

CPA FOR READING



A PROPOSAL FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA) BY THE TOWN OF READING

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
READING COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT
STUDY COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 2026



Reading CPA Study Committee

The Reading CPA Study Committee is made up of 7 voting members, and one non-voting member, appointed by the Reading Select Board, and is charged with facilitating communications within the Town, and to share information regarding possibilities and challenges when adopting the CPA. The Committee has been studying the merits of the CPA and the various methods for adoption with the goal of presenting its findings to the Select Board for review and referral to Town Meeting in the Spring 2026 and, if thereby approved, to the Reading voters at the State election in November 2026.

Since Summer of 2024, Committee members have been reaching out to community leaders, Town Administration, Town Meeting Members, the Select Board and Finance Committee, local community groups, other communities and to the statewide Community Preservation Coalition to learn more about the opportunities and challenges associated with adopting the CPA.

Based on what we have learned over the last eighteen months, the Committee strongly and unanimously recommends that the Town of Reading adopt the CPA.

Committee Members

- *Select Board:* Carlo Bacci
- *Finance Committee:* Joe Carnahan
- *Recreation Committee:* Kate Kaminer
- *Historical Commission :* Sarah Brukilacchio
- *Conservation Commission:* Martha Moore
- *Housing Authority:* Margaret Donnelly Moran (voting), Katie Gallant (non-voting)
- *Community Member At Large:* Sandy Matathia

Acknowledgments

The Reading CPA Committee thanks the following people who met with us and provided us with information and input regarding the potential adoption of the CPA in Reading.

Town Administration: Matt Kraunelis, Jayne Wellman, Andrew MacNichol, Jacquelyn LaVerde

Select Board: Christopher Haley, Melissa Murphy, Karen Rose-Gillis, Carlo Bacci, Karen Gately Herrick

Finance Committee: Joe Carnahan, Emily Sisson, Geoffrey Coram, Endri Kume, Joseph McDonagh, Marianne McLaughlin-Downing, Edward Ross, John Sullivan, Mark Zarrow

Affordable Housing Trust: Patrick Egan, Sherilla Lestrade, Jayna Stafford, Margaret Donnelly Moran, Karen Rose-Gillis

Board of Directors of the Reading Antiquarian Society: Everett Blodgett, Virginia Blodgett, Cherrie Dubois, Christine Keller, Ellen Terry

Community Planning & Development Committee: John Arena, Thomas Armstrong, Healthier Clish, Gaetano Manganiello, Hillary Mateev, Andrew Mclauchlan

Conservation Commission: Brain Bowe, Martha Moore, Joseph Fleury, Rick Keogh, Tim Michel, Carl Saccone, Chirag Sthalekar, Walter Talbot

Historical Commission: Pino D'Orazio, Amelia Freedman, Christine Keller, Jonathan Barnes, Virginia Adams, Sarah Brukilacchio, Samantha Couture

Housing Authority: Diane Cohen, Tim Kelly, Charles Adams, Diana Carter, Margaret Donnelly Moran

Library Trustees: Kelli Bacon, Patrick Egan, Andrew Gregory, Andrew Grimes, Christian Cappy Popp, Monette Verrier

Reading Open Land Trust: Robert P. Connors, Fred McGrane, Lori Shaffer, Ralph Colorusso, Michael Koehler, Justin Martel, Beth Parsons, Alison Ullman, Bill Lewis

Recreation Committee: Richard Hand, Robert Weiden, Eric Boemer, Lara Durgavich, Giuseppe Fodera, Eric Gaffen, Matthew George, Kate Kaminer, Laura Noonan, Nick Pesaturo, Melissa Pucci

School Committee: Shawn Brandt, Carla Nazzaro, Lara Durgavich, Erin Gaffen, Sarah McLaughlin, Tom Wise

Town Forest Committee: Jeffrey Lamson, Brandy Hopkins, David Flynn, Kathy Kelly, Timothy Kirwan, Christine Lusk, Derek Puff

Trails Committee: John Kastrinos, Garrett Alpha-Cobb, William Finch, Ashley Gross, Brandy Hopkins, Benjamin Ream, David Williams

In addition to the input garnered through consultations with Reading groups and individuals, the committee is grateful to the time and information shared with it by the Community Preservation Committee (Chase Mack), CPA for Natick Coalition (Ganesh Remachandran), Winchester Community Preservation Act Committee (Mike Bettencourt).

The Reading report greatly benefited and was modeled on the **CPA for Natick Report** so graciously shared with the Reading Committee by the CPA for Natick Coalition.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Executive Summary | 5 |
| CPA Overview | |
| Community Preservation Act | 7 |
| Considerations for CPA Adoption | 7 |
| Adoption Map and Communities | 10 |
| Reading CPA Committee Findings | 12 |
| Benefits of CPA | 14 |
| CPA Costs & Constraints | 15 |
| State Matching Funds | 16 |
| Recommendation to Town Meeting | 18 |
| Timeline and Next Steps | 18 |
| Opportunities for Reading | |
| Open Space & Outdoor Recreation | 21 |
| Historic Preservation | 23 |
| Affordable Housing | 25 |
| CPA Adoption & Funding Process | |
| Community Preservation Act Adoption | 31 |
| Putting Act into Effect | 32 |
| Appendices | |
| Reading CPA Flyer | 33 |
| Town Meeting Draft Warrant Article | 35 |
| Statewide CPA Community Information | 37 |
| Community Preservation Fund | 44 |
| Allowable Spending Purposes | |

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Parker Tavern: (Unknown)

Town Forest with a Winter Glaze: Barry Berman

Executive Summary

The Massachusetts legislature passed the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2000. The CPA's goal is to address the difficulties that municipalities like Reading have finding money for projects that improve the quality-of-life, sustain our environmental resources, and address housing inequities. These projects include protecting open space, expanding outdoor recreation, preserving historic buildings and landscapes, and creating affordable housing.

CPA permits cities and towns to create a Community Preservation Fund to support such projects. To date, 201 cities and towns have adopted CPA by local referendum. They have raised over \$3.7 billion for over 18,700 local community preservation projects, and received more than \$670 million in matching grants from the state, serving as an essential building block for bringing in other funds to communities.

If adopted, the CPA could provide significant funding for open space preservation, outdoor recreation, historic preservation, and affordable housing projects in Reading. Our projections indicate CPA adoption would bring in more than \$1 million dollars in annual revenues to fund the above projects, including partial matching funds from the state.

Reading already spends an average of approximately \$1 million per year on CPA-eligible projects, meaning that these partial matching funds for the CPA would allow Reading to spend less money to fund the same projects we currently do or to fund additional projects without spending any more money than we currently do. Thus, the CPA offers Reading both an effective way to obtain more state money and an efficient way to spend less local money.

Community preservation monies are raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge of ranging from a minimum of 0.5% up to a maximum of 3% of the real estate tax levy. The Reading CPA Committee is proposing a CPA surcharge of 1% with the following exemptions:

- The first \$100,000 of property value
- All low-income residents and low-or-moderate-income senior residents
- All commercial property

In FY 2025, the average single family residential property in Reading had an assessed value of \$893,069. With a 1% surcharge and exemption for the first \$100,000 of property value, we project that this average residential property would only pay an annual CPA surcharge of \$97.79.

We recommend that the Select Board refer CPA to the Spring 2026 Town Meeting, and if approved by Town Meeting, for adoption by the voters in November 2026 election as a referendum. The anticipated voter turnout for the gubernatorial election is high, which would allow a large percentage of Reading voters to express their preference. The addition of state CPA fund distributions would help Reading meet its ongoing fiscal challenges. Based on our research, assessment, and extensive grassroots outreach, we strongly recommend that our Town adopt the Community Preservation Act.

Reading CPA Committee:

Carlo Bacci, Select Board Representative
Joe Carnahan, Finance Committee Representative
Martha Moore, Conservation Commission Representative
Sarah Brukilacchio, Historical Commission Representative
Margaret Donnelly-Moran, Housing Authority Representative
Kate Kaminer, Recreation Committee Representative
Sandy Matathia, Resident-at-Large
Kathryn Gallant, Reading Housing Authority Executive Director



CPA Overview



*Cross country skiing in Bare Meadow Woods
(Photo Credit: Sarah Brukilacchio)*

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a state law passed in 2000 that allows Massachusetts communities to conduct a referendum to add a small surcharge on local property taxes. When combined with matching funds from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund, this dedicated fund is used to build and rehabilitate parks, playgrounds, and recreational fields, protect open space, support local affordable housing development, and preserve historic buildings and resources.

These revenues can only be used to fund the following categories:

- Open space protection
- Creation and rehabilitation of parks and outdoor recreation facilities
- Preservation of historic resources
- Creation and preservation of affordable housing.

