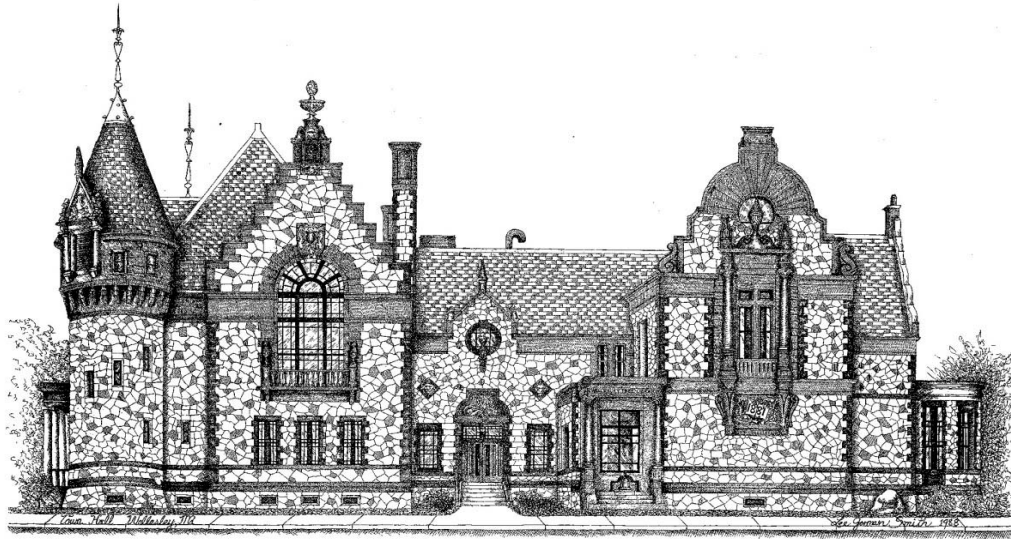


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TOWN OF WELLESLEY COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN



Prepared by the
Community Preservation Committee

_____, 2003

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Town of Wellesley ***Community Preservation Plan*** **Overview**

Introduction

The residents of Wellesley voted in November, 2002 to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA). In fiscal year 2003, our first full year under the CPA, the Town will have over \$500,000, raised through a 1% surcharge on the local property tax bills, available for eligible CPA projects. In October, 2003, a state match is estimated, at the time of this writing, to add another \$500,000. In subsequent fiscal years, unless there is a change in our level of participation or the CPA is amended by the State Legislature, we can expect similar levels of annual funding. The Wellesley Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was formed in December, 2002 to make recommendations to Town Meeting on how to utilize the funds raised through the surcharge and the state match (CPA funds).

The CPA requires that at least 10 percent (a total of not less than 30%) of the CPA funds received in each fiscal year be spent or reserved for each of the CPA's three main purposes: open space, historic resources, and community housing. CPA funds that are not expended in one year may be "banked" or carried over to subsequent years. However, once CPA funds are banked for a specific purpose, they must ultimately be used for the purpose for which they were banked. The remaining 70 percent of CPA funds in each fiscal year are available to be appropriated or banked, according to the Town's discretion, for one or more of four purposes: the three listed above, as well as for recreational uses. In addition, subject to certain restrictions, 5 percent of the CPA funds raised annually may be used for administrative activities related to the work of the CPC.

The CPC consists of nine members, including members appointed by and from the Natural Resources Commission, the Planning Board, the Housing Authority, the Historical Commission and the Recreation Commission, as well as four members appointed by the Moderator.

The CPC is required to study the "needs, possibilities and resources" for community preservation in Wellesley. To that end, we have reviewed existing plans and documents bearing on the four purposes designated for funding under the CPA: open space, recreation, historic resources and community housing. (For a list of Plans, Documents and Studies, see Appendix I, page 26.) We have met with Town boards and held a public hearing in June, 2003 to review the

CPC's proposed Community Preservation Plan (Plan) and to solicit suggestions and ideas from the community at large.

Purpose

This Plan is a summary of our work in developing community preservation goals for Wellesley. We have attempted to synthesize all planning efforts addressing the four purposes identified in CPA. We have reviewed Wellesley's current resources as well as outlined the needs and possibilities for community preservation activities enhancing open space, recreation, historic resources and community housing. We have set out the guidelines we will utilize to evaluate project proposals as well as the process we will use during this undertaking.

This Plan sets out the goals and aspirations of the CPC as we embark on our first year of implementation. The purposes of this Plan are:

- To lay out the framework CPC will use in formulating the recommendations it will bring to Town Meeting in March 2004 for the use of CPA funds in FY 2005.
- To provide guidance to the residents of Wellesley so that they may understand the purpose of the specific goals that lie behind the CPC's recommendations.
- To inform Town Meeting, which will receive our recommendations, about the considerations and goals that frame our decisions.
- To assist the applicants, who will bring proposals to us, in understanding the guidelines we will apply in reviewing and recommending projects for funding.

Goals

Wellesley is fortunate in that it has a long-standing history of placing importance on the value of assessing our Town's needs and goals. The Comprehensive Master Plan, the Open Space and Recreational Plan, and the Town Affordable Housing Policy are among these outstanding efforts. We expect that the CPA will become a resource for carrying out the thoughtful community preservation recommendations contained in these studies.

