

TM26-4

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Appendix I



TOWN OF CONCORD
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
141 KEYES ROAD, CONCORD, MA 01742
TEL. (978) 318-3290 FAX (978) 318-3291

PLANNING & LAND MGT
TOWN OF CONCORD, MA

Application for CPC Funding

Due no later than 12:00 noon on **Friday, September 19, 2025**

Applicant*: Town of Concord - Division of Natural Resources

Federal Tax Id. No.*: 046-002-121

Co-Applicant (if applicable): _____

Project Name*: Conservation Fund Project

Location/Address (if applicable): _____

Purpose*: (Select all that apply)

- Open Space
- Community Housing
- Historic Preservation
- Recreation

Project Budget*:

Amount of CPC Funds Requested: \$ 500,000

Amount from Other Funding Sources: \$ _____

Total Project Budget: \$ _____

(If multi-year project, note current phase only)

Please check which of the following is included with this Application:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One Paragraph Project Summary * | _____ Architectural plans, site plans, photographs (if appropriate) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map (if applicable) | _____ Copy of IRS determination letter (Non-profit Organizations only)* |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrative * | _____ Completed W-9 Form (Non-profits only)* |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Selection Criteria and Needs Assessment | _____ Copy of Audit or most recent Financial Information (Non-profits only)* |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Detailed Project Budget * | _____ Letters of Support (if any) |
| _____ Feasibility Assessment | |
| _____ Statement of Sustainability (if applicable) | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timeline * | |

Project Contact Person*: Delia Kaye, Natural Resources Director

Project Contact Address*: 141 Keyes Road, Concord MA 01742

Project Contact Phone*: 978-318-3285 Email*: dkaye@concordma.gov

Authorized Signature of Applicant*: Delia Kaye

Authorized Signature of Property Owner* (if different): Kerry A. Sofle...

* Required

For Historic Preservation Projects Only – please check the box below left and acknowledge:

- I/We have read the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and understand that planning for and execution of this project must meet these standards.

Project Summary

The Town of Concord - Division of Natural Resources is requesting CPA funding in the amount of \$500,000 to establish a Conservation Fund to protect water resources and biodiversity, and to protect agricultural lands, goals identified in the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Conservation lands may be permanently protected through fee-simple ownership or through a conservation restriction (CR). Conservation lands may be further restricted under an agricultural preservation restriction (APR), to preserve farmland use in perpetuity. Funding is requested from the Open Space category.

Narrative

Concord's identity is deeply tied to its natural and rural character—from its extensive conserved lands and working farms, to the rich natural assets and recreational opportunities they provide. Open space and natural resources are central to the town's history and to the literary and naturalist traditions that grew from this landscape, inspiring Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Louisa May Alcott, and other transcendentalist authors. In the community survey for *Envision Concord – A Bridge to 2030*, residents noted open space and natural resources as the #1 category that contributes to the quality of life and health in Concord.

Concord values both the natural and cultural importance of its open spaces. Its conservation lands and trails are cherished by residents and visitors alike. The Town offers plentiful opportunities for walking, hiking, running, nature study, and farming. Protecting lands that sustain wildlife and ecological processes is a priority, recognizing that unfragmented natural areas are essential for biodiversity. Concord's abundance of natural resources is remarkable for a community so close to Boston. Concord has the highest density of documented rare species records (about 2 per square mile) of any town between Plymouth and the Sturbridge area. The main reasons are likely the presence of large, intact natural areas; the major three rivers; and the abundance of early observers studying plants and animals here from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Protecting this well-documented and deeply researched part of New England for all species, as well as providing passive recreation to the public, is essential to Concord's heritage.

In early 2004, when the Town first began to seriously investigate the Community Preservation Act, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) voted unanimously to recommend that Town Meeting adopt the CPA. One argument in favor of adopting the CPA was that the Town would become eligible to receive a significant match from the Commonwealth by funding its Conservation Fund through the CPA. The NRC also expressed interest in finding creative ways to preserve and protect parcels of land through cooperative efforts for the purposes of affordable housing, recreation, historic preservation, and conservation.

The *2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)* identifies an Open Space Framework consisting of three areas of significant conservation interest: large natural areas, large agricultural areas, and wildlife and water protection corridors (Figure 1). Unprotected parcels within any large natural areas, large agricultural areas, or wildlife and water corridors in the 2015 Open Space Framework are considered to be areas of conservation and recreation interest. The chance to preserve remaining undeveloped parcels—large or small—comes only once. Once converted to other uses, these lands are lost to open space forever.

