

CANTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

Community Forum Summary

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC 4/27/2022

Overview

On April 11, JM Goldson and the Town of Canton hosted a Community Forum for the Community Preservation Plan planning process. The forum was held at the Canton Library and was comprised of a presentation by Jenn Goldson followed by an open house where participants could visit stations and talk with CPC members about the different Community Preservation funding areas.

Key Findings

- 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 bath.
- Participants at this forum prioritize Open Space and Active Recreation over Community Housing and Historic Preservation.

Meeting Format

Canton CPC members were present and introduced themselves to participants and were available for discussion throughout the forum. The presentation began with an overview of the Community Preservation Act both at the state level as well as the history of CPA in Canton. This was followed by a portion of the presentation dedicated to eligibility, where Jenn detailed the various ways that CPA funds can and cannot be used. The presentation ended with some examples of projects in each CPA category.

After the presentation, participants were invited to visit stations set up around the room. There were four stations dedicated to each of the four CPA categories. These stations had three poster boards each: one giving an overview of projects funded, the current plan's goals and priorities related to the category, specific needs and resources that Canton has, and an overview of funding; one showing a map of key resources; and one interactive board, where participants were invited to share the primary needs, issues, and ideas related to the category. Participants were also given small dot stickers that they could use to "vote" on ideas that they saw around the room that they agreed with. There was also a fifth table at the event, where participants were asked to prioritize funding across all four CPA categories.

Participants were able to leave at any point, though most stayed until the end of the event around 9pm.