The subsequent sections of this Plan discuss community goals and projects specific to preservation within each of the four designated purposes of the CPA. In addition to these goals, the CPC has articulated a set of overarching guidelines that apply to all projects, regardless of the category(ies) under which they fall. The CPC will use these guidelines in its review and decision making process and, therefore, these are intended to provide additional guidance to proponents in the preparation of their applications for funding.

CPC anticipates that each fiscal year the demand for funds will exceed our available resources. In making decisions about which projects to recommend for funding, the CPC will use the following guidelines in its project review and selection process, although not all guidelines will be appropriate for every project.

Decision Guidelines

- Preservation of a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost.
- Involvement of two or more of the purposes designated for funding under the CPA.
- Involvement of multiple sources of funding, including leveraging other public and/or private funds.
- Creation of incentives for other public and/or private projects and/or collaborations to occur.
- Demonstration that the proposal is feasible and the most reasonable plan to implement the project.
- Provision for cost/funding that is compatible with the Town's financial plan.
- Consistency with Town-wide planning efforts/reports that have received broad-based scrutiny and input.
- Consideration of recent Town Meeting actions, supported by other Town boards and/or by the community.
- Provision for a dedicated source of funding (other than CPA) for on-going maintenance.
- Compliance with the current or proposed Wellesley zoning by-laws and/or the laws of the Commonwealth.

The general guidelines stated above apply in combination with category-specific goals outlined below in the next four sections of this plan.

Process

The CPC is primarily a source for funding, rather than an initiator of projects. Town boards and departments, civic organizations, and residents may bring proposals for funding to the CPC. The CPC will give favorable consideration to those proposals that best meet our guidelines and are consistent with Wellesley's goals in the areas of open space, historic resources, community housing and/or recreation.

The CPC does not have the power to appropriate funds for particular projects, only to make recommendations to Town Meeting. Under the law, the power to appropriate CPA funds is reserved solely for Town Meeting but Town Meeting may act *only* upon the recommendations of the CPC. For these reasons, we want to provide a strong and consistent rationale for our recommendations.

We intend to become a reliable and predictable funding source for community preservation activities. To this end, we may choose to recommend to Town Meeting that some or all of CPA funds be “banked” or reserved for significant projects and opportunities in the future. We are seeking to create an efficient and effective process through which organizations can gain access to the CPA funds for projects that will enhance our Town.

Further Information

Copies of this document, as well as links to a wide range of community preservation information, including the Application for Community Preservation Funding, are available on the Town’s Web site at www.ci.Wellesley.ma.us.

This Community Preservation Plan is respectfully submitted to the residents of Wellesley in the hope that it will provide a focus and catalyst for significant enhancement of community preservation goals in Wellesley.

Adopted by the Community Preservation Committee on _____,
2003.

Katherine L. Babson, Jr., Chair

Kathryn Bowry, Vice-Chair

S. Douglas Weil, Secretary

James P. Conlin

Joan E. Gaughan

Thomas G. Schnorr

John G. Schuler

Barbara D. Searle

M. Sue Wright

Town of Wellesley ***Community Preservation Plan*** **Open Space**

Background

For Wellesley, there are many advantages to open space preservation and acquisition, all of which culminate in making our community more livable.

Wellesley is a mature suburban community yet, despite growth and mansionization, it has managed to retain much of its green character and suburban charm, largely due to the vision and generosity of the Town's founders. Today, approximately 2267 acres, or one third, of Wellesley's ten square miles is undeveloped; however, fifty-five percent of the Town's open space is privately owned. In addition, under existing zoning regulations, 851 acres of the privately owned open space could be developed into approximately 2200 dwelling units. This potential of increased development would irreparably alter the Town's character and would dramatically increase demands on its infrastructure. Consequently, Wellesley is faced with the challenge of preserving existing open space and acquiring additional open space.

Justification for preserving open space, at a time of developmental pressure, results in interdependent benefits:

- Open space affords recreation, density control, environmental education and the ability to enjoy healthful walks and beautiful views, as well as opportunities for quiet relaxation and closeness to nature. Most important, balanced open spaces become part of a community's character and identity.
- The environmental benefits of conserved open space, such as wetlands and floodplains, insure the continued operation of vital natural functions that prevent altering or damaging Wellesley's water supply, aquifer zones and watershed districts. Open space preserves and protects the wide diversity of plant and wildlife species and the continued operation of those natural processes which are necessary for survival, including air and water purification, flood control, water storage and climate control.

Wellesley has a long history of open space protection. In 1899, the Town acquired and developed the land along Fuller Brook as a parkway that has continually increased in importance. Private philanthropy provided the Town with the space at Town Hall, Hunnewell Field, Shaw Park and Sawyer Park. In 1981, Wellesley purchased 42 acres, now known as Centennial Park, in celebration of

its first 100 years as an incorporated town. Wellesley's extensive network of public open space includes some of the Town's most scenic areas and unique features. In addition, the Town benefits from the presence of the extensive grounds of several college campuses and the paths along family estates.

Before World War II, the Town was comprised of considerable undeveloped land. Following the war, the residential building boom began. By 1980 approximately 350 acres of farmland and 855 acres of woodland had been converted to residential and commercial uses. During that period, Wellesley changed from a rural to suburban community.

