



TOWN OF CONCORD
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
 141 KEYES ROAD, CONCORD, MA 01742
 TEL. (978) 318-3290 FAX (978) 318-3291

Application for CPA Funding
Due no later than 4:00pm on Friday, September 21, 2018

Applicant: Town of Concord

Co-Applicant (if applicable): _____

Project Name: Emerson Land Acquisition

Project Location/Address: 18 Cambridge Turnpike

Purpose: (Select all that apply)

- Open Space Community Housing Historic Preservation Recreation

Project Budget:

Amount of CPA Funds Requested: \$ 200,000

Amount from Other Funding Sources: \$ TBD

Total Project Budget: \$ 200,000
 (If multi-year project, note current phase only)

Please check which of the following is included with this Application:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One Paragraph Project Summary * | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timeline * |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map (if applicable) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architectural plans, site plans, photographs
(if appropriate) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrative * | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Audit or most recent Financial
Information (<u>Non Profit Organizations Only</u>)* |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Selection Criteria and Needs Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Support (if any) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Detailed Project Budget * | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Feasibility Assessment | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Sustainability (if applicable) | |

* Required Documentation

The Contact Person for this Project is: Marcia Rasmussen

All Correspondence should be mailed to: 141 Keyes Road, Concord MA 01742

The Contact Person can be reached by phone at: (978) 318-3290 or by email at: mrasmusen@concordma.gov

Signature of Applicant:  9/21/18

Signature of Property Owner (if different): Debra Keyes for Marcia Rasmussen

For Historic Preservation Projects Only – please check the box below left and acknowledge:

I/We have read the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and understand that planning for and execution of this project must meet these standards.

Project Summary:

The Town has the opportunity to acquire portions of the historically significant Ralph Walden Emerson property, including active agricultural land and a the only portion of the popular Emerson-Thoreau Amble on private property. Portions of the historic R.W. Emerson house parcel are proposed to be acquired by the Town for conservation, agricultural, and passive recreation purposes. Two parcels are proposed for acquisition through 2019 CPA funds (Parcel B and Lot 5) and a third parcel (Lot 1) is anticipated to be acquired in 2020. The parcels will be subdivided from the 10.12- acre parcel, with the R.W. Emerson House and lands to the east remaining in the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association (RWEMA) ownership. Funding is requested from the Open Space category. The Town is in discussions with the Concord Land Conservation Trust (CLCT) and donations from CLCT are expected to reduce the initial CPA request of \$200,000.

Project Narrative:

The Emerson House and grounds are part of Concord's rich literary, cultural, and agricultural history. R.W. Emerson's philosophy, writings, and lectures drew other 19-century intellectuals and writers to Concord, and the American Transcendentalists flourished in Concord's natural landscape, centered around the Emerson house. The Emerson-Thoreau Amble traverses through the property along a route traveled by Emerson and Thoreau. The Mill Brook flows through a vibrant wooded wetland within the property, with an active agricultural field on the south side of the brook. Acquisition of portions of the Emerson land provides the Town with an opportunity to ensure that the landscape associated with the literary and philosophical legacy of R.W. Emerson is maintained into the future, as well as protecting and preserving historically and ecologically important open space spanning both sides of the Mill Brook.

The R. W. Emerson Memorial House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The entire property is listed as a State Historic Resource in the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Heritage Landscape Inventory Reconnaissance Report for Concord, and is also included in Concord's American Mile Historic District.

The Emerson family has been a generous donor to public and private causes for over a century. The family donated Emerson Field to the Town in 1887, and in 1910, Charles Emerson (brother of R.W. Emerson) donated 40 acres of land to build Emerson Hospital. In 1922, the Emerson, Forbes, and Heywood families donated over eighty acres of land around Walden Pond to the state to preserve the woodland setting and protect the pond from overuse through managed recreational access.

In 1930, the Emerson grandchildren and heirs founded the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association (RWEMA), a non-profit literary foundation. Its mission is to "promote continued public appreciation of Emerson and his legacy and to preserve and interpret his home as a museum". The RWEMA continued the generosity of the Emerson family, including a gift of land for a new building for the Concord Antiquarian Society (now the Concord Museum), to include a replica of Emerson's study, which would house the contents of the study as it was at Emerson's death in 1882. In 2011, the RWEMA donated a revocable trail easement to the Town for the Emerson-Thoreau Amble to provide cross-country public access from Concord Center, through Heywood Meadow, to Walden Woods. The easement provided the ability for the Town to

construct a bridge over the Mill Brook behind the Emerson House, and a trail through the property between Heywood Meadow and the cart path that leads to the Town Forest. The bridge and trail were constructed in a similar location and route traveled by Emerson and Thoreau in their frequent walks to and from Walden Woods. This trail forms a critical link along the Emerson-Thoreau Amble, as well as the regional Bay Circuit trail. The trail is within both Lot 5 and Parcel B, and the bridge over the Mill Brook is within Parcel B.

