



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, October 9, 2020

Applicant: Town of Concord - Natural Resources Division

Co-Applicant (if applicable): _____

Project Name: Emerson Conservation Restriction

Project Location/Address: 18 Cambridge Turnpike (Lot 1)

Purpose: (Select all that apply)

- Open Space Community Housing Historic Preservation Recreation

Project Budget:

Amount of CPA Funds Requested: \$ 210,000

Amount from Other Funding Sources: \$ 355,600

Total Project Budget: \$ 565,600

(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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statement of Sustainability (if applicable) | |

* Required Documentation

The Contact Person for this Project is: Delia Kaye, Natural Resources Director

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

The Contact Person can be reached by phone at: (978) 318-3285 or by email at: dkaye@concordma.gov

Signature of Applicant: Delia Kaye

Signature of Property Owner (if different): Margaret E. Bamez (President, Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Assoc.)

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 a Conservation Restriction (CR) on a portion of the historically significant Ralph Waldo Emerson property. This portion of the R. W. Emerson House parcel is proposed to be restricted by the Town for conservation and passive recreation purposes.

Context of this application: In 2019, the Town, together with the Concord Land Conservation Trust (CLCT), acquired two of three parcels (Lot 5 and Parcel B) offered by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association (RWEMA). This application is for funding for the third (and last) offer by the RWEMA (Parcel 1): the purchase by the Town of a CR on a 0.68-acre area of woods (the Woodland Piece) between the Emerson House and the Heywood Meadow. The CR portion of the 3.6-acre lot will be held by the Natural Resources Commission, with public access provided over the Emerson-Thoreau Amble, and the lot will remain in RWEMA fee ownership. The request is for \$210,000 of CPA funds, to be supplemented by Town funds already set aside for land acquisition. Funding is requested from the Open Space category.

Project Narrative:

The privately owned Emerson House and grounds are part of Concord's rich literary and cultural 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 and its grounds. Conservation of the Woodland Piece of the Emerson lot provides the Town with an opportunity to ensure that the woods beside the house, originally planted with pines by Emerson himself (whose theme was Man's harmony with Nature), and thereby associated with his literary and philosophical legacy, are preserved in their entirety into the future, and for the first time are made accessible by public right.

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 (nephew 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 purpose is to *"promote and maintain the public interest in the literary works of Ralph Waldo Emerson ... and to that end to preserve his library and manuscripts and the home surroundings in which his literary work was done."* The RWEMA continued the tradition of generosity of the Emerson family, in 1930 donating the land for a new building for the Concord Antiquarian Society (now the Concord Museum), to include a replica of Emerson's study, furnished with the contents of his actual study as of his death in 1882. In the 1950s, the RWEMA gave the Town the land for the current

Concord police and fire station. In 2011, the RWEMA donated a revocable trail easement to the Town for the Emerson-Thoreau Amble to provide a link for cross-country public access from Concord Center, through Heywood Meadow, to Walden Woods. The easement enabled 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, simulating the bridge and trail often traveled by Emerson and Thoreau on their frequent walks to and from Walden Woods.

The RWEMA was funded in 1930 with a small endowment, but has relied mainly 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. The Association has no year-round staff, only seasonal paid guides, who offer tours from late April through October, four days per week. With the ever-rising cost of maintaining the historic house and property, and of running the visitor program, the RWEMA now is pressed to build its endowment to sustain—and to increase if possible—its operation as a museum. In 2017, with these financial needs in mind, RWEMA representatives approached the Town with a proposal to sell certain land and development rights to the Town. The sale of the development rights on the Woodland Piece between the Emerson House and the Heywood Meadow will complete a proposed two-year project to preserve the land, and to give public access to the Town and others to more widely enjoy this historic and beautiful site. It will enable the RWEMA to keep the Emerson House open to the public, and to properly maintain its integrity and authenticity as a historic 18th c. Concord home, as they have tried to do for the past ninety years, thereby fulfilling their commitment to the ethic and spirit of its historic occupants.

The Woodland Piece is a 0.68-acre area of old woods forming the western border of the Emerson House property, between the west lawn of the Emerson House and Heywood Meadow, and adjacent to the Gun House which houses Concord's historic revolutionary cannon. It fronts on the small park just installed along the former Cambridge Turnpike/Lexington Rd. intersection. On the south, it borders the Town-owned Mill Brook wetlands, managed by the Natural Resources Commission. These woods, originally planted with pines by Emerson himself and highly valued by him, are mentioned throughout his and his family's lifetime at the Emerson House.

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 preserve and give public access to open space.
- 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 land adjacent to the Mill Brook corridor and Goal 2, “Improve recreational access and connectivity” is met by adding attractive woodland to the abutting

Heywood Meadow, and by forming a connector between the new Cambridge Tpk. triangle park (and its public path and sidewalk) and the Amble (and the trail system beyond).

This project also meets several goals of the 2018 Comprehensive Long Range 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 4.6.9.1 identifies the value of connecting hiking trails for nature enjoyment, and to village centers, which is achieved through connecting Concord Center to the Emerson-Thoreau Amble, which skirts the rear of the Emerson property, and is part of a 1.7-mile trail through public open space to Walden Pond.

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 Woodland Piece is within the American Mile Historic District, and was planted, tended and enjoyed by Emerson and his family. From his study, the tall trees were the “side windows” view for all the friends, neighbors and well-known people who visited him there.

- c.) **Support by Boards, Committees, Community & Town Meeting Actions** – Town Meeting has regularly supported acquisition of land for conservation 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 and the R.W. Emerson house. 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** –Lands with CRs permitting public access are 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, and they are in full support of this application. Funds from the sale of the CR 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** – Concurrent 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 against natural disasters.
- k.) **Sources of Funding** – Town Meeting has approved a capital expenditure of \$350,000 in FY22 for the Emerson CR acquisition.
- 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 a number of benefits for the public.
- m.) **Urgency of Project** – For 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 have dwindled over the years. Operating expenses outweigh the income generated by the visitor entrance fees, and capital improvements for house and grounds restorations present a dire need for the Town to act now to preserve and maintain this land as a connected part of an important historic landscape.
- n.) **Maintenance Provisions** – N/A
- o.) **Permanent Restriction** – A Conservation Restriction in accordance with Chapter 184 §§ 31-33 will be placed over the Woodland Piece and held by the Natural Resources Commission.
- 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** – N/A.

Budget

Acquisition of a CR on the Woodland Piece:	\$560,000
CR Development:	\$ 2,000
Prepare Survey Plan:	\$ 2,000
<u>Install Monumentation (two granite bounds):</u>	<u>\$ 1,600</u>
TOTAL:	\$565,600

Feasibility

The RWEMA approached the Town with a desire to sell a CR on a portion 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 2021 for a CR on the Woodland Piece.



Legend

-  Current and Former Emerson Land
-  Emerson-Thoreau Amble

**Emerson CR Acquisition (Lot 1)
2021 CPA Application**



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