Due to the high cost of land in Wellesley and the current tight economic climate, acquisition of open space has become difficult. After 20 years without a single acquisition, the Town recently purchased a one acre parcel adjacent to Town-owned parkland on Rockridge Pond for \$700,000. The funding was accomplished through a combination of the Town's Conservation Fund and private donations.

Wellesley has two major open space organizations: The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and the Wellesley Conservation Council. The NRC was established in 1978 and consolidated the statutory functions of the Park Commission, Conservation Commission, Tree Warden, Town Forest Committee and Pest Control Officer. Its mission is to provide stewardship, education and advocacy of the Town's parks and conservation land so that Wellesley's natural assets can be preserved for future generations.

The Wellesley Conservation Council, Inc. a non-profit organization whose membership is open to the public, acquires land, primarily through gifts. Currently the Council manages 11 properties.

Two other committees, the Wetlands Protection Committee and Trails Committee, are essential for the protection of our open space. The Wetlands Protection Committee is responsible for protecting the ground and surface water supply by administering and enforcing the Commonwealth's Wetland Protection Act. The Trails Committee's goal is to preserve and enhance Wellesley's off-street trails, such as the Cochituate Aqueduct and Fuller Brook Path Park.

It should be noted that much of the work of the above-mentioned committees and commissions could not be accomplished without the support and expertise of the Town's Department of Public Works.

Resources

The CPA defines open space to include, but not be limited to:

- Aquifers and recharge areas.

- Watershed and wetlands land.
- Grasslands and fields.
- Forest land.
- River, stream, lake and pond frontage.
- Beaches.
- Land to protect scenic vistas.
- Land for wildlife or nature preserves.
- Recreation use land.

In general, open space, as defined by CPA, is considered to be land that is maintained in a natural state and available to be used for passive recreation.

The following is a partial inventory of Wellesley's open space. Further details can be found in the Open Space and Recreation Plan (1995) and the Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan (2003).

- 711 acres of Town-owned open space of which 552 acres are protected as conservation land, parks or Town forest, including land under water.
- 312 acres of Town-owned open space is covered by water. This acreage includes the Charles River, Morses Pond, Longfellow Pond, Fuller Brook, Bogle Brook, Rosemary Brook, to name a few. Some 186 of these acres comprises the Town's water supply land.
- 1,272 acres of undeveloped, privately-owned open space includes Wellesley College, Babson College, Dana Hall School, Tenacre School and large private estates. Of this:
 - 52 acres of this property is under conservation restrictions.
 - 33 acres is owned by the Wellesley Conservation Council.
 - 255 acres has Chapter 61 status, including the Wellesley Country Club and several estate parcels. (Chapter 61 allows towns to assess land at less than 100% of market rate in hopes of reducing pressure on landowners to sell or develop property in order to pay real estate taxes. If the land is sold with the intention of taking it out of protected use, a town has a Right of First Refusal to purchase the land and back taxes are recovered.)
- 283 acres are owned by the Commonwealth. Of which:
 - 140 acres protected along the Charles River under the control of the Metropolitan District Commission.
 - 85 acres at Mass. Bay Community College.
- Wetlands and vernal pools (approximately 15% of the Town contains wetlands and of the 70-80 vernal pools, 13 are "certified" by the Commonwealth).

- Natural corridors that connect large open spaces include Fuller Brook Parkway, Caroline Brook Pathway, and the Cochituate and Sudbury Aqueducts.
- Vista parcels and parcels with significant geologic formations, including rock outcrops such as Rocky Ledges in the Boulder Brook Reservation, eskers, kettleholes and kames in the Town Forest, Moses Pond gravel pits and kettleholes and “Problem Rock” at Dover and Grove Streets.

Needs

As Wellesley faces the future, the Town needs to continue its historic tradition of protecting and acquiring open space by focusing on the following:

- Preservation of those open space parcels that are significant because of their size or location.
- Enhancement of current lands, especially open spaces that are contiguous to existing Town-owned land.
- Linkages that expand and enhance the trail and path system among open space and recreation facilities throughout the Town.
- Protection of our surface and groundwater quantity and quality through protection of wells, aquifers, watershed and groundwater recharge areas.

The primary natural resource issues facing Wellesley as it looks to the future are:

- Certain parcels of open land should be preserved or expanded because of their size or their significance as potential links in the existing open space network. The benefits for passive and active recreation are obvious but additional open spaces are needed to protect groundwater and surface water quality, minimize erosion and runoff and preserve wildlife habitat.
- The sustainability of the Town’s surface water and groundwater is imperative, especially the Moses Pond watershed which is being degraded by the pressures of urbanization.
- Wellesley derives most of its public water supply from local aquifers drawn from seven municipal wells. Three wells are near Moses Pond with the four remaining wells situated near Rosemary Brook. Additional water is purchased from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). In 2001, 71% of the Town’s water came from Town wells and 29% from the MWRA.

Possibilities

CPA funds for open space may be used for the following:

- Acquisition.
- Creation, preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of open space.
- To purchase land, easements or restrictions to protect a variety of space.

These open spaces could include

- Existing and future water supply areas.
- Agricultural and forest lands.
- Wetlands and floodplains.
- Wildlife habitat and nature preserves.
- Space of active and passive recreation uses, such as playgrounds, or athletic fields for non-commercial youth and adult sports.
- Community gardens, parks or trails.

The Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan evaluates the interests of the community, prioritizes open space and recreational needs and identifies priority open space parcels for potential Town acquisition. This Plan has historically guided Town officials in making open space acquisition decisions based upon clearly defined criteria.

To obtain further information consult the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, Pond Restoration Master Plan, Comprehensive Master Plan and the Five-Year Capital Budgets Plan.

Examples of potential projects include:

- Purchase land for water supply use or water supply protection.
- Purchase conservation land. Several parcels are identified in the above mentioned Town Plans.
- Restoration and dredging of Town ponds including Morses Pond, Longfellow Pond, Abbott and State St. Ponds.
- Restoration and improvements to the historically significant Fuller Brook Path parkland.
- Trail System improvements and acquisition of the Sudbury Aqueduct Trail and the remaining portion of the Cochituate Aqueduct Trail.
- Planting of shade trees and landscape plantings on Town-owned land.

- Restoration and improvements to the Town Hall Park.

Goals

The CPC, in consultation with NRC, has developed the following open space goals. Proposals brought before the CPC may receive preference for funding if they accomplish some or all of the following goals:

The Land

- Protect open space through acquisition.
- Purchase conservation easements and restrictions.
- Obtain rights of first refusal to purchase land.

The Water

- Protect water and wetland resources, flood control areas and flood storage capacity.
- Preserve and enhance surface and groundwater quantity and quality through protections of wells, aquifers, watershed and groundwater recharge areas, lake and pond frontage.
- Restore those resources that have been degraded or impaired.

Quality of Life

- Promote the development of open space for passive and active recreation and nature-related education.
- Enhance community character through the maintenance and the quality and quantity of the Town's shade trees, scenic and historic landscapes.
- Preserve habitat protection and biodiversity.

Town of Wellesley ***Community Preservation Plan*** **Recreation**

Background

Wellesley has a long tradition of offering diversified active and passive recreational opportunities. These activities are organized and supported by a variety of Town departments including the Recreation Commission, the Council on Aging, the School Department, the Natural Resources Commission, and citizen-run sport leagues.

Wellesley is fortunate to have playgrounds, playing fields, parks, trails and conservation areas broadly distributed throughout the Town, as well as a Town beach, all of which contribute to enhancing the quality of our lives.

Resources

Outdoor recreational activities are generally classified as “active” or “passive” and the type of land needed for each is different. Under the CPA, recreational purposes are defined as “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.”

In Wellesley, passive recreation includes activities like jogging, walking, cycling and bird watching. Land used for these activities totals about 642 acres and includes areas such as parks, nature conservancies, trails and ponds

Land available for active recreational programs totals 225 acres. These activities utilize our playing fields, playgrounds, tennis courts and beach property. Participation is not age specific, ranging from pre-schoolers to seniors.

Playing Fields and Playgrounds

Participation in organized field sports has grown rapidly. Many of these sports, such as baseball, lacrosse, field hockey, football and soccer use the same fields and have overlapping seasons. Both the number of children participating in more than one sport per season and the number of adults participating in fall and spring leagues have put great pressure on field availability and maintenance. In the near future lack of availability will limit any growth in participation.

An important factor in the availability of playing fields is proper maintenance. In response to concerns about field condition and maintenance, the Playing Field Task Force was formed in 1999. The Task Force, made up of representatives from the Recreation Commission, Department of Public Works (DPW), the School Department, Natural Resources Commission and user groups,

coordinates field maintenance and enhancement. Through their efforts, funds generated from user fees support substantial on-going field improvements, such as irrigation systems. The Task Force also oversees usage, systematically not using a field for a period of time allowing it rest and thus improving the quality of the turf and in turn reducing maintenance costs.

The Recreation Commission has explored acquisition and/or use of privately owned fields. Because of the price and limited availability of land in Wellesley, it has been difficult to acquire the additional playing fields needed to meet the increasing demand for active recreational programs.

Morses Pond and Beach

For more than 75 years Morses Pond has been available to Wellesley residents as a place for aquatic activities and passive recreational uses. It also provides one of the Town's most beautiful scenic vistas.

In 1931 the Town purchased 122 acres in the vicinity of Morses Pond from the Boston Ice Company and the Boston and Albany Railroad. Fifteen acres were set aside for the Water Department. In 1935, using funds from the Federal Relief Emergency Agency, a beach was developed on a portion of the pond. In 1954 management of the beach was turned over to the newly formed Recreation Commission. The DPW, then as now, provides maintenance of the pond and beach area jointly with the Commission.

Today Morses Pond offers swimming activities, boating, a park and picnic amenities. The programs offered at the beach include a summer day camp, swimming lessons, aquatic safety training and the School Department's Wings Program.

In recent years recreational use of the pond has been limited because:

- Water quality has been negatively affected by excessive algal blooms and evasive growth of non-native aquatic vegetation.
- An increasing goose population results in problematic bacteria counts.
- When not adequately treated to control high concentrations of iron, manganese and organic material, the water lacks the minimum clarity of 4 feet required for swimming safety.
- In 2001 the beach was closed for the season due to the EPA's Paint Shop Pond cleanup project.
- Over the last decade maintenance and enhancement of the facility has been only modestly funded by the Town and beach usage and revenues from the sale of beach tags has declined.

