

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

NEWS RELEASE

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HARNESSING NEW BEDFORD'S HISTORY FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE
New Bedford to Vote on Community Preservation Act This November

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. – New Bedford has a history of making wise investments for the city's future growth. From our protected deep harbor and the cobblestone streets of the downtown to our network of parks and our incredible supply of drinking water, our citizen leaders have had the foresight to ensure that our hard-earned dollars yielded a good return. Today we have another historic chance to create a local fund that can help harness the city's rich history and turn it into an economic catalyst for the future.

At the ballot this November, New Bedford voters will have the opportunity to generate up to \$1 million per year through the Community Preservation Act (CPA) for exciting new historic preservation, outdoor recreation, and community and senior housing projects – all of which might otherwise go unfunded.

"My administration has committed to planning and acting strategically with New Bedford's long-term future at the forefront," said Mayor Jon Mitchell, who is sending CPA to the ballot with unanimous support from City Council. "Whether we are preserving open space, developing recreational opportunities, or preserving our history, New Bedford should view the CPA as a means to pursue those long-range projects that will have a positive, lasting impact on its quality of life. I applaud the consortium of organizations and individuals that have come together to advocate for this investment in our community."

If a ballot question is approved by New Bedford voters this November, taxpayers would contribute a 1.5 percent surcharge on property tax bills beginning in fiscal year 2016 to create a Community Preservation Fund. This surcharge would add about \$18 to the average homeowner's annual tax bill. The program would include several exemptions to ease the burden for taxpayers, including the first \$100,000 of residential and commercial property values and exemptions for low-income and senior homeowners.

"The Community Preservation Act has proven to be a wise investment that creates construction jobs year after year that will eliminate blight and increase the values of neighborhoods and commercial districts throughout the City," said Anthony Sapienza, President of the New Bedford Economic Development Council. "The New Bedford Economic Development Council fully supports the work of the many organizations, Mayor and City Council to place the CPA on the ballot in November, giving the voters the chance to put CPA in New Bedford's tool box for growth."

By approving CPA, New Bedford would join Fall River, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Westport and 150 other Massachusetts cities and towns already benefitting from CPA funds for projects in their communities. The city would gain access to the CPA statewide Trust Fund, which could amount to several hundred thousand dollars every year for New Bedford – last year, the state match was 52

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percent. CPA funds can also be used as the required match for state, federal and private grants that might otherwise be unavailable for projects throughout the city.

"CPA is an important investment in historic preservation and community housing that will have a major impact on neighborhood revitalization and will provide a local match to leverage state and federal funding sources," said Teri Bernert, Executive Director of the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE).

CPA is an economic development engine, with CPA historic preservation projects creating local construction jobs and enhancing assets for tourism. CPA also improves local residents' quality of life by creating and restoring playgrounds, parks, ball fields, trails and waterfront areas and improving community housing for seniors and others.

"New Bedford is one of the only communities around Buzzards Bay that doesn't benefit from this important preservation fund," said Mark Rasmussen, President of the New Bedford-based Buzzards Bay Coalition. "By passing CPA, New Bedford residents will be able to enjoy improved outdoor spaces on the water and in parks across the city."

"The Trustees have seen the difference that CPA can make across the state by preserving and restoring the places that make communities special and unique," said John Vasconcellos, Southeast Regional Director of The Trustees of Reservations and a New Bedford native. "We are thrilled that New Bedford is pursuing this great opportunity."

"The Trust for Public Land believes that everyone, particularly every child, should live within a ten-minute walk of a quality outdoor green space," said Kevin Essington, Massachusetts State Director of The Trust for Public Land. "We are thrilled to support New Bedford's interest in creating and restoring new parks, bringing people together, promoting health and revitalizing neighborhoods."

Mary Ann Rogers, President of the Martha Briggs Educational Club, said, "Voting for CPA in New Bedford gives citizens the opportunity to save historic neighborhoods and improve open space for our children."

Lee Blake, President of the New Bedford Historical Society, said, "Voting for CPA will give New Bedford residents the funds to help preserve the historic landmarks that define our city, while creating new neighborhood spaces for our children and families to enjoy."

New Bedford voters will soon be able to learn about the many benefits of the Community Preservation Act by visiting www.CPAnewbedford.org.

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