



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Community Preservation Act
Enrique J. Pepén, Chair

One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ◊ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ◊ city.council@boston.gov

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

April 29, 2026

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Community Preservation Act was referred the following dockets for consideration:

Docket #0569, Message and order approving an appropriation of Thirty-Two Million, Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$32,600,000.00) from Fiscal Year 2026 community preservation fund revenues for community preservation projects at the recommendation of the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”). The upcoming projects will aim to improve the quality of life across Boston neighborhoods. Plans include renovating playgrounds and enhancing or creating recreational spaces such as parks, community gardens, and urban farms. In addition, these projects will plant trees to grow the city’s tree canopy, preserve historic buildings and artifacts, support a program for affordable first-time home buyers and construct new affordable housing units for residents. Together, these efforts are expected to deliver a meaningful and lasting positive impact on Boston’s neighborhoods and communities.

Docket #0758, Message and order approving an appropriation order in the amount of One Million Seven Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Ninety Dollars (\$1,763,090.00) for the administrative and operating expenses of the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”) for Fiscal Year 2027, and a further appropriation order in the amount of Thirty-Nine Million Five Hundred Eighty-Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety-Eight Dollars (\$39,587,798.00) from the Community Preservation Fund’s (“the Fund”) estimated annual revenues for Fiscal Year 2027, to be appropriated and reserved for future appropriation.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and were referred to the Committee on March 18, 2026 (Docket #0569) and on April 8, 2026 (Docket #0758).

Summary of Legislation

Docket #0569 is an appropriation order from the FY26 Community Preservation Fund revenues in the amount ***\$32,600,000.00*** for community preservation projects pursuant to the recommendation of the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”).

This year, the CPC considered 45 projects and has recommended full funding for 42 of those projects. The CPC has proposed allocating ***\$16,300,000.00*** for affordable housing projects, ***\$8,150,000.00*** for historic preservation projects, and ***\$8,150,000.00*** for open space and recreational use projects.

The City of Boston's Community Preservation Act Fund was established pursuant to the Community Preservation Act (“CPA”) M.G.L. c.44B § 5 of the Community Preservation Act, mandates that the City



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Council, upon receiving recommendations from the CPC, annually approve appropriations from the CPA fund to implement the CPC's recommendations.

Docket #0758 is an appropriation order from the FY27 Community Preservation Fund revenues in the amount of **\$1,763,090.00** for the administrative and operating expenses for the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and a further appropriation order from the FY27 Community Preservation Fund revenues in the amount of **\$39,587,798.00** to be appropriated and reserved for further appropriation for FY27 community preservation projects.

The Community Preservation Act ('CPA') M.G.L. c.44B § 6 provides that in each fiscal year, the Council shall make annual appropriations from the Fund as it deems necessary for the administrative and operating expenses of the CPC, and such appropriations shall not exceed 5% of the Fund's annual revenues. The estimated revenues for FY27 are **\$41,350,888.00**; the amount being appropriated for administrative and operating expenses totals **\$1,763,090.00** or 4.3% of the estimated revenues for FY27, thereby under the 5% ceiling.

The administrative and operating expenses are increasing by \$209K from FY26, due to permanent employee salary costs, the reallocation of costs from the City's Treasury department towards the CPA to cover the costs of staff that support CPA, and an increase in contractual services for an updated CPA master plan.

In order to appropriate or reserve funds for future spending in FY27, funds must be appropriated before the tax rate is set for FY27; therefore, an appropriation in the amount of **\$39,587,798.00** is requested to be appropriated into a budgeted reserve for future recommendation by the CPC and appropriation by City Council consistent with the Act.

FY27 project funding is projected to be \$39.59M, a \$4.35M increase from FY26 driven by a \$3M increase in the projected CPA surcharge (a 1% surcharge on property taxes). In FY26 the CPA Fund had a balance of \$4.19M; in FY27, the estimated fund balance is \$5.7M. These reserves will be available to expend or carry forward in future funding rounds.

Information Received at Hearing

The Committee held a hearing on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 to discuss Dockets #0569 and #0758. Thadine Brown, Director, Community Preservation Office (CPO), and Christine O'Keefe, Director, Neighborhood Housing Division, Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH) testified on behalf of the Administration.

Director Brown shared her gratitude towards the members of the CPC and members of the CPO staff. She provided an overview of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) process and of FY26 projects. In FY26, the total CPA allocation was \$32.6M allocated across 45 total projects. Of said \$32.6M, \$3.3M was allocated from the reserve towards projects. 50% of funding (\$16.3M) was allocated towards affordable housing, 25% (\$8.2M) towards historic preservation, and 25% (\$8.2M) towards open space and recreation.

The following are requirements under the CPA (Chapter 44B of Mass General Laws): 10% of CPA funds must be spent in three categories every year—Historic Preservation, Affordable Housing, and Open Spaces



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and Recreation, up to 5% may be spent on administrative costs, only capital projects can be funded (CPA funds cannot cover maintenance, operations, or programming), and recipients of funds can be public or private entities, non-profit or for profit organizations. The following are allowable uses of CPA funds, as determined by statute: acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration and support.