Needs

Playing Fields and Playgrounds

The need for playing fields is discussed above. The level of participation continues to increase and the availability of field time cannot keep pace with this growing demand. Without the acquisition of new sites, it will soon become necessary to curtail programs and turn interested participants away.

Morses Pond and Beach

The pond's water quality and aquatic vegetation has been the subject of a long series of studies. (See Appendix I, page 26.) One recently commissioned study suggested yet another way to make the water more appealing. However, the Commission believed cost estimates for the proposed solution were more than could be justified for a facility whose season is just two months. It remains to be seen whether there are practical ways to improve the water quality to the point where recreational activities are more appealing.

Following Environmental Protection Agency related closure, in 2002 the beach re-opened and attention was focused on promotion of the facility and the programs offered. Some important but low-cost improvements, umbrellas, a water slide (FY 04) and playground equipment, have been made. Beach tag sales in 2002 equaled those of the summer of 2000.

Without continued capital investment in the pond's water quality and the beach facilities, this valuable Town resource will likely experience declining use.

Possibilities

Project possibilities for three of the four purposes (community housing, open space and recreation) eligible for CPA funding share an important limiting factor: the acquisition of suitable land for the allowed uses. There are a number of privately owned commercial and institutional parcels of land that, if acquired by the Town, might be useful for recreational uses.

The recreation projects mentioned in this report are examples of possibilities and are not meant to be representative of an inclusive listing of possibilities.

Goals

The CPC, in consultation with the Recreation Commission and its associated organizations, has identified the following goals for recreational purposes proposed for CPA funding:

- Support a diversity of recreational programs, both active and passive.
- Support the use of a given location for a range of recreational uses.
- Serve a significant number of residents.
- Offer a range of recreational opportunities to all residents, regardless of age, gender or disability.

Town of Wellesley **Community Preservation Plan** **Historical Preservation**

Background

The Town of Wellesley has consistently demonstrated a remarkable sense of pride in its rich historical heritage. From its humble beginning as the summer home of Chief Maugus, and later as a small farming town, Wellesley has developed into a vibrant, well-planned community that showcases its past in the preservation, restoration and continued use of historic assets.

Resources

Working together in this preservation effort are an active Historical Commission, Historic District Commission and the Historical Society. The Town's listings on the National Register of Historic Places include one Local Historic District, two Thematic Resource Areas, four National Register Districts and four Individual Properties. There are 564 individual property surveys filed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. These properties include the most recent Residential Property Survey that highlights properties built between 1882 and 1940. The Town also has six Scenic Roads.

Needs

The Town has no tools to protect historic properties in danger of being demolished. Twice Town Meeting has turned down a Demolition Delay By-Law. Developers and market pressures are a threat to historic preservation, with property values far exceeding the cost of the building. There is a need for public education on the value of restoration and for creative incentives for developers not to demolish. Historic Town-owned properties, structures and landscapes fare much better, having the Historical Commission to speak on their behalf, and being able to put their future in the hands of town government.

Possibilities

Projects that have been cited by the Historical Commission, various other Commissions, Boards, preservationists and interested citizens are listed below. This by no means constitutes a final list, but shows the kinds of projects that are important to the Town and are in need of investigating.

- **Farms Railroad Station:** The H.H. Richardson-design railroad station has long been a treasure of the town. It is on the National Register of

Historic Places. It is in dire need of restoration work on the roof, the interior and the exterior walls. Landscaping of the surrounding area, which may have originally been an Olmsted design, is a priority to complete the restoration process.

- **National Register Listings:** The Town's National Register List totals ten (10). There are numerous properties that are worthy of being on the National Register. Six properties have been designated as eligible by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The next step is to prepare the individual National Register applications for submission.
- **Historic Walking Tours:** To increase public awareness of the Town's history, the creation of Historic Walking Tour booklets has been suggested. These would accompany Natural Resource Commission booklets. They would include areas surrounding conservation areas, established walking paths such as Fuller Brook, and other notable historic sites. They would draw on Historical Society data, among other sources.
- **Preservation of Historic Materials:** The aim is to provide permanent protection for historical materials and artifacts that would be used for education, research and public benefit.
- **Plaque Program:** To recognize the age and relative significance of historic properties built before the incorporation of the town in 1881, the Plaque Program was instituted. Extension of the program to include homes built between 1882 and 1940 has been enthusiastically considered.
- **Historic Districts:** No new historic districts have been created since the Cottage Street Historic District designation in 1980. Eight potentially eligible districts have been identified. These "properties best exemplify the various types of residential development" occurring in Wellesley during the period of 1882 to 1940. Eight additional residential areas have been identified for further investigation.
- **Property Survey Listings:** Our complete inventory of residences, Town-owned buildings, churches and commercial buildings numbers 564. This inventory should be ongoing with additions continually added. Twenty such properties have been identified, and are not yet recorded.
- **Scenic Roads:** There are six Scenic Roads throughout the Town. Pond Road, the Brookway, Squirrel Road, Cartwright Road, Cheney Drive and Benvenue Street make up the list. Brookside Road has been suggested as an historical addition.

Goals

The CPC, in consultation with the Wellesley Historical Commission, has identified the following historical preservation goals. Proposals brought before the CPC must meet at least one of the following conditions:

- One which is on a State or National Historic Register or is eligible for placement on such a register;
- One which has been determined by the Wellesley Historical Commission, to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture or culture of the town; or
- One which is within a Wellesley Historic District.

