



North Andover, MA, Adopts State Funding Measure

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Massachusetts*

Boston, MA: Last night, North Andover became the second community in Massachusetts to adopt the Community Preservation Act when local voters passed the Act by a vote of 2,143 to 1,672. By adopting the Act, residents implemented a local 3% property tax surcharge with some exemptions, which makes North Andover eligible for state matching funds. The vote was hailed by the Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit conservation organization that has been a leading member of the Community Preservation Coalition and supported passage of the Act in North Andover.

"The approval of the Community Preservation Act by North Andover voters sends a strong message about their commitment to shaping the future of their community. North Andover is the second municipality in ten days to adopt the Act, and many more votes are scheduled over the coming weeks in other cities and towns," explained Whitney Hatch, Regional Director of the Trust for Public Land. "These successful votes highlight the concern Massachusetts residents have about diminishing open space, sprawling development, rising home values, and the destruction of our historic sights and monuments. I applaud the citizens of North Andover for taking this critical step to meet these challenges."

The bill, which became law in December, grants Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns the right to raise local property taxes to fund land conservation, historic preservation, and affordable housing. It also provides roughly \$26 million annually in matching funds to participating communities.

"North Andover is the quintessential New England town, and now we have a reliable source of funding to protect its historic and rural character," said Brad Wakeman, a member of the Open Space Committee. "In addition, this is a great step forward in protecting the Town's water supply and maintaining its affordability. I would like to thank the Trust for Public Land for its assistance in campaign to pass the Community Preservation Act in North Andover. Now the real work of setting priorities and developing an implementation plan begins."

Ten days ago, Bedford became the first community in the state to adopt the Act. At least twenty more communities, including Amherst, Ayer, Boxford, Chelmsford, Cohasset, Dracut, Duxbury, Easton, Framingham, Harvard, Marshfield, Orleans, Plainville, Rehobeth, Rockport, Sherborn,

Southampton, Wakefield, West Tisbury, and Weston, are scheduled to vote on the Act within the next few months, and dozens more are considering ballot measures.

In order for a municipality to qualify for state matching funds, the legislative body (e.g. Town Meeting or City Council) must vote to place a property tax surcharge of no more than 3% on the ballot. Alternatively, CPA may be placed on the ballot through a petition signed by at least 5 percent of the city or town's registered voters. Once CPA is placed on the ballot, local voters must then vote to approve it. Unlike Proposition 2 ½ overrides, adoption of CPA requires a majority vote locally, not a two-thirds vote. In addition, participating cities and towns can opt out of CPA after five years and end the surcharge.

If every city and town adopts CPA by implementing a 3 percent property tax surcharge, nearly \$200 million will be raised every year for open space protection, historic preservation, and affordable housing, according to the State House News Service. A minimum of 10 percent of the annual revenues raised through the surcharge must be used for each of three core community concerns: land protection, historic preservation, and affordable housing. The remaining 70 percent can be allocated for any combination of these three uses. CPA exempts certain taxpayers from the property tax surcharge, including the elderly, disabled, veterans and the surviving spouses of veterans. Local governments may also choose from several allowable exemptions.

The Trust for Public Land is a national conservation organization dedicated to protecting land for people to enjoy as parks and open space. Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 1.2 million acres nationwide, including nearly 60,000 acres in New England. The Wall Street Journal's Smart Money Magazine recently named TPL the nation's most efficient large conservation charity, based on the percentage of funds dedicated to programs.