A municipality must place collected proceeds in a restricted local Community Preservation Fund. A Community Preservation Committee (CPC) of citizens is responsible for recommending projects and their funding levels to Reading Town Meeting for final approval.

Cities and towns that adopt CPA obtain community preservation funds from two sources - a local property tax surcharge and a yearly distribution from the statewide CPA Trust Fund.

How does the statewide CPA Trust Fund work?

Trust fund revenues are derived from a surcharge placed on all real estate transactions at the state's Registries of Deeds. The surcharge for most documents filed at the Registries is \$50, which is immediately deposited in the CPA Trust Fund held at the Department of Revenue (DOR). Municipal lien certificates are subject to a \$25 surcharge. Depending upon how the real estate market is doing, the \$50/\$25 fees add up to approximately \$60 million per year

Considerations for CPA Adoption

Surcharges and exemptions approved by other cities and towns

To help frame our discussion about potential recommendations to Town Meeting, the Committee reviewed the surcharge levels and exemptions approved by voter referendum in the 201 cities and towns that adopted CPA from 2001 through 2025 using information provided by the statewide Community Preservation Coalition. Over these 24 years, municipalities adopting CPA approved surcharges ranging from 0.5% to 3%. Exemptions offered to property owners varied from "No

Exemptions” to offering all permitted exemptions for Residential and Commercial/Industrial property owners.

In the last decade, the trend has been to:

1. approve surcharges in the 1% to 1.50% range; and
2. offer all allowed exemptions to income eligible residents and exempt the first \$100,000 of assessed value from the surcharge calculation for all other residential property owners.

Exempting commercial property is unusual. However, the CPA Study Committee is recommending the commercial/industrial property exemption due to the very small fraction of Reading's property used for such purposes and the importance of maintaining Reading's vibrant downtown area.

Impact on Property Owners

The Committee was sensitive to the impact of CPA surcharges on residential property owners. At a **1%** CPA surcharge, after accounting for the first \$100,000 property value exemption, an average single family residential property assessed at \$893,069 would pay an annual CPA surcharge of \$97.79.

Information from the Community Preservation Coalition coupled with grassroots community outreach since Summer 2024 has led us to believe that a majority of property owners are likely to accept a **1%** CPA annual surcharge as acceptable investment in protecting our community's recreational, natural, historic, and housing resources.

Potential Future Overrides

The reality of Massachusetts municipal finance under Proposition 2½ is that every town like Reading must periodically vote for an operational override every few years in order to balance the budget, as the cost of a level-service budget typically rises by more than 2.5% per year. While the timing and size of future overrides is outside the scope of the CPA Study Committee, we know that Reading's last override was in 2018 and that another override is expected soon.



*The Reading Art Box Project. Artist Ruth Clark
(Photo Credit: Sarah Brukilacchio)*

There is an argument against considering the CPA at the same time as an override, as voters may balk at seeing two tax increases on the same ballot. Indeed, Reading only put CPA to a vote once before (April 2002), and it did so in the same election as voting on a debt exclusion for renovating Reading Memorial High School. Reading voters narrowly rejected the CPA in that vote, likely because they were concerned about the combined impact of two tax increases.

However, there is also an argument to be made for Reading to adopt the CPA as soon as possible, even at the same time as an override: Reading already spends an average of about \$1 million per year on CPA-eligible capital projects like improving recreational facilities, acquiring open space, and renovating historic town-owned buildings. If Reading were to adopt the CPA, similar projects could be funded via the CPA in the future, and Reading would benefit from the state's CPA Trust Fund distribution as well. The state distribution would allow Reading either to fund approximately an additional \$200,000 of these projects per year, or to fund projects we currently fund at a cost of \$200,000 less to the tax payer.

Minimizing Impact to Income Eligible Seniors and other Residents

The CPA Study Committee recommends that Reading adopts the recommended exemptions for low-income residents and low-and-moderate-income senior residents. "Low income" is defined as any income less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), while "moderate income" is defined as being between 80% and 100% of the AMI.

In Middlesex County in 2025, the AMI was \$115,800 for a household of one individual and \$132,350 for two individuals. So, any seniors with household income less than this would be eligible for exemption from the CPA surcharge.

Likewise, 80% of the AMI was \$92,650 for one individual and \$105,850 for two individuals. All residential property owners regardless of age with incomes under these thresholds would be eligible for exemption from the CPA surcharge.

Minimizing Impact to Commercial Owners

The committee also recommends that Reading adopt an exception for commercial property, considering the community's existing split tax rate between residential and commercial property. This exemption would only lower the potential annual CPA funds by approximately \$65,000 including the partial state match.

Timing

With the approval of Town Meeting, CPA adoption will appear as a question on the November 2026 ballot. The State gubernatorial election in November is anticipated to have a large turnout, thereby giving the largest possible number of voters to express their views on CPA adoption. The ballot question will state that the Town will begin to assess and collect surcharge payments in July 2027.

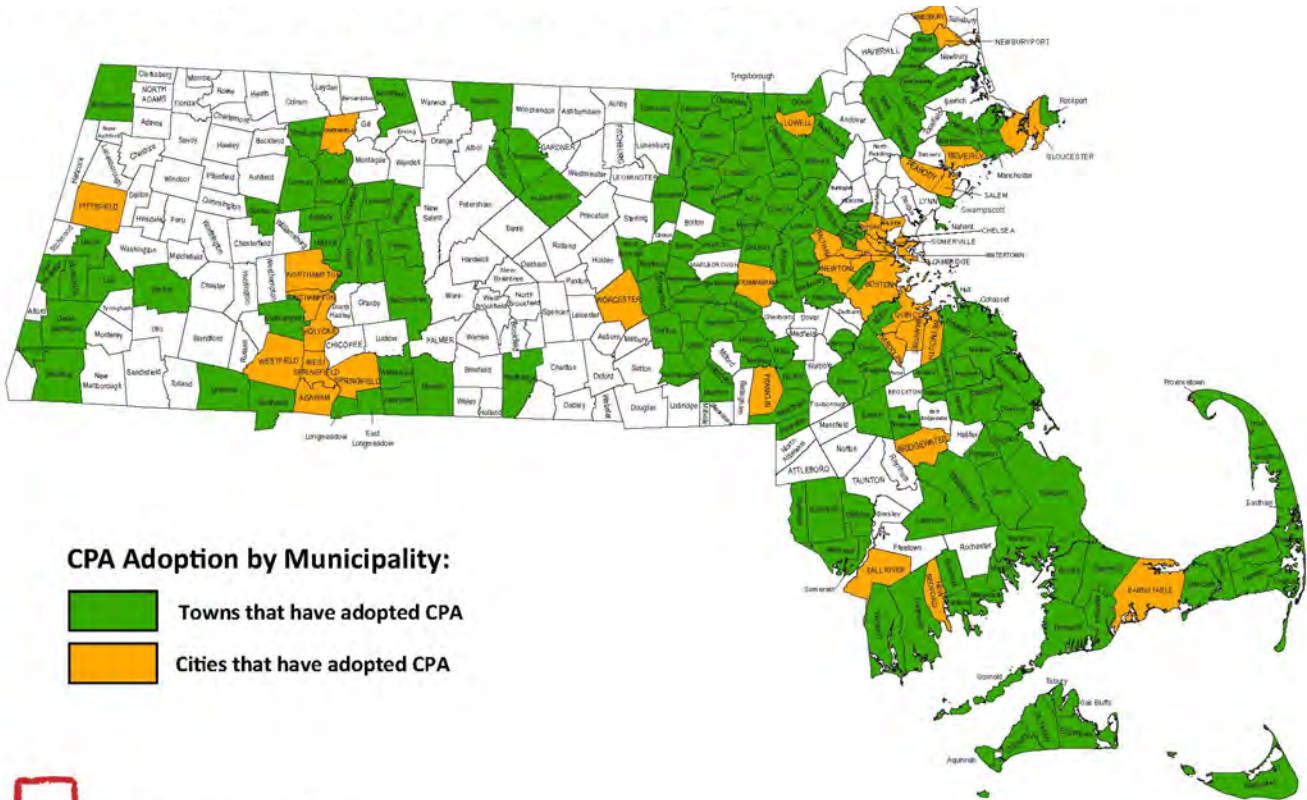


*Reading's Historical Depot
(Photo Credit: Sarah Brukilacchio)*



*Entrance into Reading's Laurel Hill Cemetery
(Photo Credit: Sarah Brukilacchio)*

Community Preservation Act Adoption



CPA Adoption by Municipality:

- Towns that have adopted CPA
- Cities that have adopted CPA



Statewide CPA results since 2001

- 201 communities have adopted CPA (57% of the Commonwealth’s cities and towns)
- Of the total number of adopted communities, 36 are cities and 165 are towns
- 71% of the state population lives in a CPA community
- Over \$3.7 Billion has been raised to date for community preservation funding statewide
- 18,742 CPA projects have been approved by local legislative bodies
- More than 15,600 affordable housing units have been created with an additional 21,000 units supported
- 39,860 acres of open space have been preserved
- Over 8,100 appropriations have been made for historic preservation projects
- Over 4,400 outdoor recreation projects have been initiated

