

**FLOWED MEADOW IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**PHASE 3**

**REQUEST FOR PLANNING FUNDS FOR  
PROPOSED BOARDWALK AND PATHWAY**

DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
CITY HALL  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02159

**CPA APPLICATION**

**NEWTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**OCTOBER 15, 2004**

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9/17/04

City of Newton

APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING



David B. Cohen
Mayor

Submit to Jennifer Goldson, Community Preservation Planner
Newton Planning and Development Department
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459
jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us
617-796-1120 ext. 1131

Name of Applicant^3 Newton Conservation Commission

Name of Co-Applicant, if applicable N/A

Contact Name Martha J. Aherin Horn, Sr. Environmental Planner
Planning Dept., City Hall

Mailing Address 1000 Commonwealth Avenue City Newton State MA Zip 02459

Daytime Phone 617-796-1134 Email mhorn@ci.newton.ma.us

Name of Proposal Flowed Meadow Improvement Project - Phase 3

Address of Proposal (or assessor's parcel id) Bounded by Lexington St., Landfill, Wabasso
Street and Auburndale Park

CPA Category (circle all that apply): Open space Historic preservation Recreation Community housing

CPA Funding Requested \$30,700 Total Cost of Proposed Project \$30,700

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Attach answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as
incomplete if all requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials as necessary.

- 1. Goals: What are the goals of the proposed project?
2. Community Need: Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing City plans?
3. Community Support: What is the nature and level of support for this project? Include letters of support and
any petitions.
4. Timeline: What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical milestones?
5. Credentials: How will the experience of the applicant contribute to the success of this project?
6. Success Factors: How will the success of this project will be measured? Be as specific as possible.
7. Budget: What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? All items of expenditure
must be clearly identified. Distinguish between hard and soft costs and contingencies. (NOTE: CPA funds
may NOT be used for maintenance.)
8. Other Funding: What additional funding sources are available, committed, or under consideration? Include
commitment letters, if available, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.
9. Maintenance: If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how will it be funded?

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

- 10. Documentation that you have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale Agreement, option, or deed.

^3 If the proposal is on City-owned land, either the applicant or the co-applicant must be the City
Board, Commission, or Department in control of the land.

## **DRAFT 9/17/04**

11. For projects that include construction or rehabilitation, include the existing and proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations, and any other drawings as necessary to visually describe the proposal.
12. Evidence that the project is in compliance with the zoning ordinance, Architectural Access Board Regulations, or any other laws or regulations. Or, if zoning relief is required, specify what relief is needed and when an application will be made to the City for zoning review.
13. Evidence that the appropriate City Boards and Commissions have approved the project (for example, proposed new uses on Parks & Recreation land requires approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission)
14. Evidence that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for remediation in place.
15. Evidence that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed.
16. Information indicating how this project can be used to achieve additional community benefits.

NOTE: If the requested funds are for a real estate acquisition, an independent appraisal will be required which the applicant will be required to fund. No funding decisions will be made without an independent appraisal. Contact Jennifer Goldson, Community Preservation Planner, at 617-796-1131 or [jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us](mailto:jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us) to arrange for an independent appraisal.

Refer to the City web site ([ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPA](http://ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPA)) for further information.  
Form CPA-1 (Revised 9/11/03)

## **Project Description**

The Flowed Meadow Conservation Area is located in Auburndale and West Newton and bounded by Lexington Street, Auburndale Park and the Rumford Avenue Landfill. (See mapping at Exhibits #1 and 2.) Currently, the Flowed Meadow Conservation Area is accessed via Wabasso Street to the east, Auburndale Park to the west and Staniford Street to the south. No access exists from either Lexington Street or Rumford Avenue due to the presence of the Rumford Avenue Landfill.

The Flowed Meadow Improvement Project seeks to implement the recommendations of the Flowed Meadow Planning Group as identified in their final report issued in August of 2000. To date, many of the recommendations have been undertaken as volunteer projects (Phase 1 – bridges, roadway relocation, wetland restoration). In addition, CPA funding was received last year for implementation of Phase 2 (trail improvements, benches and signage) and the work will be accomplished by mid-2005. A list of the work in each phase is enclosed as Exhibit #3.

This application, submitted by the Newton Conservation Commission and citizen activist Anatol Zukerman, seeks to fund the necessary planning to implement Phase 3 which consists of pathways and a boardwalk through Flowed Meadow, linking Lexington Street and Wabasso Street (See FMPG report recommendation at Exhibit #4.). A request for construction funding will be sent to Community Preservation once the cost estimates are prepared at the conclusion of the planning study.

This proposal would provide an entrance to Flowed Meadow at the 'neck' of land off Lexington Street directly across the street from the Burr School grounds. A pedestrian signal allows safe passage for children walking to and from school at this location. The 'neck' is under the control of the Department of Public Works and would be the site of a pedestrian pathway from Lexington Street to the marsh at the toe of the landfill slope. Fencing would keep visitors from entering the detention basin, the discharge point of Brunnen Brook and the side slopes of the landfill. Planning funding will allow study of the best ways to ensure the safety of all visitors at the point of entry at Lexington Street.

At the point between upland and wetland, the land changes control from DPW to the Conservation Commission. Here the pathway would turn into a boardwalk built in the marsh around the toe of the landfill slope using helical piers as supports. At the other side of the landfill, where the marsh abuts upland, the boardwalk would stop and another pathway would begin and connect the new access to the existing Wabasso Street gravel roadway. (See conceptual plan at Exhibit #5.)