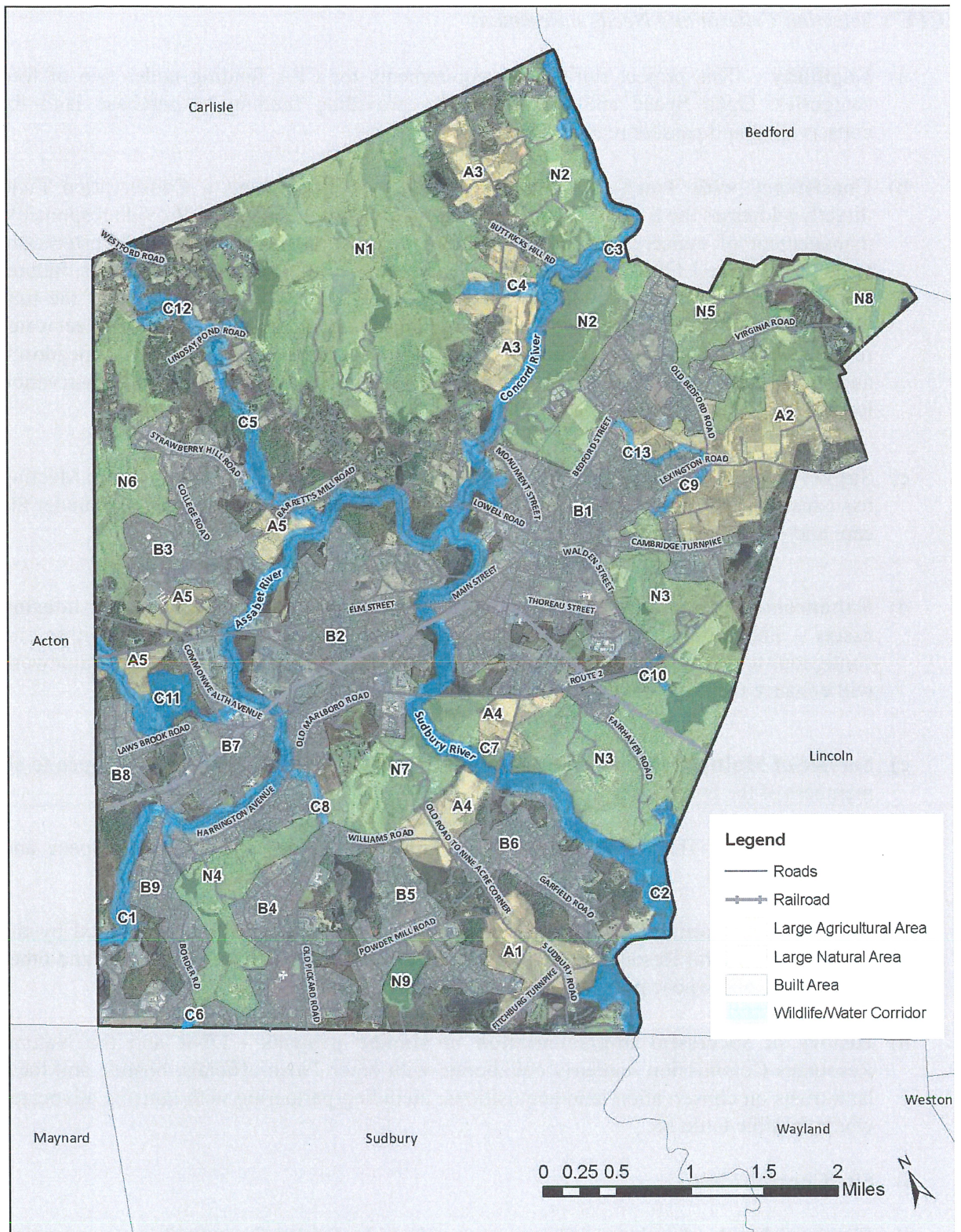


Figure 1: Open Space Framework

CPC's Selection Criteria and Needs Assessment

- a) **Eligibility** – This project fulfills the requirements for CPA funding under two of four categories, Open Space and Recreation, by providing funding to purchase land for conservation and passive recreation purposes.
- b) **Consistency with Town-wide planning efforts** – Establishing a Conservation Fund directly addresses the following goals from *Envision Concord*: **Goal 1**: Provide responsible management of conservation lands, including protection, preservation and restoration; **Goal 2**: Ensure all Concord residents understand the value of conservation lands, natural resources, open space, agricultural activities and recreational amenities. Two of the four goals of the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan are also addressed: **Goal 1**: Protect water resources and biodiversity and **Goal 3**: Protect agricultural land, including fields, meadows, and orchards. Finally, the 2025 CPA Plan recognizes the need for strategic land preservation to enhance Concord's open space.
- c) **Support by Boards, Committees, Community & Town Meeting actions** – Town Meeting has consistently supported conservation and agricultural land Town acquisitions, under the care and custody of the NRC.
- d) **Enhancement of existing Town-owned open space, recreation, historic, and or housing assets** – Focused and targeted land acquisitions of large and small parcels within and contiguous to large natural or agricultural areas identified with the Open Space Framework will enhance these natural and agricultural areas.
- e) **Service of Multiple or Underserved Populations** - Town lands are public and open to all members of the community.
- f) **CPA Purposes**- This project meets two of the four CPA purposes: Open Space and Recreation.
- g) **Administrative and Financial Engagement** – The project will be administered by the Division of Natural Resources, which has extensive experience overseeing CPA and other grant funds, and whose projects are in good standing with the CPC.
- h) **History of successful implementation of similar projects** - DNR and the Natural Resources Commission regularly collaborate with other Town officials, boards, and local land trusts on conservation land acquisitions, including partnering with housing advocates where feasible to do so.
- i) **Site Control** – N/A.
- j) **Financial Need** – Land acquisitions are unable to be funded from the Town's operating budget. Once a dedicated Conservation Fund is established and adequately funded, the need for large funding requests from the CPA or capital budget will be alleviated.