Proposals may receive preference for funding if they accomplish some for all of the following goals:

- Protection, preservation, enhancement, restoration or rehabilitation of a historic, archaeological or cultural resources or other features of significance, whether private or Town-owned, especially those that are threatened;
- Protection, preservation, enhancement, restoration or rehabilitation of a historical aspect of a property or site;
- Encouragement of the use of historic buildings for affordable housing, while still maintaining the historic character of the building sites;
- Encouragement of the preservation of historic landscapes as open space;
- Enhancement or creation of a public benefit, and to the greatest extent possible, to include an educational (in the broadest sense) component;
- Serve a community need to the greatest extent possible.

Town of Wellesley ***Community Preservation Plan*** **Community Housing**

Background

Wellesley derives its reputation as a desirable residential community from two factors. First, the Town has long been characterized by open space vistas and an absence of commercial/industrial sites, due in part to the large land holdings of several educational institutions. Second, early zoning by-laws set forth the prescription for orderly development of building lots and new streets.

Until World War II growth in Wellesley was slow and scattered. After the war a noteworthy change occurred. New neighborhoods were formed with internal symmetry and homogeneous residences, rather than a mix of residences by value. This led to the emergence of several high-end neighborhoods and a dramatic increase in the number of expensive dwellings as a percentage of the town's total housing stock. The trend was toward grouping newly constructed houses, similar in value, and market prices were increasing rapidly. By the 1960's first time home buyers were beginning to be priced out of Wellesley. In the early 1980's a boom in the metropolitan Boston housing market quickly resulted in soaring prices for first-class residential housing. Listing prices tripled and premium sales became associated with location and community amenities.

By the late 1980's the twin effects of the housing boom and the quality of its residential housing combined to make Wellesley real estate extremely desirable. Prices continued to escalate in all neighborhoods. Affordable property for first-time homebuyers vanished. The traditional range of diversity in age, income level and occupation of Wellesley's population began to change. Older residents found that they could sell their homes at very attractive prices, but could not afford to relocate anywhere in the community. Young adults of Wellesley families could not afford their first-time home purchase in the town in which they had grown up. And more and more the Town came to depend on municipal employees who could not afford to live in the Town that employed them.

In response to this striking trend, the 1989 Annual Town Meeting adopted the first of a succession of articles which, over the past 15 years, have attempted to move the Town back toward a level of diversity in housing which many associated with Wellesley's earlier history. Key to all these efforts has been the approval of a housing policy, which states that:

Wellesley is an outstandingly attractive residential community, enriched by the diversity of its residents. Wellesley seeks to ... preserv[e] a mix of housing stock that includes low income [i.e., state-subsidized], moderate income and market rate housing. In establishing this Affordable Housing Policy, Wellesley seeks to control its own growth and development.

Despite efforts by Town-appointed committees and groups of citizens, Wellesley has not produced dramatic results in the area of affordable community housing. Projects, which might have creatively addressed the need for diverse housing stock, have most often been stymied by a lack of funding sources.

The CPA does not use the term affordable housing, but rather speaks of “community housing”, which means housing for low and moderate income individuals and families, including low or moderate income senior housing. Under the CPA, low income refers to a person or family whose income is less than 80% of the area’s median income as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); moderate income refers to a person or family whose income is less than 100% of that median. As of March 2003, HUD determined that the Boston area’s median income for a family of four was \$80,800.

Resources

Wellesley has two major housing organizations, the Wellesley Housing Authority (Housing Authority) and the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation (WHDC).

The Housing Authority is a state-funded agency that carries out the duties of a local housing authority under Chapter 121B of the General Laws. These duties include planning, constructing, operating and maintaining rent-subsidized housing for low-income families, veterans and elders. Though state-funded, the Housing Authority is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners, four of whom are elected by Town voters. The Housing Authority provides administration and maintenance for 234 units of low-income state subsidized public housing in Wellesley for families, elderly and handicapped/disabled individuals. Elderly/Disabled developments are located at 41 River Street (26 units), 315 Weston Road (31 units), and 487-513 Washington Street (76 units). Family housing developments are located at Barton Road (89 units) and 50 Linden Street (12 units). The renovation and modernization of the Barton Road family units with \$13.4 million in funds from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) were completed in May of this year.

The WHDC is a non-profit entity established by the Town in 1998 whose mission is to preserve the Town’s tradition of being home to families of a variety of

economic backgrounds while responding to current state-mandates for providing housing for low or moderate income individuals and families.

Other community housing developments in Wellesley include 136 units with rents regulated under federal HUD agreements and 9 affordable units regulated under a “hostile” comprehensive permit issued under sections 20-23 of Chapter 40B of the General Laws, the so-called “Anti-Snob Zoning” or Comprehensive Permit Act (Chapter 40B).

Three affordable homeownership units will be sold later this summer under a Chapter 40B comprehensive permit supported by the Board of Selectmen.

However, Wellesley’s stock of approximately 386 units of affordable community housing remains strikingly low in a Town with 8,594 households, 85% of which are single-family homes and 83% of which are owner-occupied. Notwithstanding efforts by several non-profit, including religious, organizations to fill that gap, Wellesley has added only a negligible number of new affordable units over the past two decades.

