

April 3, 2023

President Linda Morad and Honorable Members  
of the New Bedford City Council  
City Hall  
133 William Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear President Morad and Members of the City Council:

For 62 years, the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) has been preserving the city's history and architectural heritage while enhancing the quality of life for the residents of the city. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) seamlessly aligns with the mission and goals which have guided WHALE in all its work. CPA creates local construction jobs by spurring development, eliminating blight, promoting sustainability, supporting affordable housing options, and increasing the values of neighborhoods and commercial districts throughout the City.

In 2014, the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) participated in a vigorous outreach program, working with a diverse group of stakeholders interested in historic rehabilitation, parks and open space, and community housing, to raise awareness of the benefits of the CPA program and to bring the CPA adoption item to a ballot question.

WHALE, along with other city organizations and neighborhood groups held over 30 community outreach meetings and participated in a variety of neighborhood and local events to promote CPA. The initiative received positive media coverage and in June 2014, the City Council voted unanimously to advance the CPA question to the local ballot, which ultimately was passed by the voters.

New Bedford's adoption of CPA was notable, as it was one of the first cities within the Commonwealth to adopt CPA, and as a Gateway city, attracted national attention, including the Land Trust Alliance featuring New Bedford's CPA adoption in their national magazine *Saving Land*. Furthermore, the City was asked to provide representation to the Steering Committee of the State Community Preservation Coalition, an organization that advances the CPA tenets of smart growth and sustainable development in communities throughout Massachusetts.

WHALE has completed more than 70 rehabilitation and preservation projects, many of which include a variety of housing options. A small sampling of past redeveloped properties with affordability components include the Union Street Lofts, the Grinnell Mansion Congregate Home for the Elderly, the Oscar Romero House and numerous single family homes transferred with income restrictions.

CPA has funded or is currently funding a variety of WHALE projects which include 10 units of Veteran housing, 15 units of restricted income housing, the rehabilitation of a foreclosed blighted two-family residential property for eligible first-time homeownership, as well as commercial projects which will revitalize neighborhoods and attract visitors to the city.

CPA is a wise and sound investment as it directly leverages an automatic state match, and many of the individual CPA projects attract additional public and private dollars to match their CPA awards, leveraging funds far beyond the community's investment and which often would not be available without the CPA incentive. This has certainly been the case with many of the above-mentioned WHALE projects.

The ability to use local sourced funding to implement locally driven projects that fulfil community needs is an attribute of the CPA program which attracted WHALE to support its adoption in 2014. The community benefit of the CPA program cannot be overstated. The ability to invest in a variety of long-term impactful initiatives which promote economic growth, enhance parklands, and preserve our history while ensuring strong, safe neighborhoods and thriving commercial districts should not be considered for elimination.

CPA was signed into state law in 2000 and to date, 194 communities have adopted CPA, which thus far, has not diminished the state match from the DOR managed Community Preservation Trust Fund. The 194 communities represent 70% of

Massachusetts residents and statewide over \$3.15 billion has been raised for community led projects. Since its inception there have only been three attempts (the last in 2012) by communities to revoke the CPA program through a ballot initiative, and all three failed by a large margin. It is clear that both locally and statewide, CPA's benefits are widely recognized.

WHALE respectfully asks that you recognize the widespread benefits of CPA and not override the Mayor's veto on the non-binding referenda to repeal the Community Preservation Act.

Nissa Leary  
President + WHALE