All 201 communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act:

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Abington | Egremont | Maynard | Shirley |
| Acton | Essex | Medford | Shrewsbury |
| Acushnet | Fairhaven | Medway | Shutesbury |
| Agawam | Fall River | Mendon | Somerset |
| Amesbury | Falmouth | Middleborough | Somerville |
| Amherst | Framingham | Middleton | Southampton |
| Aquinnah | Franklin | Millis | Southborough |
| Arlington | Georgetown | Milton | Southwick |
| Ashland | Gloucester | Monson | Springfield |
| Ayer | Goshen | Nahant | Stockbridge |
| Barnstable | Gosnold | Nantucket | Stoughton |
| Becket | Grafton | Natick | Stow |
| Bedford | Granville | Needham | Sturbridge |
| Belchertown | Great Barrington | New Bedford | Sudbury |
| Belmont | Greenfield | Newburyport | Sunderland |
| Berlin | Groton | Newton | Swampscott |
| Beverly | Groveland | Norfolk | Swansea |
| Billerica | Hadley | North Andover | Templeton |
| Boston | Hamilton | Northampton | Tewksbury |
| Bourne | Hampden | Northborough | Tisbury |
| Boxborough | Hanover | Northbridge | Townsend |
| Boxford | Hanson | Northfield | Truro |
| Boylston | Harvard | Norwell | Tyngsborough |
| Braintree | Harwich | Norwood | Upton |
| Brewster | Hatfield | Oak Bluffs | Waltham |
| Bridgewater | Hingham | Orleans | Wareham |
| Brookline | Holliston | Peabody | Watertown |
| Cambridge | Holyoke | Pelham | Wayland |
| Canton | Hopedale | Pembroke | Wellesley |
| Carlisle | Hopkinton | Pepperell | Wellfleet |
| Carver | Hubbardston | Phillipston | Wenham |
| Chatham | Hudson | Pittsfield | West Boylston |
| Chelmsford | Hull | Plainville | West Bridgewater |
| Chelsea | Kingston | Plymouth | West Newbury |
| Chilmark | Lakeville | Plympton | West Springfield |
| Cohasset | Lancaster | Provincetown | West Stockbridge |
| Concord | Lee | Quincy | West Tisbury |
| Conway | Lenox | Randolph | Westborough |
| Dartmouth | Leverett | Rehoboth | Westfield |
| Deerfield | Lexington | Rockland | Westford |
| Dennis | Lincoln | Rockport | Weston |
| Dighton | Littleton | Rowley | Westport |
| Dracut | Longmeadow | Royalston | Weymouth |
| Dunstable | Lowell | Salem | Whately |
| Duxbury | Malden | Sandwich | Whitman |
| East Longmeadow | Manchester | Scituate | Wilbraham |
| Eastham | Marion | Seekonk | Williamstown |
| Easthampton | Marshfield | Sharon | Winchester |
| Easton | Mashpee | Sheffield | Worcester |
| Edgartown | Mattapoisett | Shelburne | Wrentham |
| | | | Yarmouth |

Reading CPA Committee Findings

There has been a significant cost to Reading for rejecting CPA in 2002 when it was previously presented before Reading voters.

Had Reading adopted CPA in 2002 as proposed, our Town would have raised over \$20 million including state matching funds totaling in excess of \$3.7Million, a very significant return on investment. The state’s matching funds comes from all taxpayers -- including Reading residents. ***Because we did not adopt CPA, all these matching funds went to other cities and towns.***

In addition, not adopting CPA has cost the Town numerous opportunities for open space acquisition and protection, historic preservation, outdoor recreation, and the creation of affordable housing. Some opportunities were lost altogether; others were delayed and thus made more expensive for taxpayers.

Like many other communities across the Commonwealth, Reading has difficulty finding room in its tight municipal budget for “quality-of-life” projects. This is due to competing demands for limited Town funds, coupled with a desire to keep property taxes as low as possible. Such projects are often considered to be discretionary when compared to other operational budget items, and are often relegated to the back burner.

Meanwhile, Reading is steadily becoming less affordable to first time-buyers and to working class families. Housing prices are increasing beyond the means of many seniors and families, and affordable housing is increasingly difficult to find. We don’t have dependable local funding to preserve our historical resources, and finding funds to preserve and maintain our open space and recreational amenities continues to be a major challenge.

CPA Exemptions

When adopting CPA, municipalities have the option to include several types of exemptions. We recommend that Reading exempt the properties of low-income homeowners, low-and-moderate income senior homeowners, commercial property owners, and the first \$100K of assessed value of all residential properties.

Unlike the \$100K exemption that is automatically applied, the low-income exemption is applied through an annual application process at the local level. While taxpayers who already file annual applications in other income-based exemption programs need not reapply, a new application will be required of those who are not on file. Income thresholds for low income housing or low-income senior housing is based on 80% of HUD Area-Wide Median Income guidelines.

CPA's Effect on Your Tax Bill

At a 1% CPA surcharge, after accounting for the first \$100,000 property value exemption, an average single family residential property assessed at \$893,069 would pay an annual CPA surcharge of \$97.79.

Single-family residential tax impact:

| | Assessed value | Current tax | CPA Surcharge |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Average | \$893,068.69 | \$11,011.54 | \$97.79 |
| Median | \$840,800.00 | \$10,367.06 | \$91.34 |
| Bottom 10% | \$673,500.00 | \$8,304.26 | \$70.71 |
| Top 10% | \$1,187,680.00 | \$14,644.09 | \$134.11 |

Assumptions:

- Fiscal Year 2025 property values
- Fiscal Year 2025 tax rate (\$12.33 per \$1k)
- CPA Surcharge rate of 1%
- Exemption for first \$100k of property value

The benefits and return on investment to Reading of CPA adoption would be significant, far outweighing its costs

The longer-term value created by projects funded through CPA *now* will make Reading an even better place to live. CPA adoption in November 2026 would help Reading fund projects deferred from the Capital Improvement Program, address unmet local needs, and respond to emerging opportunities that would otherwise have difficulty competing with the many other demands on annual Town budgets. It will permit Reading to provide near-term and long-term quality-of-life benefits to residents through projects that preserve, protect, renew, and support open space, outdoor recreation, historic resources, and community housing.

CPA monies can supplement and support other project funding sources such as state grants, town appropriations and private funds, making multi-source initiatives possible. CPA income and balances not spent in any year are reserved for future use, creating a rolling and growing Community Preservation (CP) Fund for future investment in eligible projects.

CPA Fund monies can be committed and reserved to pay the debt service on long-term borrowing needed to finance large qualifying projects. Note that the CPA Study Committee recommends exempting commercial and industrial property from the CPA surcharge and only applying the surcharge to residential property, as the projected revenue from Reading's small commercial and industrial tax base is small relative to the impact that the surcharge would have on local businesses.

| Property class | Surcharge collected | State match (27.66%) | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Residential | \$790,309.05 | \$218,599.48 | \$1,008,908.53 |
| Commercial/Industrial | \$51,125.20 | \$14,141.23 | \$65,266.43 |
| Both | \$841,434.25 | \$232,740.71 | \$1,074,174.96 |

Assumptions:

Fiscal Year 2025 property values

Fiscal Year 2025 tax rate (\$12.33 per \$1K residential, \$13.61 per \$1K commercial/industrial)

CPA surcharge rate of 1%

Exemption for first \$100K of property value

State match based on average of last 5 years (source: communitypreservation.org/trustfund)



Community Garden at the Mattera Conservation Area which opened in 2022.
(Photo Credit: Chuck Tirone)

Benefits of CPA

Dedicated Community Preservation Fund

Reading will have a dedicated Community Preservation (CP) Fund to support local open space protection, historic preservation, outdoor recreation, and community housing. Planned projects and emerging opportunities will not need to compete with other Town needs.

Mandated minimum distributions to Community projects

Funds will be allocated to each of the CPA project categories every year. The CPA requires that a minimum of 10% of annual revenues be reserved or spent for open space (including outdoor recreation), historic resources, and community housing. This leaves the bulk of total revenues each year to be used or reserved for projects in any of the three categories at the discretion of Town Meeting.

Community Preservation (CP) Funds will cover CPA Administrative Expenses

Up to 5% of annual CPA revenue may be budgeted for Community Preservation Committee (CPC) administrative purposes. Annual CPC operating costs will not impact the Town's operating budget.

Community Initiated Project Proposals

The CPC will use a formal process to solicit project applications from community organizations, government bodies, and individuals. The CPC will evaluate project applications and recommend the appropriation of CP Fund monies to Town Meeting each year. This ensures that project selection and funding is a community-based process.