To date, the Community Preservation Fund has funded 396 projects awarding over \$229M in funding, which include 60 affordable housing projects, 185 historic preservation projects, and 151 open space and recreation projects. CPA funds have helped preserve over 150 historical building sites, vessels, and artifacts protecting Boston's cultural and architectural heritage, rehabilitated and created more than 100 playgrounds and recreational spaces, expanding access to safe, vibrant outdoor areas for residents of all ages, preserved and developed nearly 2,200 units of affordable housing, and allocated over \$28M to programs supporting first time homeownership and preventing displacement.

See below for a breakdown of previous funding rounds:

2025: \$38.1M awarded, 52 projects
2024: \$38.3M awarded, 57 projects
2023: \$38.8M awarded, 55 projects
2022: \$26.2M awarded, 49 projects
2021: \$25.2M awarded, 63 projects
2020: \$21.7M awarded, 33 projects
2018 & 2019: over \$41M awarded, 87 projects

Director Brown provided an overview of projects by neighborhood across 2018 to 2025 and stated the following are neighborhoods with the highest number of projects: Dorchester (72), Roxbury (66), Jamaica Plain (28), Mattapan (17), Charlestown (17), South End (17), Back Bay (17), and East Boston (16). She pointed the public towards multiple resources that provide updates on CPA projects and showcase completed projects. She provided an overview of funding and project percentage in each category for the last 8 funding rounds: Affordable Housing (\$177,905,596 (51% of funding); 60 projects (15% of projects), Historic Preservation (\$54,535,227 (24% of funding); 185 projects (47% of projects), Open Space and Recreation (\$57,169,877 (25% of funding); 151 projects (38% of projects).

To date, 19 projects have withdrawn for a variety of reasons including not meeting the readiness to proceed, not being able to agree to the 15 year terms of the CPA grant agreement, and not being able to align to the long term site control agreements. The CPO actively monitors 120 projects, conducts site visits, and holds monthly check-ins to track construction timelines and compliance. Approximately 80% of funds from 2018-2025 have been paid out (which does not indicate project completion) and grant installment payments are moving at a rapid pace out the door. The CPO utilizes a rolling eligibility form which allows applicants to apply early; this provides the office with additional time to verify proposed projects before they are selected to go before the committee.

The CPO hosts annual community engagement and educational meetings, looking to expand their reach and ensure residents across all neighborhoods can participate. It organizes multiple virtual information sessions and workshops throughout the spring and summer, helping applicants understand eligibility, readiness to proceed, and the CPA process. The office provides language access accessibility when needed. The office utilizes social media channels and a monthly newsletter (which reaches over 1,500



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residents) to keep the public informed about funding rounds, project updates, and upcoming events. Director Brown reiterated that the office has launched its FY27 funding round.

Metrics from the FY26 funding round include the following: CPA staff hosted over 15 virtual CPA events, information sessions, workshops, and meet and greets, received over 100 eligibility forms/requests for proposals (RFPs), and submitted 84 applications to the CPC totalling over \$45M in funding requests. The CPC held 9 public meetings from September through January, totalling over 15 hours of public discussion. 45 projects were considered in the FY26 funding round, totalling \$32,600,000 with 42 of the 45 projects recommending full funding. Once approved by City Council, the Committee will have recommended 441 projects, awarding over \$260M in funding through nine CPA funding rounds.

The following are the number of projects by neighborhood recommended in the FY26 funding round: Allston-Brighton (1), Back Bay (3), Charlestown (3), Chinatown (1), Dorchester (8), Downtown (1), East Boston (1), Hyde Park (3), Jamaica Plain (4), Mattapan (1), Mission Hill (1), Roslindale (3), Roxbury (7), South Boston (1), South End (1), West End (2), and West Roxbury (1). The following neighborhoods did not have any projects in the FY26 funding round: Beacon Hill, Boston Harbor, Fenway-Kenmore, North End, and Bay Village.

The CPC utilizes a CPA plan to guide the allocation of funding, and has been doing so since FY23. The plan includes data from the eighth funding round and is available on the CPC website. The plan measures several key indicators, including income, language access, demographics, and the poverty line. The following are statistics detailing the impact of CPA projects: 215 projects (55.5%) are in neighborhoods where over 65% of households earn below the Area Median Income (AMI), 162 projects (39.5%) are in neighborhoods with the highest language access needs, 157 projects (40%) are in neighborhoods where more than 65% of residents identify as People of Color, and 33 projects (8.3%) are in census tracts with elevated poverty levels, where 40% of more of residents live below the poverty line.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Community Preservation Act, I recommend moving the listed dockets from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that these matters **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Enrique J. Pepén, Chair
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