The RWEMA was funded with a small endowment, but has relied also on contributions from its trustees and other family members and friends to support the upkeep of the house and grounds, carry the cost of the visitor program, and make occasional grants to Emerson scholars and editors. Guided tours are offered April through October four days per week. With the ever-rising cost of maintaining the R.W. Emerson house and property, and of running the visitor program, the RWEMA now is pressed to build up its endowment to sustain its operations. In 2017, representatives approached the Town with the proposal to convey land to the Town to strengthen its endowment. Acquisition of Parcel B and Lot 5 (and of Lot 1 in 2020) will assist the RWEMA in continuing its mission to maintain the simplicity, authenticity, and informality of the Emerson House “museum”, as they have done for the past eighty-eight years, to fulfill their commitment to the ethic and spirit of its historic occupants.

Parcel B is a 3.40-acre parcel of primarily wooded wetland traversed by Mill Brook (see attached figure). It borders Heywood Meadow to the east, Town conservation land managed by the Natural Resources Commission. About 500 feet of the Mill Brook flows through Parcel B, with the adjacent wooded wetland providing a valuable riparian corridor. The Emerson-Thoreau Amble meanders through Parcel B from Heywood Meadow, through Town Forest trails and on to Walden Pond.

Lot 5 is a 2.38-acre parcel that consists primarily of active agricultural land farmed by two generations of local farmers. The southwest boundary of Lot 5 fronts on Walden Street, across from the Hugh Cargill community garden, and the southern property line is bounded by a cart path leading to the Town Forest. The Emerson-Thoreau Amble crosses through Lot 5 to the cart path, along Town Forest trails, and on to Walden Pond. Across the cart path is Concord Housing Authority land with six units of affordable housing.

CPC's Selection Criteria and Needs Assessment

This application meets the following General Selection Criteria as found in the 2018 Community Preservation Plan:

- a.) **Eligibility** – Under the CPA legislation, CPA funds may be used is for “*the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space*”. This proposal seeks to acquire open space, including a portion of the Mill Brook riparian corridor, and the only portion of the Emerson-Thoreau Amble on private land, thereby improving natural habitat protection and public access to natural lands.
- b.) **Consistency with Town-wide Planning** – Acquisition of the R.W. Emerson land is consistent with several Town goals. The proposed project meets Goals 1 and 2 of the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Goal 1, “Protect water resources and biodiversity”

is met through protecting of a segment of the Mill Brook and associated riparian corridor, and Goal 2, “Improve recreational access and connectivity” is met by ensuring that the revocable trail easement donated by the RWEMA in 2011 is protected in perpetuity. Loss of Amble access across the Emerson land would mean rerouting the Amble trail along Heywood Street and Walden Street to the cart path across from Hugh Cargill Community Garden to access Town Forest trails, or along Cambridge Turnpike to just east of the Millbrook Farm nursery.

This project also meets several goals of the 2018 Comprehensive Long Ranger Plan. Goal 4.6.1 identifies the importance of “maintaining and increasing the amount of conservation land... to protect important ecosystems and natural systems”. Goal 4.6.2 notes the value of protecting rivers and wetlands, which comprises a majority of Parcel B and much of Lot 5. Protecting existing agricultural land is identified in Goal 4.6.6, including the Town purchase of farmland when available (Goal 4.6.6.3); this goal would be met by protection of the “pumpkin field” farmed by two generations of Concord farmers. Goal 4.6.9.1 identifies the value of connecting hiking trails for nature enjoyment, and to village centers, which is achieved through permanent protection of the Emerson-Thoreau Amble.

All six goals of the 2018 Community Preservation Plan Criteria for Open Space Preservation are met by this project. Criteria 1 is “Address objectives identified in the 2015 or the Comprehensive Long Range Plan”. Criteria 2 is “Identify and secure additional funding and support of other entities for open space land protection”. Criteria 3 is “Provide Conservation Restrictions with public access”. Criteria 4 is “Provide connections with existing trails or potential trail linkages with open space”. Criteria 5 is “Protect drinking water quantity and quality”. Criteria 6 is “Provide flood control/storage”. As noted above, the project meets several goals of the 2015 OSRP and the 2018 CLRP. The project is anticipated to be supported in part from a contribution from the Concord Land Conservation Trust, with a CR to be held by the Land Trust with public access. The Amble traverses the Emerson property, and is part of a 1.7-mile trail through public open space (other than the Emerson property) from Heywood Meadow to Walden Pond. Concord Center may be accessed from Heywood Meadow either along Walden Street or Lexington Road. Protection of the Emerson land provides a natural filter to protect water quality. Essentially all of Parcel B and Lot 5 are within the 100-year floodplain, and preservation of the land protects the ability of the land to provide flood storage from rising floodwaters from the Mill Brook.