We will not lose unspent funds

CP Fund income and balances not spent in any year are reserved for use in the future years. This creates a rolling and growing CP Fund for future investment in eligible projects.

Ability to pay debt service

Community Preservation Fund monies can be committed and reserved to pay the debt service on long-term borrowing for large qualifying expenditures.

This will allow the CP Fund to use anticipated future revenues to secure borrowing needed to finance large capital projects.

Opportunity to leverage other grants

An appropriation of CP Funds signals a commitment that may encourage funding from other sources. CP Funds can leverage grants, town appropriations, and private funds, making multi-source initiatives possible.

No more 'leaving money on the table'

The State's Community Preservation Trust Fund, capitalized by fees paid to the Registries of Deeds, will match local CPA revenues. Recent annual matches have ranged from a high of 43.84% (FY 2022) to a low of 16.87% (FY 2025). With CPA's approval by voters, registry fees that residents pay will come back to Reading after going to other CPA communities for over two decades.

Preserve and enhance Reading's quality of life

Projects funded through CPA will sustain and enhance the quality of life for Reading residents with an efficient mix of local and partial matching state funds, potentially lessening the size or frequency of future tax overrides. These resulting enrichments will ultimately lead to increased property values and an elevated sense of place.

CPA Costs & Constraints

There would be a CPA surcharge added to quarterly property tax bills

Property owners not qualifying for complete CPA exemptions would pay a modest CPA surcharge on each property tax bill.

Administrative Needs

There would be some administrative burden on the Assessors office in calculating surcharges and processing requests for income-based CPA exemptions. The town would mitigate some of this administrative work by combining this process with existing income-based tax exemptions. The CP Fund administrative budget can be used to pay for necessary software upgrades to facilitate this additional administrative work.

Once voters adopt CPA, its terms can only be altered or repealed by ballot referendum

Either Town Meeting or 5% of registered voters could place a referendum question on a future ballot to change CPA surcharge levels and/or exemptions.

CPA adoption cannot be repealed for five years

Repeal can only be accomplished by a ballot referendum. To date, over nearly two decades, no city or town that adopted CPA has repealed it, indicating that residents of adopting communities are satisfied with CPA's relative benefits and costs.



*Splash Pad
(Photo Credit: metrowestvisitors.org)*



*Basketball court in poor condition at Birch Meadow Recreation area.
(Photo Credit: Reading Recreation Department)*

State matching funds for Community Preservation

The Community Preservation Act guarantees cities and towns participating in the community preservation program a state match of at least five percent (5%) of what communities raise annually. The Commonwealth established the Community Preservation Trust Fund for this purpose.

On or before November 15 of each year, distributions are made from this Trust Fund to each city or town that imposed a surcharge for the fiscal year that ended on the preceding June 30.

Monies distributed from the Trust Fund come primarily from surcharges on fees charged for recording documents with Registries of Deeds or Land Court. It is, therefore, a redistribution of funds paid by residents across Massachusetts for recording deeds and related documents. The Trust Fund can also be credited with public or private gifts, grants or donations to the state for community preservation purposes, and other monies transferred to the Trust Fund by the state legislature.

Historically, these matches have ranged from 100% in the first years (34 communities received distributions in 2002) to as low as 16.87% in 2025 when 196 communities received distributions. But the match percentage has decreased over the last 5 years, resulting from a decrease in the recording fee surcharge due to the high mortgage rates. The match for FY 2025 was 16.87% with the 10 year average being 24.76%.

| Date of Distribution | Fund Distribution |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 10/15/2016 | 20.58% |
| 11/15/2017 | 17.20% |
| 11/15/2018 | 19.01% |
| 11/15/2019 | 23.90% |
| 11/15/2020 | 28.63% |
| 11/15/2021 | 43.84% |
| 11/15/2022 | 38.51% |
| 11/15/2023 | 21.02% |
| 11/15/2024 | 18.06% |
| 11/15/2025 | 16.87% |

Source:
<https://www.communitypreservation.org/trustfund>



Reading Town Hall (Photo Credit: Jayne Wellman)



Trail in Reading Town Forest

Committee's Recommendation to Town Meeting

The Committee believes the adoption of CPA would be enormously beneficial to Reading and its residents, and that its benefits far outweigh the costs. In our opinion, the sooner it is adopted, the better.

After extensive research and community outreach, we recommend that Reading Select Board authorize a warrant article for consideration at the Spring 2026 Reading Town Meeting, which if adopted, would place a CPA referendum on the November 2026 ballot.

The referendum ballot question will specify that:

- The CPA surcharge level shall be one percent (1%). We believe this surcharge level will minimize the burden on homeowners. It also aligns with historical spending levels on CPA eligible projects.
- Only residential property taxes will be subject to the CPA surcharge.
- Qualifying seniors and income-eligible residents shall be exempt.
- All other residential properties shall receive a CPA exemption for the first \$100,000 of assessed property value.
- Surcharge assessment and collection shall begin in FY2028.

See Appendix for sample Town Meeting Warrant Article and Motion, and sample ballot question.

Timeline and Next Steps

Winter 2026

- CPA Study Committee Report and Recommendation to the Select Board to authorize a warrant article for Spring Town Meeting.

Spring - Fall 2026

- Town Meeting approval of ballot question
- CPA campaign and outreach
- Minimum 60 days before election advise Secretary of State of ballot measure

Fall 2026 Election

- CPA adoption measure on the ballot

If ballot measure is successful:

Spring 2027

- Town meeting adopts Community Preservation By-law to enable creation of Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Spring - Fall 2027

- CPC established by Town Meeting bylaw;
- CPC drafts Community Preservation Plan

July 1, 2027 (FY 2028)

- CPA surcharge starts

Fall 2028

- CPC completes Community Preservation Plan, evaluates first round of project proposals, and makes recommendations to Town Meeting.
- Fall Town Meeting votes to approve CPC recommendations.

*Opposite Page
Camille's Clock
(Photo Credit: Barry Berman)*



Opportunities for Reading

Open Space & Outdoor Recreation

Reading supports responsible stewardship of its natural resources, including its aquifers, open spaces, forests and trees, farms, parks, rivers, wildlife habitat and views. Reading may exercise this stewardship through appropriate acquisition, regulation, mitigation and restoration strategies.

Definition:

“Open Space” is defined broadly by the CPA statute as: agricultural land; well fields, aquifers, recharge areas, and other watershed lands; grasslands, fields, or forest lands; fresh and salt water marshes and other wetlands; ocean, river, stream, lake, and pond frontage; beaches, dunes, and other coastal lands; scenic vistas; land for wildlife diversity or biodiversity or nature preserves.

“Outdoor Recreation” uses of open space are defined as including, but not limited to: community gardens; trails; non-commercial youth and adult sports; and parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields.

Allowed Activities

- Acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space, and land for recreational use.
- Rehabilitation or restoration of open space, if the open space was acquired or created with community preservation funds.
- Rehabilitation and restoration of land for recre-



ational use; unlike open space, there is no requirement that the land was acquired with community preservation funds.

Eligible Project Categories

Acquisition and Creation

- Acquire private property as permanent open space
- Rehabilitate brownfields by converting to open space
- Raze vacant, municipally-owned buildings to create permanent open fields
- Purchase permanent conservation or agricultural preservation restrictions to protect open space or farmland from future development
- Purchase easements to protect water supply recharge areas and other watershed lands
- Purchase privately-owned outdoor recreation facilities for municipal use (e.g. golf course)
- Convert existing structures such as railroad bed to recreational use (e.g. walking; bike trail)
- Convert underutilized municipal land to community gardens or dog parks
- Clean contaminated industrial land and convert to municipal ball fields or playgrounds

Preservation

- Remove invasive plant species from ponds and wetlands to protect wildlife habitats and open space from harm
- Install an irrigation system in a public park to prevent grass from dying
- Install new drainage in an existing athletic field to prevent deterioration from flooding

Rehabilitation

- Restore natural areas acquired with CPA funds to their natural state
- Seed, plant trees, landscape a permanent open space created by removal of building
- Restore unused walking trails to usable condition in forest land acquired with CPA funds
- Create recreational opportunities through brown-field restoration and/or redevelopment

*Stodder's Neck Dog Park, Hingham, MA
(Photo Credit: trustedhousesitters.com)*

Potential Projects for CPA Funding in Reading

Trail signage, improvements and expansion

Since 2010 Reading has created an online trail map accessed through the Town's website. It also built one new connecting trail, the Aberjona River Headwater trail, in the center of Town. However, the town is missing key links among trails. CPA funds could help acquire either the land or the easements to complete these paths or expand others.

