

# Updated Community Preservation Plan

## Summary of results of survey, focus groups, and forum

### **Combined Key Findings (Forum, Focus Groups, and Surveys):**

*from JM Goldson*

#### **Outdoor Recreation Goals**

Based on the community engagement results, the consultant recommends considering the following CPA goals pertaining to outdoor recreation:

1. Rehabilitate existing outdoor recreation facilities including at the public schools.
2. Create a new bike trail.
3. Install new lighting and seating at existing outdoor recreation fields and courts.

#### **Open Space Goals**

Based on the community engagement results, the consultant recommends considering the following CPA goals pertaining to open space:

1. Acquire and protect undeveloped land for the purpose of mitigating the impacts of climate change and for open space conservation that provides public access
2. Improve accessibility to open space areas.
3. Create connections between open spaces, historic sites, and downtown Canton through walking, hiking, and bike paths.
4. Acquire open space downtown to be used as a town green.
5. Fund the creation of a community garden.

#### **Historic Preservation Goals**

Based on the community engagement results, the consultant recommends considering the following CPA goals pertaining to historic preservation:

1. Continue to support projects and activities at the Paul Revere Heritage Site, such as the museum.
2. Acquire and preserve artifacts and resources related to the rich Native American history in Canton of the Ponkapoag Tribe.
3. Acquire and restore historic textiles like the Civil War Uniform and custom dresses.
4. Develop a cohesive approach to, and plan for historic preservation in Canton.

#### **Community Housing Goals**

Based on the community engagement results, the consultant recommends considering the following CPA goals pertaining to community housing:

1. Create and preserve community housing, including affordable housing, that will address documented housing needs including, but not limited to housing for low- and middle-income households, seniors, and starter housing opportunities and to maintain the Town's compliance with the state's 10 percent goal per c. 40B.
2. Be strategic about the location of new housing developments to support the community's vision as articulated in the Canton Master Plan.
3. Support the creation of a local down payment assistance program for first time homebuyers.
4. Preserve existing community housing units, such as the developments at Hagan and Rubin Court and support development additional public housing units

## **Focus Groups Key Findings:**

*from JM Goldson*

- Housing affordability is a challenge faced by many Canton residents, backed up by several specific anecdotes in the focus group. However, participants identified opportunities for CPA funding that can help create more affordable options in the community.
- Residents feel that active recreation in Canton is a well-supported and widely appreciated element of the town. Further support and coordination of active recreation opportunities would be something that would benefit the community and its many families.
- Participants identified many historic and natural resources that are present in Canton. Protecting these resources will help Canton maintain and further its appeal.
- There are many historic resources that can be utilized in the community, but it will take more funding and volunteer effort to take on some of the more large-scale projects identified by the Historical Society and others.
- Open space resources are widely used in Canton, and participants identified several options for increasing accessibility of some of these resources to meet increasing demand.

## **Forum Key Findings:**

*from JM Goldson*

- There is a need for both upgrades to existing community housing and new units.
- Beyond preserving historic items and buildings, participants want to identify how historic preservation projects will be used and shared by the community.
- There is a need for maintenance of new and existing open spaces, as well as a need for more wooded areas in Canton
- There is a need for more facilities for adults, more availability at existing fields and courts, and a bike path
- Participants at this forum prioritize Open Space and Active Recreation over Community Housing and Historic Preservation.

## **Survey Key Findings:**

*from JM Goldson*

- Survey respondents were more likely to be female and had higher incomes than the town's population overall, but were similar in age breakdown to the town's population.
- Respondents were moderate users of park, playgrounds, or athletic fields in Canton.
- When asked which types of outdoor recreation projects in Canton are the most important, two categories of projects scored the most highly – projects related to walking and biking, including creating new trails, and improvements and updates to existing parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields.
- When asked about their main concerns about housing issues in Canton, most respondents showed concern that existing residents and adult children raised in Canton will not be able to buy a home due to rising prices.
- The most pressing housing issues for respondents were housing affordability for seniors and veterans, affordable housing for low and middle income households, and maintenance and upgrades to existing housing in Canton.
- When asked what types of historic preservation projects are the most important, protecting historic resources threatened by new development scored the most highly.