The 2018 Community Preservation Plan Criteria for Historic Preservation is most relevant in points 4, 5, and 6. Criteria 4 is “Provide funding for historic resources ... within the historic districts”. Criteria 5 is “Help ensure that a threatened historic resource is saved”. Point 6 is “preserve the settings of historic buildings and cultural landscapes such as farm land. The Emerson land consists of land within the American Mile Historic District and was walked extensively by Emerson, Thoreau, and other historic literary and philosophical members of the early American Transcendentalists. The “pumpkin patch” is a long-farmed field within the property, evoking Concord’s rich agrarian history. Finally, the location of the Amble through these parcels establishes a cultural sense of place.

- c.) **Support by Boards, Committees, Community & Town Meeting Actions** – Town Meeting has regularly supported acquisition of land for conservation and agricultural purposes, particularly when paired with preservation of historical landscapes and resources.
- d.) **Preservation, Protection, or Enhancement of existing Town-owned open space, recreation, historic, and/or housing assets** – This proposal preserves land adjacent to Heywood Meadow, the R.W. Emerson house, and in close proximity to the Town Forest. Preservation of this land also promotes and preserves the importance of one of Concord's most important literary and philosophical thinkers.
- e.) **Service of Multiple or Underserved Populations** – Town conservation lands are public and open to all members of the community.
- f.) **CPA Purposes** – This proposal meets the CPA purpose of open space preservation.
- g.) **Administrative and Financial Management** – The Town has successfully undertaken numerous land acquisition projects over many decades. In addition, the Department has extensive experience administering CPA funds and other grant applications and has met all requirements of the program and funds to date.
- h.) **Successful Implementation of Similar Projects** – Please see above comment.
- i.) **Site Control** – The land is owned by the RWEMA. Funds from the sale will provide much-needed funds to its endowment to allow for long-term maintenance of the R.W. Emerson house and grounds so that this irreplaceable resource may continue to be open to the public.
- j.) **Financial Need** – Competing interests for schools, infrastructure, and other important Town needs are always in competition for open space acquisition efforts. Community Preservation Act funds present a welcome avenue to acquire open space to protect and preserve conservation lands important for connection to Concord's history and interest in protecting valuable ecological resources, as well as climate resiliency by providing undeveloped buffers to safeguard natural disasters.
- k.) **Sources of Funding** – The Town is in discussion with the Concord Land Conservation Trust (CLCT) on donations to acquire these parcels, and the initial CPA request is expected to be reduced pending the outcome of these discussions.
- l.) **Project Plan Feasibility** – The feasibility of this project is excellent. The Town and the RWEMA are enthusiastic about the opportunity to partner on this project, which will provide substantial benefits for the public.
- m.) **Urgency of Project** – For nearly 90 years, the RWEMA has preserved and maintained the R.W. Emerson house and grounds on a small endowment and donations from the Emerson family and friends, which has dwindled over the years. Operating expenses outweigh the income generated by the visitor entrance fees, and capital improvements for

barn and house restorations present a dire need for the Town to act now to preserve and maintain these lands as a connected part of an important historic landscape.

- n.) **Maintenance Provisions** – The Natural Resources Division will continue to maintain the Emerson-Thoreau Amble through the Trails Committee and summer Conservation Crew. The agricultural field will continue to be farmed under Division oversight.
- o.) **Permanent Restriction** – Open space acquired with CPA funds requires a restriction in accordance with Chapter 184 §§ 31-33. The Town is in discussions with the Concord Land Conservation Trust on their interest in holding a Conservation Restriction on the two parcels and it is anticipated that the CLCT will hold the restriction.
- p.) **Reimbursement** – This proposal does not seek reimbursement of previously appropriated funds.
- q.) **Incorporation of Sustainable Design Features** – N/A.
- r.) **Four Sustainability Principles** – N/A.
- s.) **Local Qualified Vendors** – N/A.
- t.) **Normal CPC Schedule** - This proposal does not request the CPC to act outside their normal schedule.
- u.) **Land Acquisition Projects** – Land acquisition projects for which CPA funds are sought must also adhere to the requirements of Article 35 of the 2008 Annual Town Meeting (See APP #54 of the Town of Concord, Aug. 2008) to ensure that affordable housing representatives be involved in preliminary discussions regarding all acquisitions.

Budget

Acquisition of Parcel B and Lot 5 is estimated at \$200,000. The CPC request is for this amount, but the amount is expected to be reduced as the Town is in active discussions with the Concord Land Conservation Trust for a contribution to acquire the land.

Feasibility

The RWEMA approached the Town with a desire to sell portions of the RWEMA land to provide more secure funding to restore and maintain the house and grounds as a museum for public enjoyment. The RWEMA is in full support of this application and the Town is very interested in preserving the RWEMA lands in perpetuity.

Timeline

Subject to CPC recommendation, and Town Meeting approval, the Town will enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the RWEMA in July 2019 for Lot 5 and Parcel B.



Legend

-  Project Site
-  Emerson-Thoreau Amble

**Emerson Land Acquisition
2019 CPA Application**