Forest and conservation land expansion

Reading's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) targets unprotected land adjoining existing open space as the most valuable properties to protect, allowing us to expand trail networks, as well as protect wildlife and the environment. Reading was able to acquire a conservation restriction adjacent to Arcadia Avenue that connects to the Longwood Conservation Areas as well as thirteen acres on Haverhill Street to connect to Timberneck Swamp. CPA funds could help acquire this land when it becomes available.

River protection

Another valuable resource for both recreation and conservation is the Ipswich and the Aberjona Rivers. Although some of this land is town-owned and other land is protected with conservation restrictions, there are segments that are unprotected and would be valuable additions. Additionally, there are opportunities to expand and enhance conservation and recreation similar to the Maillet, Sommes & Morgan conservation area.

Accessible trails and playgrounds

Reading has identified a number of its scenic trails and playgrounds that could be made either handicap-friendly or fully ADA compliant. Although volunteers have done an admirable job of creating our walking trail system, they don't have the expertise or equipment to create accessible trails. Additionally, improvements to make playgrounds accessible and more inclusive is needed. CPA funds could provide funding to increase and expand accessibility.



*Town Forest Alligator Alley Boardwalk
(Photo Credit: Will Finch)*

Birch Meadow fields and playgrounds

The Town has been implementing a multi-phase re-imagining of the Birch Meadow Park fields and playgrounds. CPA funds could support future phases.

Invasive species control

Invasive species are disrupting native ecosystems and habitats leading to a decline in local biodiversity and the overall health of the ecosystem of Reading's open spaces and conservation areas. CPA funds could help restore disrupted and threatened areas.

Pickleball, basketball, and tennis courts

Reading is seeking to fund or improve courts for pickleball, basketball and tennis. CPA funds could be used to fund these initiatives.

Improve access and parking to open space areas

CPA funds could be used to provide better access to Reading's open spaces similar to what the Town self-funded in the purchase of the Grove Street lot to provide access to the Town Forest.



Old Central Fire Station on Pleasant Street
(Photo Credit: Sarah Brukilacchio)



Old South Church
(Photo Credit: Tony LaVerde)



Parker Tavern
(Photo Credit: Reading Antiquarian Society)

Historic Preservation

The Town could establish a fund to provide low interest loans and/or grants for ADA improvements, fit-out, or facade improvement to encourage preservation of historic properties. Income from the Community Preservation Act could provide funds for a loan or grant program.

Definition:

The statute defines an “Historic Resource” as a building, structure, vessel, real property, artifact, or document that is either listed or eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places, or determined by the local Historical Commission to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture, or culture of the city or town.

Allowed activities:

Acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources are all allowed activities. Funds can be used to rehabilitate or restore municipally owned historic properties that were acquired prior to Reading's adoption of the CPA. Funds can also be used to rehabilitate or restore privately owned historic resources if doing so serves a clearly defined public purpose, such as providing or improving public access to places of historical significance to the town. Rehabilitation can include ADA-compliance measures and other capital improvements needed for properties to meet building codes or functionally perform the intended use of the property.

Examples of allowed activities:

Acquisition

- Acquire a historic resource
- Provide a match for federal or state grants
- Purchase a preservation easement to protect façades or other historic features
- Restore historic buildings to reverse inappropriate alterations

- Restore archival documents
- Conduct historical or archaeological surveys necessary for preservation projects
- Provide grants to acquire or preserve a historic property in private non-profit ownership (with a preservation restriction)

Restoration

- Restore historic landscapes
- Restore municipal historic structures such as town halls, libraries, commons, parks, or cemeteries
- Rehabilitate signage or markers at historic sites
- Adaptively reuse historic sites such as fire houses, town halls, mills, police stations, or schools for community housing or another municipal use through rehabilitation. Provide new utilities and other site work necessary for a preservation.
- Capital improvements to historic resources necessary to comply with building codes
- Mitigate environmental contamination at historic sites
- Provide accessibility at historic sites, such as elevators, ramps, restrooms, etc.

Potential Projects for CPA Funding

Rehabilitating and Restoring Places of Historic Significance

Reading's Parker Tavern, the Belltower at Old South Church, and the Clock Tower at the Joshua Eaton School are examples of buildings or artifacts historically significant to the Town. CPA funds can be used to rehabilitate or restore these and similar buildings or components.

Renovation and Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings

Several buildings of historic significance to Reading have been adapted and creatively reused in ways that support our town's changing needs and enhance the public good. The historic Central Fire Station on Pleasant St, for example, was transformed into the home of the Reading Senior Center many years ago. With the Senior Center

being reconstructed near Burbank Arena, the old Fire Station will be undergoing a new transformation and CPA funds could be used to rehabilitate it as part of a larger plan for its reuse.

Preservation of Historic Cemeteries

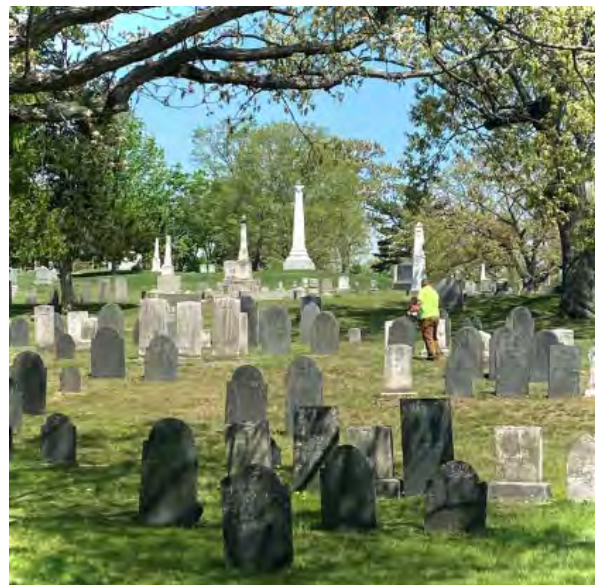
Reading is home to historic Laurel Hill Cemetery established in 1737. It contains numerous graves from the Colonial and Revolutionary war era. CPA funds could be used to repair dozens of damaged and displaced headstones and grave markers and to restore and preserve the cast-iron fences. Town funds were recently used to replace curbing at the cemetery. CPA funds could have been used freeing up town funds for other worthy projects.

Preservation of Town Monuments, Memorials and Markers

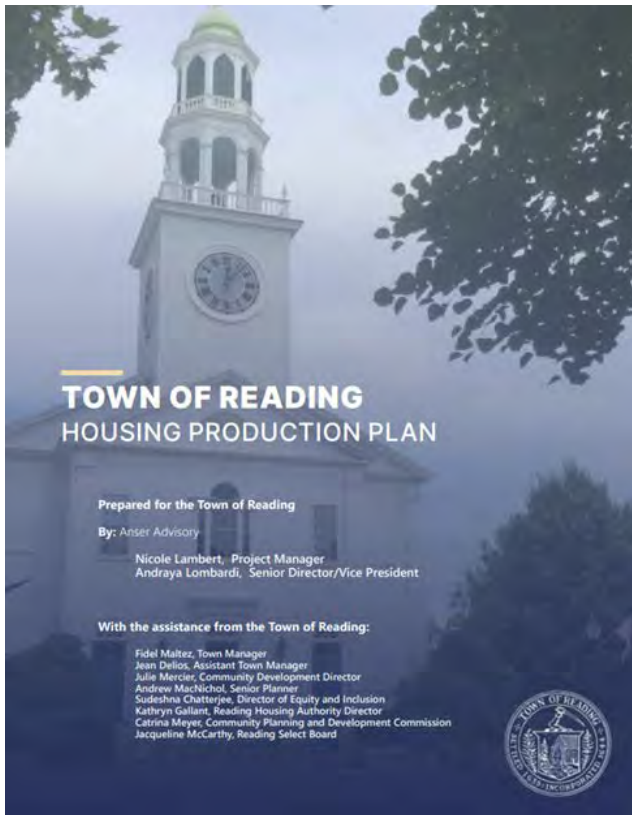
The Laurel Hill Cemetery contains numerous veteran monuments including a prominent Civil War Memorial dedicated in 1895, and later memorials for veterans of World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. CPA funds could be used to undertake any needed restoration projects.

Improved Planning for Historic Preservation

Despite Reading's rich and important history, only a small portion of the town's historic resources have been inventoried or preserved. Other towns have used CPA funds to undertake such inventories, and Reading could choose to do the same.



Laurel Hill Cemetery, Reading, MA
(Photo Credit: readingma.gov)



Nearly 30% Reading families are cost burdened, meaning these families are spending over 30% of their income on housing costs.



CPA funded affordable homes being developed for families by a nearby housing authority (Rendering Credit: Dietz & Company Architects)

Affordable Housing

Definition:

'Community Housing' is defined by the Act as housing for persons or families earning up to 100% or less of the area-wide median income adjusted for household size, using limits set annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. In Reading's case, we equate 'Community Housing' to 'Affordable Housing'.

