

Print**Community Preservation Act Committee Proposal Request Form FY2022 - Submission #16012**

Date Submitted: 10/14/2020**Instruction**

Submit proposals by Monday, October 12, 2020 at 4:30pm. CPAC will ask relevant boards, committees and commissions for their input on proposals and encourages applicants to consult with them before submission. Presentations of projects will be scheduled for CPAC meetings in October and November. Recipients of funds shall report back in writing annually about the progress of the project. Projects must be completed within three years of award and unspent funds returned to the CPA Fund.

Criteria

1. Feasibility of the Project; 2. Documentation for Estimated Costs; 3. Funding available: a. multiple sources of funding, b. need for additional funding in future years, c. demonstrates lack of other funding sources if applicable; 4. Urgency of the Project; 5. Estimated timeline from receipt of funding, to start and to completion; 6. Acquisition and/or preservation of threatened resources; 7. Population(s) to be served by the Project; 8. A Plan for how the project will be maintained over time; 9. Priority ranking of your Project set by relevant Town boards, committees or commissions.

Project Title*

North Common and Main Street Parking Lot Project

Funding Category*

Check all that apply.

- Community Housing
 Historic Preservation
 Open Space
 Recreation

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$500,000

Submitting Entity*

Department of Conservation & Development on behalf of Historical Commission & LSSE Commission

Contact Person*

David Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager & Director of Conservation & Development

E-mail Address*

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Project Team

Christine Brestrup, Planning Director brestrupc@amherstma.gov
Nate Malloy, Senior Planner malloyn@amherstma.gov
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Paul Dethier, Engineer, DPW dethierp@amherstma.gov
Barbara Bilz, Director, LSSE bilzb@amherstma.gov

Names and e-mail addresses for other members of your project team.

If your proposal has an associated website, you may include a link.

<https://www.amherstma.gov/3395/North-CommonMain-St-Parking-Project>

Proposal Overview*

This project requests funds for the historic rehabilitation of the North Common and Main Street Parking Lot and Boltwood Avenue to provide the community with more flexible, programmable spaces that will continue to respect the historic integrity of a landscape that is central to the civic and social activity of Amherst's downtown. Rehabilitation of the North Common will follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Cultural Landscapes, which defines Rehabilitation as standards that acknowledge the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape's historic character.

Amherst and its center have grown and expanded and the Town Common has been a dominant landscape feature since the founding of Amherst. Although it has undergone various changes, its character and function has remained consistent throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Increased use of the Common, however, has greatly deteriorated its condition. Swaths of turf have been trampled to bare earth exacerbating erosion and drainage issues. Tree roots are exposed because of soil compaction. The limited seating needs to be replaced. The tree planters are rotting and falling apart. The WCTU (Woman's Christian Temperance Union) fountain no longer works. There are no formal gathering spaces and the sidewalks are nearly inaccessible due to heaving, cracks and failing pavement.

The project includes the renovation and rejuvenation of the parking lot between the North Common and Main Street, known as "the Main Street Parking Lot" as well as the area in front of Town Hall, to provide a paved plaza that can be occasionally used for activities other than parking, such as band concerts, farmers' markets, poetry readings and other types of performances and events. Boltwood Avenue between Main Street and Spring Street will be included in the project to improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation and to improve the connection of the Town Common and Parking Lot to the entry to Town Hall.

This project is the result of several years of planning and community participation. Three community forums were held in 2013, 2014 & 2015. In the fall of 2015 Town meeting appropriated \$190,000 in CPA funds in anticipation of receiving a \$400,000 PARC grant from the state. The PARC grant application was not successful at that time.

In FY18 another \$360,000 in CPA funds was approved by Town Meeting, for a total of \$550,000 in CPA funds (\$190,000 + \$360,000). In April 2018, Town Meeting voted a bond authorization of \$450,000 (\$400,000 to be earmarked for the Main Street Parking Lot) to be paid back using Transportation Enterprise Funds.

All of these appropriations mean that there was about \$950,000 available for the North Common and Main Street Parking Lot project.

In 2018 a working group was formed, including members of the Amherst Historical Commission, Leisure Services and Supplemental Education (LSSE) Commission and town staff from the Department of Conservation & Development, DPW and LSSE.

The firm of Weston & Sampson, Engineers and Landscape Architects, was hired in 2018 and worked with the town to develop a Preferred Plan, including a design for the green area known as the North Common, the Main Street Parking Lot and a new plaza area in front of Town Hall as well as improvements to Boltwood Avenue.

The design consists of pedestrian and vehicular circulation, seating areas, parking, a plaza in front of Town Hall and rerouting traffic on Boltwood Avenue, to provide a beautiful "living room" for Downtown Amherst. This concept design will be the "crown jewel" among proposed downtown Amherst projects, which include a possible parking garage, a playground at Kendrick Park, a band shell for the southern portion of the Common and improvements to downtown sidewalks, crosswalks and streetscape. The central seating area of the green space could be used for sitting, playing games, picnicking, small poetry readings, and small musical offerings, such as a trio of musicians. Portable chairs and picnic tables could be added to the lawn areas throughout the North Common area to expand seating and outdoor dining opportunities.