- When asked about specific project ideas, a number of residents specifically noted that they would like to see more done at the Paul Revere Heritage Site, such as a museum. In addition to this, many respondents expressed a desire to find a project that honors the area's Native American history.
- About 40 percent of respondents indicated that they visit protected natural areas 1-2 times a month, and about 26 percent never visit them.
- Priorities for open space in Canton include acquisition or protection of undeveloped land for the purpose of mitigating the impacts of climate change and for open space conservation that provides public access, according to respondents.
- In order of priority, respondents would like to see CPA funding spent on Active Recreation, Open Space & Passive Recreation, Historic Preservation, and Community Housing.

## **Community education about the CPA is needed!**

There were a lot of survey answers that suggested uses of funds that would not be CPA eligible.

The main topics that people were often mistaken on:

- Indoor recreation facilities
- Artificial turf for fields
- General projects usually funded by tax-payers (new/updated schools and municipal buildings, fixing roads/bridges, etc.)
- Community-use facilities and projects (cafes, snack bars, town pool, community garden, festivals and events, classes/education for children and adults, etc.)

## Survey answers with multiple proponents:

### **The question: are there any specific active recreation projects that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?**

- Music/performance space – 2
- Skatepark – 3
- Frisbee golf course – 4
- Developments at Pequitside – 5
- Development at Paul Revere Heritage Site – 7
- Conservation Land – 7
- Replacing porta potties with real bathroom facilities – 11
- Lighting installation/improvements at various fields, parks, and courts – 15
- Water access (boat rental, fishing, swimming) – 18
- Improvements to/addition of parks – 19
- Pickleball – 20
- Mutch Skating Rink – 25
- Dog Park – 25
- Improvements to/addition of playgrounds – 28
- Improvements to athletic fields/courts – 28
- Walking Paths/Trails – 41
- Additional fields/courts – 41
- Bike Paths/Trails – 47
- Non-CPA eligible ideas – 51

#### Notes:

##### Often repeated themes:

- Field Acquisition: requests for lacrosse and tennis fields/courts
- Field Improvements: fix drainage problems
- Many requests for handicap accessible improvements/additions to playgrounds, parks, and walking paths

### **The question: Are there any specific community housing projects/programs that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?**

- Additional housing for handicapped/disabled – 2
- Additional housing for veterans – 3
- Acquire more affordable housing – 12
- Update/Improve existing affordable housing – 14
- Non-CPA eligible projects – 14
- Additional housing for seniors/elderly – 17
- No CPA funds for housing – 41

Notes: A large number of survey takers were not in support of funding for affordable housing. Many felt that affordable housing should not be funded by taxpayers or through the town. 92% of survey takers were homeowners, and only 5.5% were renters.

**The question: Are there any specific historic preservation projects that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?**

- Cemeteries – 3
- Native American History – 4
- Tilden House – 6
- Gridley School – 6
- Non-CPA eligible projects – 10
- Canton/CPA should not put money into Historical Preservation – 10
- Paul Revere Heritage Site – 12
- Non-specific support for Historical Preservation in Canton - 13

Comments against putting more funds into specific projects:

- Paul Revere Heritage Site – 4
- Tilden House – 8

**The question: Are there any specific open space or passive recreation projects that you would like to see considered for CPA funding in the upcoming years?**

- Bike Trails – 4
- More green space/trees in downtown/housing developments/require for new developments – 4
- Paul Revere Heritage Site – 4
- Canton has enough open space, don't fund more – 4
- Non-CPA eligible projects – 4
- Pequitside – 5
- Access to water (ponds, reservoir, boating, etc.) – 9
- Walking Paths – 10
- Purchase available land to prevent more/over development – 16