Allowed activities:

Activities allowed for Affordable Housing include:

- a) The acquisition, creation, preservation and support of affordable housing.
- b) The rehabilitation or restoration of affordable housing, provided the housing was acquired or created with CP Fund monies.
- c) Appropriations to the Reading Affordable Housing Trust Fund created by Reading pursuant to MGL c. 44, § 55C; however, the Trust may expend monies from the CP Fund only for affordable housing purposes described in sections a) and b) above.

Potential Projects for CPA Funding

For additional information, please refer to [Massachusetts Housing Partnership \(MHP\) guidebook for CPA](#)

Capacity Building

Part-time planning staff hire

Reading Affordable Housing Trust is entirely volunteer run. The Trust meets once a month and is often dependent on assistance from short-staffed Community and Economic Development Department to jump start and sustain its initiatives. CPA funds can be used to hire staff dedicated at least part-time to housing issues. The staff will have the benefit of recommendations and implementation strategies from the 2023 Housing Production Plan.

Procuring professional services

CPA funds could be used to procure professional services to prepare grants; provide local matching funds necessary to secure state or federal funding for housing development projects; or help promote rezoning efforts for flexible zoning, smart growth overlap districts through Ch. 40R, and affordable housing development on nonconforming lots.

Pre-development Activities

The Affordable Housing Trust may request CPA funds to finance pre-development activities. These activities may be needed to determine project feasibility, plan for the number of housing units to be built or preserved and create preliminary site plans for the best use of an entire parcel. It may be appropriate to spend funds on pre-development activities for projects that turn out, after adequate investigation, to be infeasible. Pre-development activities, also referred to as “soft costs”, are eligible to receive CPA funds and may include the following:

- Appraisals
- Preliminary Environmental Feasibility Studies
- Preliminary Financial Feasibility Analysis
- Legal Costs
- Permit Processing Fees
- Costs related to Request for Proposals (RFP)
- Site Planning and Design Studies
- Surveys
- Technical Review of Development Proposals

Housing Production

Land purchase:

CPA funds can be used to acquire property for the purpose of creating affordable housing and for funding development on donated land or acquired tax-title properties. Subsidizing land costs through pre-acquisition of buildable land can be effective to enhance feasible development possibilities and to provide more control over design and location of development. A significant advantage to acquire real property with CPA Funds is that the purchase is exempt from MGL Ch 30B, which requires a municipality to seek property through a bid or RFP process.

Tannerville Redevelopment

CPA funds could be employed to redevelop Tannerville replacing the existing two story walk-ups with a three or four story elevator building so all apartments would be accessible allowing residents to age in place. A new building would also have expanded community amenities and services, and could serve as a cooling center or hub during climate emergencies. A reconfiguration of the site would also allow for an increase in the number of affordable apartments at the site expanding affordable housing in Reading.

Small Homes for Seniors and Families

The Reading Housing Authority (RHA) could look to develop with CPA funding small homes with unit sizes ranging from 600 sq ft to 1,200 sq ft, targeting seniors who choose to age in place, young couples with children, single-parent households, and disabled residents on Town-owned parcels allowing the Town to leverage significant other grants and funding for such an initiative. Economies of scale could be achieved by clustering a group of smaller units with shared amenities, and by leveraging prefabricated construction processes to minimize waste and speed up construction times.

Scattered Site Family Development

RHA currently owns various sites across Town that are under utilized, and could be expanded to provide additional affordable housing units. CPA funds could help with pre-development activities allowing RHA to access competitive state funds to expand housing options for income qualifying families.



Cluster Homes | Ross Chapin Architects



*Tannerville Public Housing, Reading
(Photo Credit: Reading Housing Authority)*

Housing Preservation & Improvement

Reading could lose some of its affordable housing stock in the future, if the units no longer meet the needs of moderate and lower income residents, including seniors and special needs populations. For units to count as part of the Subsidized Housing Inventory, they must be subject to use restriction or resale controls to preserve their affordability for a minimum of 15 years from the date of subsidy approval or completion of rehabilitation. Some eligible activities include the following:

Handicapped Accessibility Improvements

Provide grants or loans to provide accessibility improvements to allow qualifying disabled or elderly occupants to continue to live safely in their homes.

Housing Rehabilitation Programs

Offer funds for improvements, primarily code-related, to owner occupied or investor-owned homes occupied by qualifying households in exchange for deed restrictions.

Improvements to Housing Authority Properties

Make improvements to Reading Housing Authority (RHA) properties or other subsidized, deed restricted properties. These cannot be routine maintenance items.

Preserve "Expiring Use" Properties

Refinance properties where affordability restrictions are due to lapse to maintain units as affordable, instead of allowing the units to convert to market prices.

For more information on resources directed to expiring use units, see websites for DHCD (www.mass.gov/dhcd) and MassHousing (www.masshousing.com).



*RHA Family Housing Oakland Road
(Photo Credit: Reading Assessor's Office)*



*RHA family Housing - Summer Avenue and Main Street
(Photo Credit: Reading Assessor's Office)*

Financial Assistance

Funds may also be used to provide subsidies directly to eligible households to lower the cost of affordable housing. Eligible activities in this category include the following:

Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance

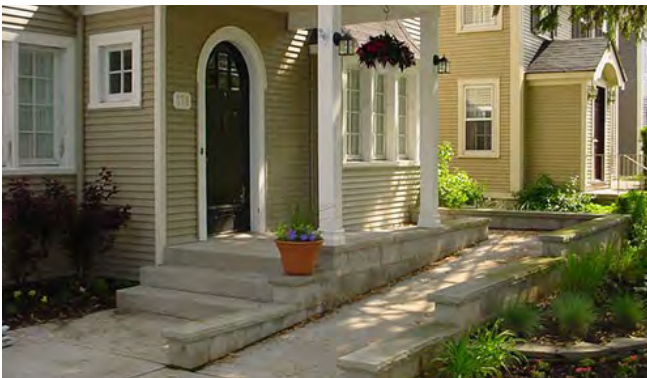
Provide financial support to first-time homebuyers to help cover the down payment and closing costs in exchange for deed restrictions to preserve affordability.

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)

Offer a form of matched savings where qualifying participants make a contribution into a savings account that is matched at a ratio by another entity, such as a non-profit organization, with public and/or private funding to support home purchase.

Interest Rate Subsidies

Reduce the mortgage interest rate to make monthly payments more affordable to first-time home buyers or those who qualify for age-restricted developments. These subsidies could be used in tandem with other state programs such as the Soft Second Loan Program.



*Accessibility retrofits to older single family homes
Photo Credit: IDEA Center of Buffalo, NY*

Mortgage Subsidies

Provide a subsidy to fill the gap between the purchase price of an existing home or condominium and the affordable price based on the formula established under the state's Local Initiative Program (LIP), requiring that the purchase meet all LIP requirements including the acceptance of a deed restriction to preserve affordability.

Rental Assistance

The 30% rule -- that a household should spend no more than 30% of its income on housing costs -- still remains a reliable indicator of housing affordability. CPA Funds can be used to offer direct assistance in the form of rental vouchers that subsidize the difference between market rents and what a household can afford to pay, based on spending no more than 30% of one's household income on housing.

Support for other rental expenses

Provide grants or deferred loans, to qualifying households to help them defray costs related to accessing rental opportunities including security deposits, moving costs or utility bills. CPA funding could be provided through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Technical Assistance

Fund technical assistance to property owners to help them create affordable accessory, or "in-law" units.



CPA Adoption Process

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Northern Bank

O'SULLIVAN ARCHITECTS

Community Preservation Act Adoption Process

The following is a comprehensive description of the CPA provisions for adoption by local communities. A more detailed perspective on these provisions, as well as information regarding provisions not described here, can be found in the most recent Department of Revenue Information Guideline Release (IGR) on the Community Preservation Act ([IGR No. 19-14 dated December 2019](#)).

The adoption of CPA is ultimately decided by the voters during a state or municipal election. There are two ways to enable the referendum:

Acceptance by Legislative Body

A Warrant Article to place the CPA question on the next election ballot is considered at Town Meeting. CPA adoption requires approval of both Town Meeting and the electorate at the next regular municipal or state election, as specified in MGL Ch. 44B §3.

Acceptance by Petition

A referendum question seeking acceptance of the Act, approval of a specific surcharge percentage and approval of any allowable exemptions may be placed on the ballot by petition. The petition must be signed by at least five percent of the registered voters – in Reading’s case, approximately 1,058 voters – and filed with the Board of Registrars of Voters. The Board must certify the signatures within seven days of filing.

The Committee is recommending that Reading follow the Legislative Body route by filing a Warrant Article for Spring 2026 Town Meeting.

Legislative Body (Town Meeting Action)

A majority of Town Meeting members must first approve a specific proposal – the Warrant Article Motion – to present to the voters.