This new connection would allow visitors from the Lexington Street neighborhood and students from Burr School direct access to the extensive pathway system in Flowed Meadow, Auburndale Park, DCR's Forest Grove Reservation and the Charles River Pathway. A kiosk would welcome visitors and provide mapping. The planning process would consider other amenities during community meetings.

Funding is sought for the planning effort, estimated to be \$30,700.00 as outlined in the budget. (See Exhibit # 6.)

**Goals:** This design project will take City-owned land which is currently inaccessible due to its topography and potentially dangerous activities and transform it into an accessible link between two neighborhoods and many acres of public open space. In addition, it will provide an educational facility for nature study for students at a nearby school.

**Community Need:** This project will connect the West Newton neighborhood near Lexington Street to the Auburndale neighborhood and park system more directly and conveniently than is currently possible. Access will improve to Purgatory Cove, Forest Grove Reservation and Auburndale Park. Residents attending the meetings of the Flowed Meadow Planning Group in 2000 indicated that such a connection would be highly desirable and the members included it in their recommendations.

In addition, the pathway and boardwalk system will make more readily available a large parcel of land with many different ecosystems to the school children who attend Burr School as they will be able to take field trips simply by crossing Lexington Street.

**Community Support:** Members of the community who attended the Flowed Meadow Planning Group meetings supported all of the committee recommendations to enhance this large open space in many different ways to serve different needs. These groups include Aldermen from the affected wards, Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Parks & Recreation Department, Auburndale Community Association, Newton/Waltham Citizens Against Hazardous Waste, the Newton Conservators, Charles River Watershed Association, Island Neighborhood Association of Waltham & Newton. In addition, many individuals from both Auburndale and West Newton contributed their expertise to the committee's report. More recently a petition was circulated by Anatol Zukerman and signed by several citizens, and letters of support have been received. These documents may be found at Exhibit #7.

**Timeline:** Once the project receives the necessary approvals (est. Spring 2005), Requests for Proposal will be written and sent out to the various professionals needed. Their work would be completed in the fall – winter of 2005, with the cost estimates coming back to the CPA Committee for construction funding at that time.

**Credentials:** The Newton Conservation Commission currently has under its control approximately 260 acres of land, all of which are maintained as passive open recreational space for the citizens of Newton. We have considerable experience in the design, construction and management of public open spaces for passive recreational opportunities. In addition, we have an ongoing maintenance program, Friends groups, sponsored volunteer workdays and a relationship with several Boy Scout troops whose members assist with various projects to enhance the Conservation Areas. The Commission's efforts have been very successful to date and we anticipate continuing our stewardship of Flowed Meadow.

**Success Factors:** The success of this project will be measured by the area's users who will be able to jog, walk, showshoe and cross-country ski through a substantially larger area than has been available previously. In addition, this project will provide access to Burr School students to enhance their nature study.

**Budget:** It is estimated that the cost of this planning project will be \$307000.00 as shown in full on Exhibit #6.

**Other Funding:** Funding is not available from the Conservation Commission budget which is already committed to maintenance of existing facilities and emergency work. No other funding is being pursued for this planning study; however, it is possible that grant funding may be available for the construction portion of the project and we would seek it at that time.

**Maintenance:** The funds being requested are for a planning study and no maintenance will be required. The actual project, once completed, will require maintenance. The Conservation Commission has a landscape budget for routine maintenance tasks on all of its conservation areas. The project will be designed so as to need minimal maintenance; i.e., stonedust pathways and recycled lumber or man-made lumber for the boardwalks. Between the landscape contractor, scouts and the Friends group, we believe the Commission will be able to maintain the project successfully.

**Site Control and Landowner Approval:** The Department of Public Works controls the 'neck' of land adjacent to Lexington Street and the Commissioner's letter of permission and support is enclosed as Exhibit #8. The Conservation Commission controls the remainder of the land under discussion (marsh and Wabasso Street), known as the Flowed Meadow Conservation Area. The Commission is the sponsor of this application. Records of Board of Aldermen votes assigning the land are attached as Exhibit #9.

**Regulatory Compliance:** The property is zoned as Public Use, and pathways and boardwalks for public use are in compliance with that zone. An Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission will be sought once the plans are completed. Costs of wetland delineation and wetlands permitting are included in the estimate of the costs of this planning study. A Sidewalk Crossing Permit will be required by the Engineering Department prior to commencement of construction. No other permits will be required.

**Hazardous Materials:** Flowed Meadow is adjacent to the Rumford Avenue Landfill, recently capped after extensive testing for hazardous materials. Routine semi-annual testing and reporting of groundwater quality in the vicinity of the landfill falls within normal limits. To our knowledge, hazardous materials have not been found in Flowed Meadow.

**Professional Standards Compliance:** The site is difficult from the standpoint that it consists of marsh and potentially dangerous landfill activities which must remain separate from the public spaces. It is the Commission's intention to employ the personnel and techniques most suited to the design of this boardwalk and pathway system, including a geo-technical engineer, a structural engineer and a landscape architect or architect.

The Commission is committed to a thoroughly researched and professional project which meets all City standards for safety and accessibility as well as an interesting experience and educational opportunity for visitors.

**Additional Community Benefits:** The connection of the West Newton and Auburndale neighborhoods through this public open space near the Charles River is extremely important to all of the groups and individual citizens who attended meetings of the Flowed Meadow Planning Group. Having accessible public open space in this area will ensure that the operations at the landfill will not expand. The opportunity for passive recreation will be expanded for the surrounding area which is densely populated and in need of quiet space in which to 'get away' from busy urban lives and reconnect with nature. Nature study by school children at the Burr School will be enhanced by this entry into Flowed Meadow.