- k) **Other Sources of Funding** –Conservation land acquisitions are frequently a partnership with the Concord Land Conservation Trust, a local non-profit with excellent fundraising capabilities.
- l) **Project Plan Feasibility** –Conservation Funds have been successfully established in several municipalities in the Commonwealth.
- m) **Urgency of Project** – It is impossible to know when most landowners will be in a position to sell priority parcels. Without a dedicated Conservation Fund, the Town is reliant on Town Meeting schedule. Alternatively, a Special Town Meeting could be schedule if a landowner is unable to wait for Annual Town Meeting, but this is a large burden on Town staff.
- n) **Maintenance Provisions** – N/A.
- o) **Permanent Deed Restriction** – No permanent restriction is needed as part of this project.
- p) **Reimbursement** - This proposal does not seek reimbursement of previously appropriated funds.
- q) **Local Qualified Vendors** – N/A.
- r) **Normal CPC Schedule** – This proposal does not request the CPC to act outside their normal schedule.
- s) **Land Acquisition Projects** – Early coordination with housing advocates, including the Concord Housing Development Corporation, will be undertaken for all land acquisitions that may be contemplated.

Budget: A Conservation Fund would allow the Town to move quickly in the event a priority parcel with high ecological value comes on the market. It should be noted that the current request is a start to building the fund, and future annual requests to add incremental amounts to the Conservation Fund are anticipated.

In addition to acquisition, the Conservation Fund is intended to be used for professional services necessary for the completion of land acquisition projects, such as real estate appraisals, title certifications, Registry of Deeds recordings, surveys, environmental assessments, and other due diligence.

Having monies in a dedicated Conservation Fund can help convince the state to contribute funds towards APRs for priority farmlands. It can also allow the Town to act on its right of first refusal for parcels taxed under M.G.L. Ch. 61, where the 120-day window of opportunity can be challenging. Dedicated funds can also be used as a match for federal and state land grant opportunities.

Feasibility - Since the creation of the Natural Resources Commission in 1959, the Commission and staff have worked diligently over the years to successfully protect key parcels, actions that are consistently supported by Town Meeting. A Conservation Fund is consistent with the objectives of both the OSRP and *Envision Concord*, which both speak to the value of preserving valuable open space. The OSRP, which highlights the need for focused conservation land preservation, was endorsed by the Select Board, Planning Board, Natural Resources Commission, Board of Health, Agriculture Committee, West Concord Advisory Committee, the Concord Land Conservation Trust, Sudbury Valley Trustees, and ConcordCAN. Several residents also submitted letters of support. Town Meeting has voiced ongoing support for conservation land acquisitions for decades.

Statement of Sustainability - By its very nature, land preservation is sustainable, protecting woodland, farmland, wildlife habitat, and river frontage from development.

Outreach Strategy - In accordance with Article 35 of 2008 Annual Town Meeting, consideration of conservation land acquisitions will involve early coordination with housing advocates. An example of this successful process was the partnership between the Concord Housing Development Corporation, Concord Land Conservation Trust, Sudbury Valley Trustees, and the Town to acquire the 7-acre Assabet River Bluff for both housing and conservation purposes. Conservation land acquisitions are often a partnership between the Town and the Concord Land Conservation Trust, an organization skilled at community outreach and fundraising.

Timeline – The usual land acquisition process requires Town Meeting approval for either CPA or capital expenditures. This can prove challenging to a seller who may be unable to wait up to a year to sell the property. Establishing a Conservation Fund allows the Natural Resources Commission and the Town to move more nimbly when a priority parcel comes on the market.

Letters of Support. Attached please find a letter of support from the Natural Resources Commission.



TOWN OF CONCORD
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
141 KEYES ROAD, CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742
TEL. (978) 318-3285 FAX (978) 318-3291

Eve Isenberg, Chair
Community Preservation Committee
Town of Concord
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742

September 17, 2025

Dear Ms. Isenberg and Members of the Community Preservation Committee:

At the September 17, 2025 Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting, the NRC unanimously voted to support the Division of Natural Resources CPA application to establish a Conservation Land fund and recommends your favorable vote to include this project on the warrant for Town Meeting approval.

Creating a Conservation Land fund will position the NRC and the Town to pursue acquisition of priority conservation parcels identified in the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan. When the Town contemplated adoption of the Community Preservation Act in 2004, the NRC unanimously recommended adoption of the Act. One argument in favor was that the Town would become eligible to receive a significant match from the Commonwealth by funding its Conservation Fund through the CPA. The NRC also expressed interest in finding creative ways to preserve and protect parcels of land through cooperative efforts for the purposes of affordable housing, recreation, historic preservation, and conservation

We encourage your support for this project.

Sincerely,

Nick Pappas, Acting Chair
Natural Resources Commission