Required Action::

Town Meeting must vote to accept G.L. Ch. 44B Chapters 3-7 and approve the amount of the surcharge. In Reading’s case, the Committee is recommending a **1%** surcharge.



View of the bridge at the Maillet, Sommes & Morgan Conservation Land, off Lowell Street (Photo Credit: Martha Moore)

Discretionary Actions:

Town Meeting may include any or all of the following surcharge exemptions in the proposal to be presented to the voters:

An exemption for property owned and occupied as a domicile by a person who would qualify for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing in the community. The Committee is proposing that this exemption be adopted to eliminate the any financial impact to these households.

An exemption for Class Three, Commercial, and Class Four Industrial property if the community annually adopts a higher tax rate for those classes. Reading has a 1.14 split tax rate between residential and commercial or industrial properties, and therefore the Study Committee is proposing an exemption for commercial or industrial properties to ensure we do not negatively impact the Town's emerging commercial activity.

An exemption for \$100,000 of the assessed valuation of Class One, Residential parcels. We are proposing the adoption of this exemption.

*Opposite Page - Main Street
(Photo Credit: Unknown)*

Adoption Process (continued)

Voter Action

After Town Meeting accepts the CPA and adopts a surcharge plan, the acceptance referendum must be placed before the voters on the ballot of the next regularly scheduled municipal or state election: in this case, it would be the State election held on November of 2026.

If the next election is a state election – as is the case here – the Secretary of State must receive at least 60 days notice of the referendum.

Question form

The referendum question presented to the voters must read as follows:

Shall Reading accept sections 3 to 7, inclusive of chapter 44B of the General Laws, as approved by its legislative body?

Question Approval

The question is approved and the statute accepted if a majority of the voters voting on the referendum question vote “yes.”

Putting the Act into Effect

Effective Date

A community accepting the statute at an election held before the actual tax commitment for a fiscal year is made may impose the surcharge beginning in that fiscal year, or in the fiscal year that begins the July 1 after the election, as specified in the acceptance vote of the legislative body. In Reading's case, the surcharge would begin in the next fiscal year (FY 2028), i.e., July 1, 2027.

Notification of Acceptance

The Town Clerk must notify the State Data Management/Technical Assistance Bureau if the statute is accepted. The notification should be made as soon as practicable after the referendum election, but it must be received not later than September 15 of the fiscal year following the close of the fiscal year the surcharge is first assessed in order for the community to receive distributions from the State trust fund.

Amended Acceptance

A city or town may amend the surcharge percentage and exemptions. Amendment is by majority vote of the legislative body and by referendum. MGL Ch. 44B §16(a).

Revocation of Acceptance

Acceptance may be revoked, but the city or town must wait until at least five years after the referendum passes to do so. Revocation is by majority vote of the legislative body and by referendum. MGL Ch. 44B §16(b). The surcharge continues to be assessed, however, until all obligations incurred and funded by the city or town from Community Preservation Fund revenues are paid.

Appendix A

Reading CPA Flyer on next page



What is the Community Preservation Act?

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, develop outdoor recreational facilities and create affordable housing. 201 municipalities in Massachusetts have adopted CPA, which allows funds raised by the local community through a small surcharge to the tax levy to receive additional funds from the State.



Why should Reading consider adopting CPA?

- ◆ CPA can create funding for projects that protect and restore our parks, trails, playgrounds, and historic town buildings.
- ◆ CPA can fund affordable housing production and preservation for low income households including seniors, families, veterans, and first time homebuyers.
- ◆ CPA brings in additional STATE FUNDS: Reading gets an immediate return on local investment.
- ◆ CPA gives Reading an edge for GRANTS: It would give us the local funding source required by many grant programs.
- ◆ CPA is about creating value for today and tomorrow by creating space for recreation, protecting our environment, preserving our historic character, and furthering affordable housing goals.

POTENTIAL CPA PROJECTS IN READING

OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Birch Meadow Phase II
- Pickleball construction
- Playing field improvements
- Trail completion, trail accessibility improvements
- Remove invasive plant species from local habitats
- Restore natural areas and underused walking trails
- Expand community gardens
- Improve access and parking to Reading's open space areas
- Upgrade Tennis and Basketball Courts

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Renovation of Parker Tavern
- Renovation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings (like Pleasant Street Center)
- Restoration of Town monuments, memorials, markers and historic buildings
- Improve historical preservation planning and archives

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Preservation improvements to Reading Housing Authority property
- Pre-development activities and feasibility studies
- New affordable housing development

34 For more information reach out to the Reading Community Preservation Act Study Committee:

<https://www.readingma.gov/CPA>

Appendix B

Note: This is a DRAFT Warrant Article, Town Meeting Motion and Ballot Measure, all of which reflect the Study Committee's recommendations to adopt the Community Preservation Act, subject to the review of Town Counsel.

Town Meeting Warrant Article

To see if the Town will accept Sections 3 to 7, inclusive, of Chapter 44B of the General Laws, otherwise known as the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act, by approving a surcharge on real property for the purposes permitted by said Act, including the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space, the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources, the acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of land for recreational use, the acquisition, creation, preservation and support of community housing, and the rehabilitation and restoration of such open space and community housing that is acquired or created as provided under said Act; to determine the amount of such surcharge on real property as a percentage of the annual real estate tax levy against real property and the fiscal year in which such surcharge shall commence; to determine whether the Town will accept any of the exemptions from such surcharge permitted under Section 3(e) of said Act; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Meeting Motion

I move that the Town hereby accepts Sections 3 to 7, inclusive, of Chapter 44B of the General Laws, otherwise known as the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act, by approving a surcharge on real property for the purposes permitted by said Act, including the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space, the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources, the acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of land for recreational use, the acquisition, creation, preservation and support of community housing, and the rehabilitation and restoration of such open space and community housing that is acquired or created as provided under said Act; that the amount of such surcharge on real property shall be 1% of the annual real estate tax levy against real property commencing in fiscal year 2028; and that the Town hereby accepts the following exemptions from such surcharge permitted under Section 3(e) of said Act: property owned and occupied as a domicile by any person who qualifies for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing in the Town, as defined in Section 2 of said Act; class three, commercial, and class four, industrial, properties as defined in G.L. c.59, §2A; and \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of residential real property.

Ballot Measure

Shall the Town of Reading accept sections 3 to 7 inclusive, of Chapter 44B of the General Laws, as approved by its legislative body, a summary of which appears below?

Sections 3 to 7 of Chapter 44B of the General Laws of Massachusetts, also known as the Community Preservation Act, establish a dedicated funding source to acquire and preserve open space, parks and conservation land, protect public drinking water supplies and scenic areas, protect farmland and forests from future development, restore and preserve historic properties, and help meet local families' housing needs. In Reading, the Community Preservation Act will be funded by an additional excise of 1% on the annual tax levy on real property to be assessed beginning in fiscal year 2028, and by annual distributions provided by the state. (Continued on next page)

If approved, the following will be exempt from the surcharge: property owned and occupied as a domicile by any person who qualifies for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing in the Town, as defined in Section 2 of said Act; class three, commercial, and class four, industrial, properties as defined in G.L. c.59, §2A; and \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of residential real property. A taxpayer receiving a regular property tax abatement or exemption will also receive a pro rata reduction in surcharge.

Upon acceptance by the voters, a Community Preservation Committee will be established by town by-law, composed of local citizens, to study community preservation resources, possibilities and needs, and to make annual recommendations to Town Meeting on the use of the funds. All expenditures must be approved by Town Meeting.