Needs

The Town’s principal need is for community housing which will allow it to move toward compliance with certain laws of the Commonwealth, such as Chapter 40B and Executive Order 418, which impose on the Town the obligation to increase its supply of affordable units.

Chapter 40B mandates that at least 10% of a town’s housing units must be low or moderate income housing. According to the inventory maintained and published by DHCD, only 4.5% of Wellesley’s housing meets that test. As long as Chapter 40B’s 10% guideline remains unmet, unless the Town can demonstrate to DHCD that the Town is making good faith efforts to encourage the development of low and moderate housing, private developers will be able to invoke Chapter 40B’s comprehensive permit process to skirt Wellesley’s zoning by-laws and build developments that are out of character with their neighborhoods.

Under Executive Order 418, failure to make good faith efforts to increase the number of affordable units could possibly render the Town ineligible to receive certain discretionary state financial grants.

At present, the Town’s inability to implement any creative community housing proposals, such as partially funding “carriage house” or other types of factory fit construction on tax title property, makes the Town vulnerable to large-scale housing developments under Chapter 40B in which as little as twenty-five percent of the units are in fact affordable.

The Town has long desired to be in a position to effectively negotiate with developers of housing on issues of size, percentage affordability, duration of affordability, and betterments. The present absence of any Town economic clout in such discussions could be altered by using CPA funds for community housing purposes.

Possibilities

At the present time, there are at least three clear possibilities for the use of CPA funds in support of community housing initiatives.

First, CPA funds can be used to purchase existing market rate units and then resell them to eligible low and moderate income families, using the CPA funds to discount the resale price. Under the CPA, units so acquired will be subject to recorded deed restrictions designed to ensure that they remain permanently affordable. Of further value, this approach furthers several goals: preserving the more modest homes in a neighborhood, stabilizing neighborhoods which are now subject to “teardowns” and out-of-scale new construction, and scattering affordable units throughout the Town.

Second, by focusing rehabilitation efforts on deteriorating structures of historic significance, we could preserve important structures and rededicate their use to community housing. For example, the American Legion Building at 496 Washington Street, title to which will soon automatically vest in the Town, has for years provided privately subsidized affordable housing to a number of low-income veterans. CPA funds could be used to rehabilitate the building and then use it as multi-family community housing. Since the American Legion building is listed with the Wellesley Historical Commission, use of CPA for such a project would satisfy more than one of the CPC decision guidelines.

Third, there are creative approaches to housing which might be considered as possible uses for CPA funds. For example, the Town owns parcels of land throughout the Town, some acquired through tax title, that may be suitable for housing use. Since land costs are the major ingredient in preventing the construction of community housing in Wellesley, these lots might well be utilized for housing with CPA funds supporting a portion of the cost. In addition to increasing the number of affordable units, this approach would modestly increase tax revenues by moving non-taxable Town property onto the real estate tax rolls.

There is no doubt that, under the direction of the WHDC there are other properties that could be rehabilitated, as well as opportunities for new construction, with the use of CPA funds. But, in the final analysis, what is most important at this point in time is for Wellesley to signal a willingness to get beyond talk and to demonstrate a clear and viable plan addressing the shortage of community housing units in Wellesley. The CPA presents us with an opportunity to take a more proactive role in determining the type and location of these units.

Goals

The CPC, in consultation with the Housing Authority, WHDC and other organizations, has identified the following community housing goals. Proposals brought before the CPC may receive preference for funding if they accomplish some or all of the following goals:

- Create new and preserve existing community housing that is consistent with the Town's affordable housing policy adopted under Article 31 of the 1989 Annual Town Meeting and modified under Article 42 of the 1997 Annual Town Meeting.
- Create new and preserve existing community housing that is well designed and maintained, is of high quality and based on sound planning principles.
- Disperse community housing throughout the Town by siting new community housing in neighborhoods that currently have little or no affordable housing.
- Provide and preserve community housing that promotes age and income diversity.
- Ensure the long-term affordability of community housing, and in perpetuity wherever possible.
- Create new and preserve existing community housing that will contribute to the state's mandated target of having 10% of the Town's housing stock affordable to households with incomes at or below 80% of the Boston area's median income.
- Provide a mix of low income, moderate income and market rate housing.
- Provide community housing opportunities that give priority to local residents, Town employees and families of students enrolled in the Town's public schools.
- Reuse existing buildings or use previously developed or Town-owned sites for new community housing.
- Acquire and convert market rate housing into community housing.

Community Preservation Act Town of Wellesley Application for Funding

Submission

Proposals for Community Preservation funding must be submitted using the attached application form. All relevant information requested on the application form must be included with the proposal.

Applications must be typewritten and ten copies of the application and all supporting documentation must be submitted to the Community Preservation Committee, Wellesley Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482.

The application for funding for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003 may be submitted between September 1 and October 17, 2003. Unless an applicant can demonstrate that a significant opportunity would otherwise be lost, applications will not be accepted after this date.

For further information about the application process, contact the CPC at (781) 451-1019 x-297 or visit the CPC Web page to view the CPC plan at www.ci.wellesley.ma.us/cpa/index.html or email us at cpc@ci.wellesley.ma.us.

Review by the Community Preservation Committee

Each application will be acknowledged when it is received. It will be reviewed for completeness and the applicant will be notified if additional information is required.

Once the CPC has determined that an application is complete, the proponent(s) will be given an opportunity to present the scope and details of the project to the CPC.