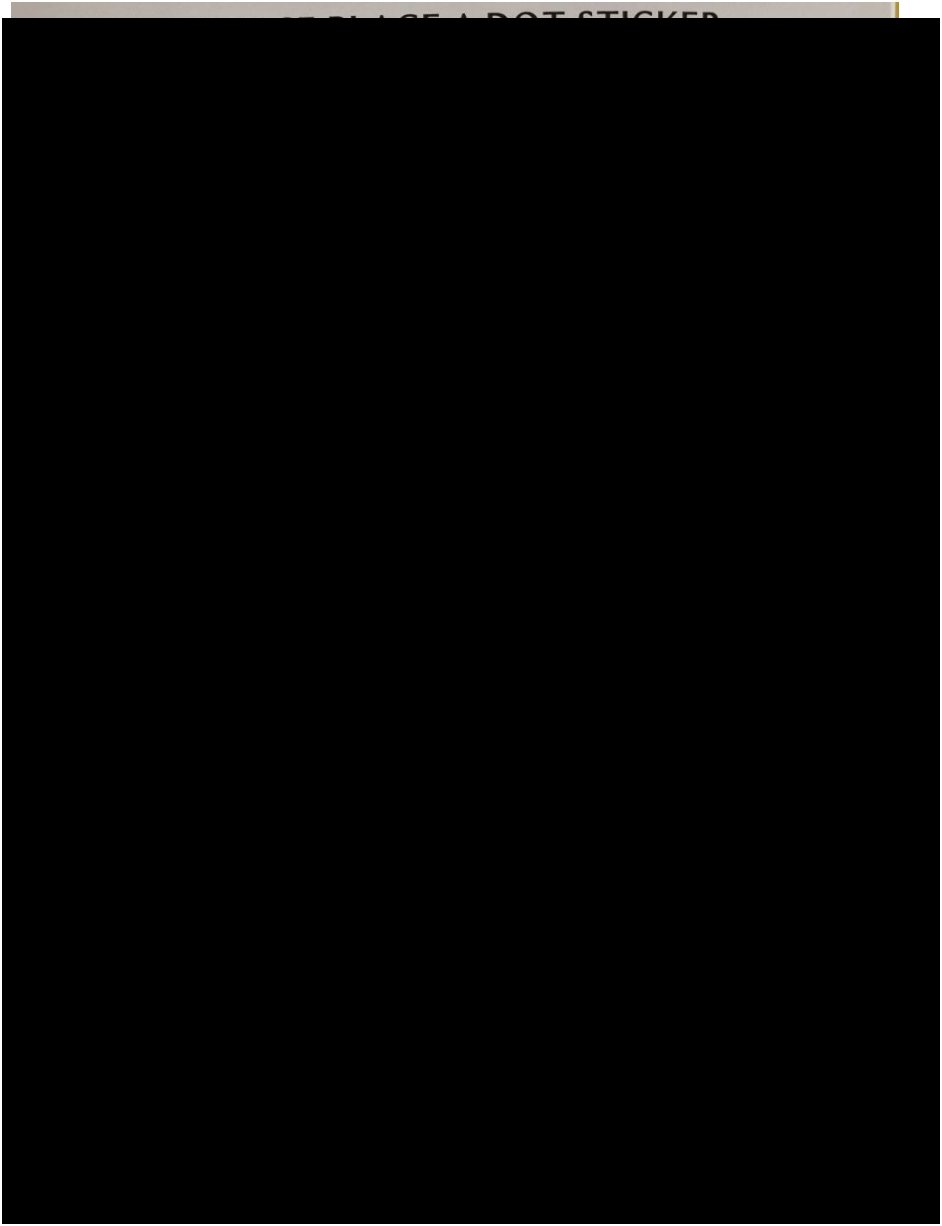
Participants

About 14 participants were present at the forum. The age of participants was older than the city's population. Seventy-eight percent of forum participants were between 35 and 64 years old, compared to 42 percent of Canton residents overall in the same age bracket, according to 2019 American Community Survey estimates.

Participants were asked to select their affiliation with the Canton community. All participants indicated that they live in Canton.

The large majority (all but two) of participants identified as homeowners. One participant indicated that they rented, and one chose "other." This is a larger share of homeowners than the town overall, where 76 percent of households are homeowners, according to 2019 ACS estimates.

The following map was displayed at the forum. Participants were asked to place a sticker near where they lived.



Community Housing

At the Community Housing station, several needs and issues were identified, as well as one idea. Participants recognized a need for the modernization of public housing units, particularly in terms of electricity and plumbing. Participants also expressed a need for more community housing units so that Canton natives can afford to stay in Town. One idea raised by participants was to repurpose the main building of the St. Gerard Majella to be used for housing for seniors or veterans.

Historic Preservation

At the Historic Preservation station, participants discussed the needs, issues, and ideas related to the topic in Canton. Participants noted a need for not only preserving historic items and buildings, but for identifying how they will be used and shared. Some ideas for future projects include the restoration of civil war uniforms, custom dresses, and other textiles. Forum participants were also in support of preserving the Hooper Bell.

Open Space

At the Open Space station, participants discussed the needs, issues, and ideas for open space in Canton. Some of the needs and issues with the most consensus among participants were the need for maintenance of new and existing open spaces, as well as preserving the integrity of existing Town-owned parks. Other needs and issues identified include upland forest preservation, and to make open spaces for all residents of Canton, not just children and families.

The idea with the most support from other participants was a bike path, followed by the purchase of private wooded lots, and the construction of a walking path to enhance connection between the Paul Revere Heritage Site and downtown. Other ideas include community gardens, a Town Green, and funding for open space management plans.

Active Recreation

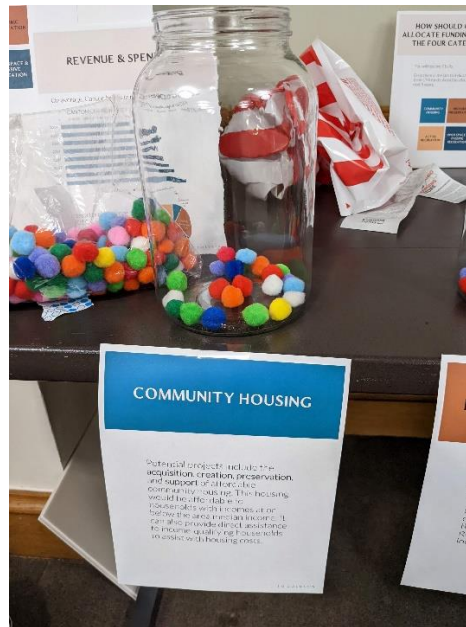
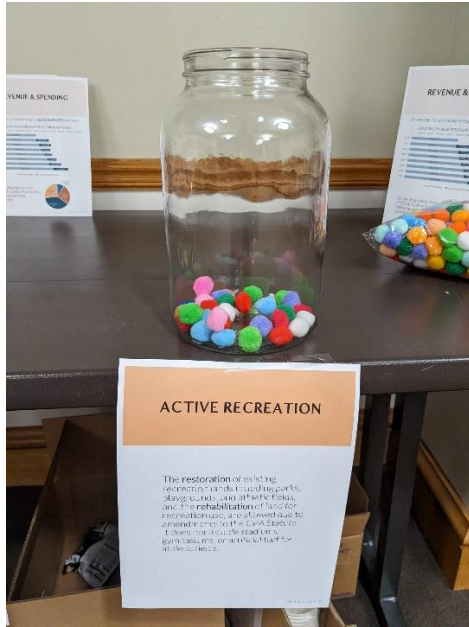
Participants at the active recreation station discussed the needs, issues, and ideas related to recreation in Canton. Participants noted a need for adult recreation like bocce ball, horseshoes, and community gardening, not just providing opportunities for families and children. There was also a need identified for more field availability for lacrosse, soccer, and football.