Appendix C

Statewide CPA Community Information

| City/Town Name | Date Adopted | Current Surcharge | Current Exemptions |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------|---|
| Abington | 4/30/2016 | 1.50% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Acton | 11/5/2002 | 1.50% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Acushnet | 4/7/2003 | 1.50% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Agawam | 11/6/2001 | 1% | Low income |
| Amesbury | 11/7/2023 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Amherst | 4/3/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Aquinnah | 5/9/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Arlington | 11/4/2014 | 1.50% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Ashland | 5/7/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Ayer | 4/23/2001 | 3% | Low income |
| Barnstable | 11/2/2004 | 3% | None |
| Becket | 5/17/2008 | 1.50% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Bedford | 3/10/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Belchertown | 5/16/2005 | 1.50% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Belmont | 11/2/2010 | 1.50% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Berlin | 11/6/2018 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Beverly | 11/6/2012 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Billerica | 11/8/2016 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Boston | 11/8/2016 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Bourne | 4/6/2005 | 3% | None |
| Boxborough | 11/4/2014 | 1% | Low income |
| Boxford | 5/15/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Boylston | 11/8/2022 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Braintree | 4/2/2002 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Brewster | 5/17/2005 | 3% | None |
| Bridgewater | 4/23/2005 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----|---|
| Brookline | 5/4/2021 | 1% | Low income |
| Cambridge | 11/6/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Canton | 11/6/2012 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Carlisle | 5/22/2001 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Carver | 4/22/2006 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Chatham | 5/16/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Chelmsford | 4/3/2001 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Chelsea | 11/8/2016 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Chilmark | 4/25/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Cohasset | 4/7/2001 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Concord | 11/2/2004 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Conway | 4/15/2004 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Dartmouth | 4/1/2002 | 2% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Deerfield | 5/7/2007 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Dennis | 5/10/2005 | 3% | None |
| Dighton | 4/10/2010 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Dracut | 5/7/2001 | 2% | Low income |
| Dunstable | 5/15/2006 | 3% | Low income |
| Duxbury | 3/24/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| East Longmeadow | 4/11/2006 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Eastham | 5/17/2005 | 3% | None |
| Easthampton | 11/6/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Easton | 4/24/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Edgartown | 4/14/2005 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Egremont | 5/13/2025 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Essex | 5/14/2007 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Fairhaven | 4/4/2005 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Fall River | 11/6/2012 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Falmouth | 5/17/2005 | 3% | None |
| Framingham | 11/3/2020 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------|----|---|
| Franklin | 11/3/2020 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Georgetown | 5/14/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Gloucester | 11/4/2008 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Goshen | 5/5/2007 | 3% | Low income |
| Gosnold | 11/2/2010 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Grafton | 5/6/2002 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Granville | 4/14/2008 | 2% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Great Barrington | 11/6/2012 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Greenfield | 11/3/2020 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Groton | 11/2/2004 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Groveland | 5/3/2004 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Hadley | 11/2/2004 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Hamilton | 5/12/2005 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Hampden | 5/7/2001 | 1% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Hanover | 11/2/2004 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Hanson | 5/17/2008 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Harvard | 4/3/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Harwich | 5/17/2005 | 3% | None |
| Hatfield | 11/7/2006 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Hingham | 4/28/2001 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Holliston | 5/22/2001 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Holyoke | 11/8/2016 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Hopedale | 11/3/2020 | 1% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Hopkinton | 5/21/2001 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Hubbardston | 11/7/2006 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Hudson | 5/14/2007 | 1% | None |
| Hull | 11/8/2016 | 2% | Low income |
| Kingston | 4/23/2005 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Lakeville | 4/4/2022 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Lancaster | 11/3/2020 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------|----|---|
| Lee | 11/3/2020 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Lenox | 11/7/2006 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Leverett | 4/28/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Lexington | 3/6/2006 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Lincoln | 11/5/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Littleton | 5/12/2007 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Longmeadow | 6/6/2006 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Lowell | 11/5/2019 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, commercial |
| Malden | 11/3/2015 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Manchester | 5/17/2005 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Marion | 5/31/2005 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Marshfield | 4/28/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Mashpee | 5/7/2005 | 2% | None |
| Mattapoisett | 11/7/2006 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Maynard | 5/1/2006 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, commercial |
| Medford | 11/3/2015 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Medway | 5/7/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Mendon | 11/5/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Middleborough | 11/2/2010 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Middleton | 11/2/2004 | 1% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Millis | 11/7/2006 | 1% | Low income |
| Milton | 11/3/2020 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Monson | 11/7/2006 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Nahant | 4/24/2004 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Nantucket | 4/3/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, commercial |
| Natick | 11/8/2022 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Needham | 11/2/2004 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| New Bedford | 11/4/2014 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Newburyport | 11/5/2002 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Newton | 11/6/2001 | 1% | None |

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------|----|---|
| Norfolk | 5/1/2001 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| North Andover | 3/6/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Northampton | 11/8/2005 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Northborough | 11/2/2004 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Northbridge | 5/15/2018 | 1% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Northfield | 11/4/2008 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Norwell | 3/16/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Norwood | 11/8/2016 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Oak Bluffs | 4/14/2005 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Orleans | 5/17/2005 | 3% | None |
| Peabody | 11/6/2001 | 1% | None |
| Pelham | 5/7/2011 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Pembroke | 11/7/2006 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Pepperell | 4/25/2022 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Phillipston | 5/7/2007 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Pittsfield | 11/8/2016 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Plainville | 11/6/2018 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Plymouth | 5/11/2002 | 2% | None |
| Plympton | 5/17/2008 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Provincetown | 5/5/2004 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Quincy | 11/7/2006 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Randolph | 4/5/2005 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Rehoboth | 4/6/2009 | 1% | Low income |
| Rockland | 11/8/2016 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Rockport | 4/16/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Rowley | 5/8/2001 | 3% | Low income |
| Royalston | 11/4/2008 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Salem | 11/6/2012 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Sandwich | 5/5/2005 | 2% | None |
| Scituate | 3/30/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----|---|
| Seekonk | 4/6/2009 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Sharon | 11/2/2004 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Sheffield | 11/5/2024 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Shelburne | 11/8/2022 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Shirley | 5/2/2023 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Shrewsbury | 11/3/2020 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Shutesbury | 11/4/2008 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Somerset | 11/6/2012 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Somerville | 11/6/2012 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Southampton | 5/7/2001 | 3% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Southborough | 5/12/2003 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Southwick | 11/5/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Springfield | 11/8/2016 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Stockbridge | 5/20/2002 | 3% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Stoughton | 4/8/2008 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Stow | 5/15/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Sturbridge | 4/19/2001 | 3% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Sudbury | 3/25/2002 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, commercial |
| Sunderland | 11/2/2010 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Swampscott | 11/5/2024 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Swansea | 11/4/2008 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Templeton | 5/7/2007 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Tewksbury | 4/1/2006 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Tisbury | 4/19/2005 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Townsend | 11/5/2024 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Truro | 5/10/2005 | 3% | None |
| Tyngsborough | 5/8/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Upton | 5/5/2003 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Waltham | 11/8/2005 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Wareham | 4/2/2002 | 3% | First \$100,000 - residential |

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------|----|---|
| Watertown | 11/8/2016 | 2% | Low income |
| Wayland | 4/24/2001 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Wellesley | 11/5/2002 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Wellfleet | 5/2/2005 | 3% | None |
| Wenham | 5/7/2005 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| West Boylston | 4/3/2007 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| West Bridgewater | 4/5/2008 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| West Newbury | 5/1/2006 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| West Springfield | 11/4/2008 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| West Stockbridge | 6/29/2020 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| West Tisbury | 4/14/2005 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Westborough | 11/8/2022 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Westfield | 11/5/2002 | 1% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Westford | 5/1/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Weston | 5/5/2001 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Westport | 3/11/2002 | 2% | None |
| Weymouth | 11/8/2005 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Whately | 11/4/2008 | 3% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Whitman | 11/3/2020 | 1% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Wilbraham | 11/2/2004 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Williamstown | 5/14/2002 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential |
| Winchester | 11/5/2024 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Worcester | 11/8/2022 | 2% | Low income, first \$100,000 - residential, first \$100,000 - commercial |
| Wrentham | 11/8/2016 | 1% | First \$100,000 - residential |
| Yarmouth | 5/2/2005 | 3% | First \$100,000 - residential |

Appendix D

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

| DEFINITIONS (G.L. c. 44B, § 2) | OPEN SPACE | HISTORIC RESOURCES | RECREATIONAL LAND | COMMUNITY HOUSING |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| ACQUISITION Obtain property interest by gift, purchase, devise, grant, rental, rental purchase, lease or otherwise. Only includes eminent domain taking as provided by G.L. c. 44B | 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 Yes | 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 Yes | 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. Yes | 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 Yes |
| CREATION To bring into being or cause to exist. <i>Setidean v. City of Newton</i> , 452 Mass. 472 (2008) | Yes | | Yes | Yes |
| PRESERVATION Protect personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| SUPPORT Provide grants, loans, rental assistance, security deposits, interest-rate write downs or other forms of assistance directly to individuals and families who are eligible for community housing, or to entity that owns, operates or manages such housing, for the purpose of making housing affordable | | | | Yes, includes funding for community's affordable housing trust |
| REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION Make capital improvements, or extraordinary repairs to make assets functional for intended use, including improvements to comply with federal, state or local building or access codes or federal standards for rehabilitation of historic properties | Yes if acquired or created with CP funds | Yes | Yes | Yes if acquired or created with CP funds |

CPA FOR READING

FEBRUARY 2026

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE READING COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT STUDY COMMITTEE:

Joe Carnahan, Chair, Finance Committee Designee
Sarah Brukilacchio, Vice Chair, Historical Commission Designee
Carlo Bacci, Select Board Designee
Margaret Donnelly-Moran, Reading Housing Authority Designee
Kate Kaminer, Recreation Committee Designee
Sandy Matathia, Resident-at-large
Martha Moore, Conservation Commission Designee

with support from:

Katie Gallant, Executive Director Reading Housing Authority

