



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
RESIDENT FEEDBACK ON FY17
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN**



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WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED JUNE 16 TO JULY 22

**From: Steve Mulder
Received: July 9, 2016**

Hi -
Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

The only comment I'd like to make is about the balance of funding. There are three important priorities for the CPC, and yet one of them gets 3 TIMES the funding of the other two. That's inappropriate and not in the spirit of what the CPC should be doing to best serve the entire community. All three areas are important! Please aim for a better balance in FY17.

Thank you.
Steve Mulder
42 Stone Ave

**From: Green and Open Somerville, Union Square Neighbors, Somerville Climate Action
Received: July 20, 2016**

July 20, 2016

Somerville Community Preservation Committee
Kristen Stelljes, Program Manager
Somerstat
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Members of the Community Preservation Act Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the how the City should prioritize spending Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding in FY 2017. For other cities and towns in Massachusetts, the CPA has been among the most important sources of funding for the acquisition of new green, open and recreational spaces. It could be in Somerville as well, if adequate funding is directed toward it.

In previous years, Somerville dedicated only 15% of revenue to open space and outdoor recreation, which is barely the legally required minimum of 10% per category. With the high cost of land in Somerville, this is part of the reason why there has not yet been a single approved proposal for acquisition of land for open space or outdoor recreation, though we understand an acquisition fund has been started to support this. It is ironic that many other towns which already have a good deal of open/green/recreational spaces have chosen to prioritize this, while Somerville suffers from minimal open/green/recreational spaces and then chooses to allocate near minimum funding towards it.

If we, as a city, are ever going to make progress towards SomerVision's open space goal of 125 acres, and creating the green/open/recreational spaces we know a healthy (and growing) community needs, the City has to find a way to acquire some land and designate it as open space. Meeting the Union Square Neighborhood Plan's minimal open space targets relies on the city's ability to acquire some land, and it's unclear how that could actually happen without a significant funding commitment.

Proposed zoning will hopefully require that open space be created in private developments, and this is really important, but the public will have more limited control over how this space is designed and used compared to the publicly owned spaces that would be created on land acquired through CPA funding. Public control over "public space" is important for a number of reasons, including making sure all have access to it and its design truly reflects what the public wants. Dedicating funding to the creation of public open space is one of the great opportunities of the CPA, and this was what many hoped to see the CPA used for when they voted for it.

We thank the CPA committee for making good use of the CPA funds which have been allocated to open space so far by choosing to fund a number of projects that are valued and appreciated by the community. Many of these projects appear to meet the CPA definition of 'outdoor recreation', which is one of the allowable uses for open space funds. There is also a great need and desire for the more passive, natural places that meet the definition of 'open space', and we hope to see CPA funds used for a broad range of open space types in the future. We support the acquisition of land for open space to address the needs of residents, as identified through citywide and neighborhood-based open space planning and active community engagement processes.

There are clearly important projects in all funding categories. The CPA committee faces a really difficult job in choosing how to allocate funding between open space, community housing and historic resources, but open space is unique in that there are not many other options for funding acquisition of land and designating it as open space. A larger funding commitment could even allow the City to choose to bond against future CPA revenue in order to acquire a large property for a significant new open space. It would be great to see this as an option that could be considered in Union Square now, while there may be opportunity for acquisition before the planned redevelopment begins in earnest.

We advocate for equal funding between all three categories, recognizing that each is important but open space is a critical need and deserves more than minimal funding. We also encourage the City to actively pursue opportunities to acquire land for a range of open space types as identified through community planning processes, and ask the CPA committee to dedicate funding to both outdoor recreation and passive, natural open spaces.

Thank you again for your consideration.

This letter is cosigned by the following groups and organizations:

Renee Scott of

Green and Open Somerville - Access for all Somerville residents to green, healthy, safe recreational space

Rob Buchanan, Tim Talun of

Union Square Neighbors – an independent neighborhood association dedicated to helping Union Square become an even better place to live, work, play and raise a family

Maureen Barillaro of

Somerville Climate Action - a grass-roots collaborative working for a safe and stable climate while helping to build a resilient, just, and sustainable community.