The design was completed in the summer of 2018 and was presented to the Select Board. The cost for the entire project was estimated at about \$1.9 million. This increase was due to the work that was added during the design process, making the parking lot usable as a plaza, extending the plaza in front of Town Hall and the work along Boltwood Avenue.

At the time that this project was presented to the Select Board (fall of 2018), the town was transitioning to a new form of government and it was decided to wait until the Town Council took its seat before proceeding with the project.

We are now coming back with this project that has changed and expanded since 2016 and 2018 when Town Meeting voted the original CPAC funding and the bonding authorization.

Include specific details of your project, including deliverables, items to be repaired, specific purchases, etc. Once your proposal is approved by Town Council, no changes will be allowed.

Description of Funding Needed*

This project is now larger than was originally conceived. In the beginning the project was only envisioned to include the green square area of the North Common. As the project took shape, it made sense to include the Main Street Parking Lot, which was about to undergo a re-design and repaving, and Boltwood Avenue, which provides access to the North Common, Town Hall and the Main Street Parking Lot.

The project has recently been reviewed and revised by the DPW staff to save more trees than the Weston and Sampson plan had saved and to refine the grading plan and to examine the possibility of reducing the cost of the 2018 plan.

The funds from CPAC from FY 16 and FY 18 amount to \$550,000. About \$64,000 was expended to pay the designers to prepare the Preferred Concept Plan, leaving \$486,000.

The \$450,000 bonding authorization from FY2018 is only partially available for this project because about \$50,000 was earmarked for another project. Approximately \$400,000 is available from this bond authorization to fund the Main Street Parking Lot. .

The current application is requesting \$500,000 in CPAC funds, split in two portions, \$250,000 for Historical Preservation and \$250,000 for Recreation.

Proposed funding sources are as follows:

\$486,000 FY16 & FY18 CPAC funds remaining from \$550,000 after paying design consultants

\$400,000 FY18 funds from \$450,000 bond authorization

\$500,000 FY22 funds currently being requested from CPAC

\$1,386,000 Total funding from town sources

Plus

\$400,000 PARC grant funding proposed to be applied for in Summer 2021

\$200,000 Fund raising – private sources

\$1,986,000 Total funding possible for the project

Include cost estimates and other sources of funding.

Budget*

19-01-08.pdf

Attach your project budget.

Estimated Timeline*

Draft schedule North Common, Main Street Parking Lot & Boltwood Avenue October 14, 2020	
Apply for CPAC funding	October 2020
Present project to Town Council	November 2020
Work with Planning staff, DPW staff, Historical Commission, LSSE to refine design plan & cost estimate	November/December 2020
Obtain approval of plan from Town Council	January 2021
Obtain approval of CPAC funding	Spring 2021
Permitting	Spring 2021
Construction documents	Spring 2021
Apply for PARC Grant funding	Summer 2021
Bid project	Summer 2021
Construction Contract Award	Late Summer 2021
Construction Start	September 2021
Construction complete	November 1, 2022

Describe the project timeline from receipt of CPA funds to project completion. Include in the timeline when funds will be spent.

What is the urgency of the project, if any?

The project is urgent because the conditions of the North Common green area and the Main Street Parking Lot continue to deteriorate. The town had hoped to begin construction on this project in 2018. The North Common is no longer safe for pedestrians, it is not ADA accessible, and the trees and landscape are severely impacted by erosion, compaction and poor drainage.

Does this project preserve or acquire any threatened resources?*

The project will preserve a revered part of the historic Town Common, onto which the historic Town Hall, Grace Episcopal Church, Grace Church Parish House and the 19th Century buildings along South Pleasant Street front. The project will also preserve a number of the historic trees on the North Common along with the historic WCTU fountain.

What population(s) will be served by this project?*

Residents of Amherst, visitors, students, families of college and university students, shoppers, patrons of the town restaurants and others will all be served by this project.

How will the CPA investment in your project be maintained over time?*

The project will be maintained by the town and the Department of Public Works, as part of their regular maintenance schedule.

What relevant Town committees or commissions are you working with?

Over the years, since 2013, we have worked with the Historical Commission, the LSSE Commission, Design Review Board, the DPW staff, Planning Department staff, and others on this project. We have held three public forums in 2013, 2014 and 2015 along with numerous public meetings in 2018 as the Weston & Sampson Concept Plan was developed.

Please include any other information regarding the project you deem necessary for the CPAC.

Links to past CPAC requests for North Common from FY16 and FY18

<https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/32515/North-Common-CPA-2015-Proposal?bidId=>

<https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/37196/4-HP-REC-North-Common-Phase-II-Proposal---TOA?bidId=>

You may upload any attachments you deem useful to CPAC here.

Concept Plan 2018-12-14 Weston and Sampson.pdf

Suggested attachments include floor or site plans, photographs, drawings, etc.

You may upload any attachments you deem useful to CPAC here.

Concept Plan 10-14-2020 DPW.pdf

You may upload any attachments you deem useful to CPAC here.

No file chosen

Affirmations*

I understand that if my project is approved by the Town Council, my organization will have a maximum of three years from July 1, 2021 to expend its grant. After June 30, 2024, the Town may return any unused money to the CPA fund for new appropriation, unless an extension is granted.

I acknowledge the above.