From time-to-time the CPC will schedule public hearings to discuss its work, to review proposals under consideration and to receive comments from the citizens of Wellesley. In addition, there is an opportunity for citizens to speak as a part of the agenda of each CPC meeting.

Funding Decisions

The CPC will submit its recommendations for the use of CPA funds to the Advisory Committee and other relevant Town boards. All CPC funding is ultimately subject to the approval by Town Meeting Boards.

APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING

Submit to: Community Preservation Committee

Wellesley Town Hall
525 Washington Street
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482
Email: cpc@ci.wellesley.ma.us

Name of Applicant/Contact Person _____

Sponsoring Organization, if applicable _____

Mailing Address _____

Daytime Phone _____ Email _____

Name of Proposal _____ Date _____

CPA Category (circle all that apply): **Open Space** **Historic Preservation** **Recreation**
Community Housing

CPA Funding Requested _____ Total Cost of Proposed Project _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: In describing the project, please include answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as incomplete if all relevant requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials and exhibits as necessary.

1. **Goals:** What are the goals of the proposed project? Who will benefit and why? How will success be measured?
2. **Community Need:** Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing Town plans?
3. **Community Support:** What is the nature and level of support and/or opposition for this project?
4. **Budget:** What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? All items of expenditure must be clearly identified and back-up documentation provided. Distinguish between hard and soft costs. (NOTE: CPA funds may NOT be used for maintenance.) Include a two to five year budget, if appropriate.
5. **Funding:** What funding sources are available, committed or under consideration? Include commitment letters, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.
6. **Timeline:** What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical elements? This should include the timeline for expenditures, receipt of other funds and/or other revenues, if any.

7. **Implementation:** Who will be responsible for implementing the project? Who will the project manager be? What relevant experience does the proposed project manager have?
8. **Maintenance:** If ongoing maintenance is required, who will be responsible and how will it be funded? Please include a detailed five year budget.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Provide the following additional information, if applicable.

9. **Further Documentation:** Documentation that you have control over the site, such as a Purchase and Sale Agreement, option or deed.
10. **Feasibility Reports:** Any feasibility reports, renderings or other relevant studies and material.
11. **Zoning Compliance:** Evidence that the project does not violate any zoning by-laws or any other laws or regulations, including environmental, and/or plans to obtain necessary approvals.
12. **Other Information:** Any additional information that might benefit the CPC in consideration of this project.

Appendix I - Plans, Documents and Studies

Board of Selectmen:

- Five-Year Capital Need Planning Schedule (FY 04 – 08)

Community Housing:

- Town of Wellesley Affordable Housing Reference Guide (1995)
- Housing Partnership Committee Report on Oakland Street and Woodland Avenue Sites (1996)
- Wellesley Housing Partnership Committee Report to the Board of Selectmen on Article 37 of the 1996 Town Meeting: Potential Affordable Housing Sites Oakland Street – Woodlawn Avenue – Alhambra Road (1996)
- Wellesley Housing Partnership Committee Report to the Board of Selectmen on Article 38 of the 1996 Town Meeting: Wellesley Non-Profit Development Corporation (1996)
- Introductory Report of the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation to Annual Town Meeting. (2001)
- Reports and Studies vis a vis Housing: Wellesley Housing Authority (2003)

Historic Preservation:

- Massachusetts Historic Commission State Register of Historic Places
- Massachusetts Historic Commission Form B-Building Forms Inventory
- Wellesley Residential Property Survey; 1882-1940
- Five Pounds Currency, Three Pounds of Corn: Wellesley Centennial Story, Elizabeth M. Hinchliffe (1981)

Open Space:

- Open Space and Recreation Plan (1995 – 1999)
- Pond Restoration Master Plan (1998)
- Build-Out Analysis for the Town of Wellesley (2000)
- Morses Pond Management Update (2002)
- Open Space and Recreation Plan (Draft Update, March, 2003)
- NRC Five-Year Capital Budget Plan (FY 04 – 08)

Planning Board:

- Comprehensive Master Plan (1994 – Currently being updated)
- Cedar Street Phase I: Vision Statement and Area Plan (1999)

- Cedar Street Phase II: Land Use and Neighborhood Design Plan (2001)
- Linden Street Phase I: Vision (2001)
- Linden Street Phase II: Final Phase (2002)
- Lower Falls Zoning, Urban Design and Landscape Guidelines (1997)
- Lower Falls Railroad Right-of-Way (proposed)
- Wellesley Hills Phase I: Vision for Wellesley Hills Square (2000)
- Wellesley Hills Phase II: Action Plan for Wellesley Hills Square (2001)
- Wellesley Square Vision (1996)
- Wellesley Square Action Plan (1998)
- Wellesley Square, Recommendations for Organizing a Wellesley Square Partnership (2000)
- Wellesley Square Zoning Study (2003)
- Town Maps / Zoning, Land Use

Public Works, Department of:

- Storm Water Management – (1981)
- Storm Water Management – Natural Run Off (2003)
- Town Maps

Recreation:

- Indoor Pool Feasibility Study/Operation Plan (1996)
- Pool Facility/Feasibility Study (1997)
- Recreation Needs Survey and Forecast (1999)
- Morses Pond Beach Improvement Plan (2001)
- Skateboard Facility Site and Operational Plan (2002)