Similar to the open space station, participants expressed a desire for a bike bath. In addition to this idea, participants noted a need for baseball fields, pickle ball courts, and lighting and seating at recreation fields and courts.

Priorities

At the final priorities station, participants were asked to demonstrate how they would allocate the CPA budget amongst the four categories. Participants were each given seven balls, which represent the 70 percent of the budget that is not already allocated. Participants then dropped these balls into containers representing each of the categories. Images of these jars can be seen on the following page.

Canton Community Preservation Plan – April 11, 2022, Community Forum Summary



The results of this exercise are as follows:

- Open Space: 30%
- Active Recreation: 29%
- Community Housing: 21%
- Historic Preservation: 20%

Open Space and Active Recreation had most of the budget allocated to the categories. These categories also had the most engagement at the category stations. Ultimately, the participants at this forum prioritize Open Space and Active Recreation over Community Housing and Historic Preservation.

Appendix – Board Images & Transcription

Below are images of the interactive boards from each station as well as a full transcription of the notes left by participants.

Transcription

Category	Issue/Idea	Text	Votes
Community Housing	Needs/Issues	Modernization of Public Housing Units - plumbing, electrical, etc	1
	Needs/Issues	Increase quantity of community housing [REDACTED]	1
	Needs/Issues	Agree with proposed upgrades to Hagan & Hemenway	1
	Ideas	Repurpose St. Gerard Majella (Main Building) for senior housing and/or vets	1
Historic Preservation	Needs/Issues	Preserving historic items/buildings but also identifying how they'll be used/shared	1
	Needs/Issues	Restoration of civil war uniforms & custom dresses	
	Needs/Issues	Bell preserve	2
	Ideas	Textile restoration & preservation	1
	Ideas	Conserve the Bell	
Open Space	Needs/Issues	Special/decorative water fountain	
	Needs/Issues	continue to upgrade and maintain open space - revere park, pequitside, recreation for children	
	Needs/Issues	Consider the full scope of Canton's demographics and interests - not just children/families	
	Needs/Issues	Maintaining new & existing open space	3
	Needs/Issues	Preserve integrity of existing town owned parks	2
	Needs/Issues	upland forest preservation	1
	Ideas	community gardens, especially in areas with condos/apartments - not all land can be used to grow produce	
	Ideas	connecting & construction of walking trails	1
	Ideas	create a town green	1
	Ideas	Funding for open space management plans (like Pequitside Farm)	1
	Ideas	Purchase of private wooded lots	3
	Ideas	walking paths (paved, level stone) - enhance connection between PRHS (Paul Revere Heritage Site) & downtown	2
	Ideas	Bike path	5
Active Recreation	Needs/Issues	more field availability for lacrosse, soccer, football	
	Needs/Issues	Adult recreation (bocce, horseshoes, community gardening)	1
	Needs/Issues	Make 2 full court basketball courts by Devoll with bleachers	
	Needs/Issues	Reaching all ages within community [REDACTED]	
	Ideas	baseball fields	
	Ideas	pickle ball courts	1
	Ideas	Seating to enjoy recreation at courts, fields	
	Ideas	well lit fields	1
	Ideas	identify and build dedicated property for youth football [REDACTED]	
	Ideas	Bike Path	2