother goes to it 2-3 times a week. As a kid, I learned to swim at the college pool in the summer and participated in summer swim programs. Can a YMCA facility be brought to town to provide general recreation activities/experiences along w senior and physical therapy activity opportunities? I feel the neighborhood playgrounds can accommodate the playground, athletic fields & Park resources. Skateboard park(s) are unique so don't need several. I realize \$\$\$ is limited but multi use areas where appropriate. Neighborhood parks do not need to be huge. A dog park works for people in areas where housing is in cramped areas and no natural subdivisions. Places like Waterford Village should be required to provide some recreation space and dog park. Here is where the Town works with new housing development (complexes and subdivisions) coming to town work together to provide for the new residents to their area.
- I would like to see pickleball for seniors, private public partnerships for additional playground near high density neighborhoods (walkable), survey about needs for fields, ADA accessible improvements to Carver's Pond with perhaps a parking space and accessible trail, improvements to High Street park, some dangerous partial foundations, drop-offs to River, should be addressed, concentrate on parks vs well head protection areas for trail improvements, skatepark and dog park are potential liability issues. Recommend high density apartments take on this liability for tenants if pet friendly and ask for public Access.
- I would like to see the common in Central Square and adjacent areas turned into a park as part of the re-configuring of the downtown area. We need to give our community centralized areas to gather. Also, a spacious outdoor park area with an outdoor stage/theater would be great for town gatherings around performances of the arts.
- Let's build a rail trail! Look at some of the amazing examples in West Bridgewater, Northampton, Easthampton, Hopkinton and more. Investments in Legion Field to ensure best in class facilities. Invest in artificial turf on some fields. Fix the Prospect Street playground. Enhance green space in the downtown area.
- Maintain and improve existing parks
- Marathon park could use some improvements as the children's and toddlers areas have wooden blocks covering broken parts



- More outdoor facilities for 8+ yr. old kids to meet with friends to have pick up sport games or to hang out. As of now there is legion field that is always in use. So, there is no option for kids to have a pick-up game.
- Mostly would just like to see the parks that we have maintained properly.
- Off road walking trails that could be used for snowshoeing, etc., in the winter
- Outdoor education areas. Fitness areas.
- People used to swim at the Nip. People were kicked out, but the motorboats and jet skis stayed. It should be the other way around. Provide a safe swimming area were many people can enjoy The Nip instead of just a few boat owners. High iron content but let that be the people's choice to swim there.
- Pickleball Courts, Sailing on the Nip
- Sidewalk connection population areas of town. At present sidewalks go out to Scotland and Prattown. It should be possible walk from major residential areas to the town center. The connecting sidewalks would also make it easier for the sidewalk snowplow to get out to existing unconnected areas.
- Somewhere that people can find out what trails are available in our town. Many times, people are asking on Facebook. A pamphlet would be nice.
- The town needs to maintain existing properties better. We create things but never maintain thus we have failing and inundated playgrounds and parks. How about keeping what we DO have updated and well kept.
- This town needs a dog park.
- upgrade existing areas , improve hiking and water sport areas, create new trails that could also be used for snowshoe or XC skiing. Concentrate on multi-use projects rather than single sport ideas.
- Walking trails! Currently few options in Bridgewater and usually go to other towns for daily 2-3-mile walks. Titicut is nice but not much parking and is deep woods so very buggy. With EEE threat I usually avoid in summer.
- With all of the building the developers should be required to build recreation areas. Places where kids can get together and get a pickup game going (basketball courts, baseball, street hockey). Right now, kids have very few choices to do this, as legion is always in use.

## COMMUNITY HOUSING

- Affordable housing that is actually affordable, not \$1k plus per month.
- Affordable infill apartments
- Apparently more housing for the elderly is needed. The waiting list is crazy. Bridgewater citizens have had to move out of town, due to the long wait.
- Art. The town needs more inviting places to create. There isn't really anything for students to do in town. Young kids ride their bike to McDonald's. College students have no place to go but bars. If we had a community spot for ppl to study, read, do arts and crafts that would be nice. And yes, I would be willing to help out if that was something of interest
- As a single graduate student with a dog it is impossible to find affordable housing. It's like the community does not support higher education while it's the host of an amazing university. Growth and independence is needed for a younger adult community yet the ability to move out of home

with parents, obtain an education and work still does not meet the needs of affordable housing. I'd be better off not working and apply for section 8 housing. I'm hopeful Bridgewater as well as growing towns can make a change.

- Commuter rail assistance and/or parking assistance to promote even greater commuting
- Elder subsidized rentals are needed so they can remain citizens of a town they love without the upkeep and maintenance of owning a home
- Help seniors stay in their homes.
- I am very concerned about the amount of multifamily dwellings on minimal space that have been permitted and are planned. They draw on our municipalities and offer little to no service for elderly and existing residents. We need to attract businesses to increase revenue and stop building affordable/low income housing - I think we have met our requirement.
- I don't want a single dollar spent on affordable housing.
- Investment in housing along the rail corridor in Bridgewater.
- McElwain. Consider habitat for humanity project on tax title property on Bedford Street near funeral home. Good access for college, high school and town workers. Highly visible project that could bring community together about importance of affordable housing and see that people who need housing are just like themselves, friends, family and neighbors.
- More affordable housing for senior citizens. Clean up rooming house in center.
- More elderly housing
- More retail/ apartment buildings in the downtown
- More Senior Living
- New builds are huge not a lot of new smaller one level for seniors
- No but rent is based off of home values (affordable) not college. When they consider 1800+ for a 2-bedroom affordable there is something wrong
- No more large housing projects
- No. Bridgewater has more than enough low and very low-income housing. We have ENOUGH housing and far too little resources already for those already residing here. Stop building and creating more need and fulfill the needs of those living
- Only that not everyone likes a cookie cutter development whether its apartments or houses. The only choices lately are raised ranches or colonial. Again, save the farm look to this town. Make sure there is adequate schools and classrooms BEFORE adding another apt. complex. Not every family with 3 kids can purchase a home so why do college kids get 1st dibs on 3br apartments?
- Place for seniors that has a range of levels, from independent apartments to assisted living, to nursing care, as needed.
- Preservation and refurbished of the old town hall so that it can be used.
- Rail trail type paths so people can walk, bike and bring strollers.
- Renter apartments and homes need to be maintained inside and outside as does the associated property. The town and college need to work closely to ensure rentals for students are clean and safe and up to code. Same for elderly and for single parent families - better working relationships w co-agencies to work with property owners to ensure up to codes and fair pricing. I am saddened by the number of houses/properties in general in such poor condition. It makes the town look worn out, tired and dumpy. And I can't believe officials allow it. A worn-out dumpy looking town is

not attractive to potential new residents and businesses. (Businesses need to clean up their act as well but that another survey I am guessing)

- Stop building apartments and houses fix the center of town it's an eye sore
- There are places - Stone Meadow, High Pond - to accommodate 55+ residents.
- Town funded playground
- We do not need more housing in Bridgewater. Rather, we need to invest in improving the housing options that are already available. There are many multi-family housing units that look like blights on the outside that hinder the look of Central Square and the general downtown area.
- We need more affordable housing. We need to be part of the solution to the lack of affordable housing in eastern Ma. Crucial to ending homelessness.
- Work with the owner of the Broad Street property