

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDS: WHERE TO BEGIN

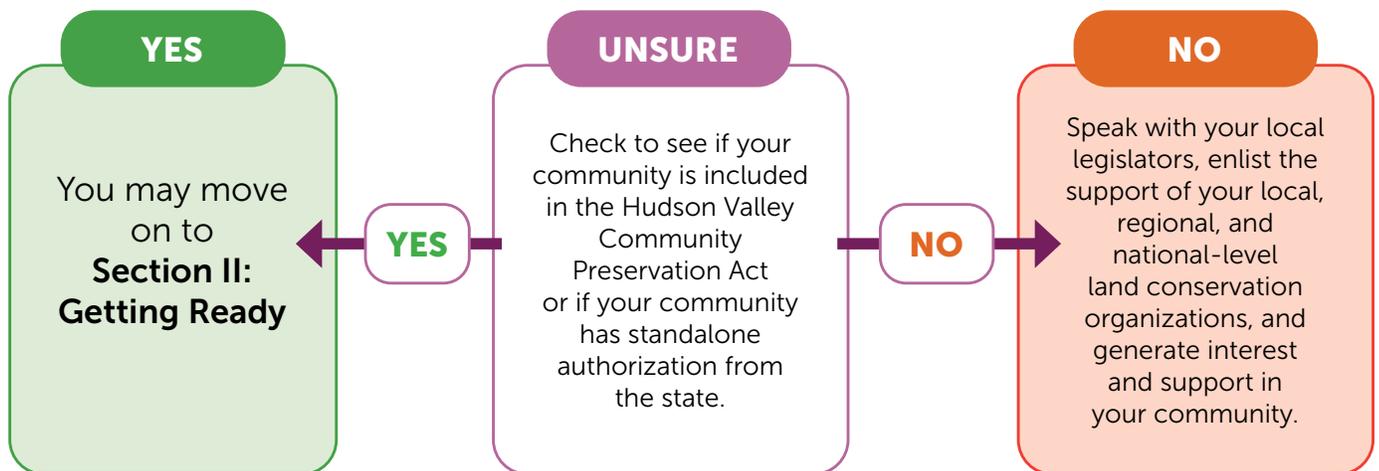


As you begin to think about establishing a **Community Preservation Fund (CPF)** in your community, you must take the first step in identifying both what you have and what you need. In this training, you will learn about the enabling legislation that allows you to establish a Community Preservation Fund, and what information and resources you need to collect in order for your local planning and policy development efforts and your “Vote Yes” campaign to be successful.

SECTION I: STATE AUTHORIZATION

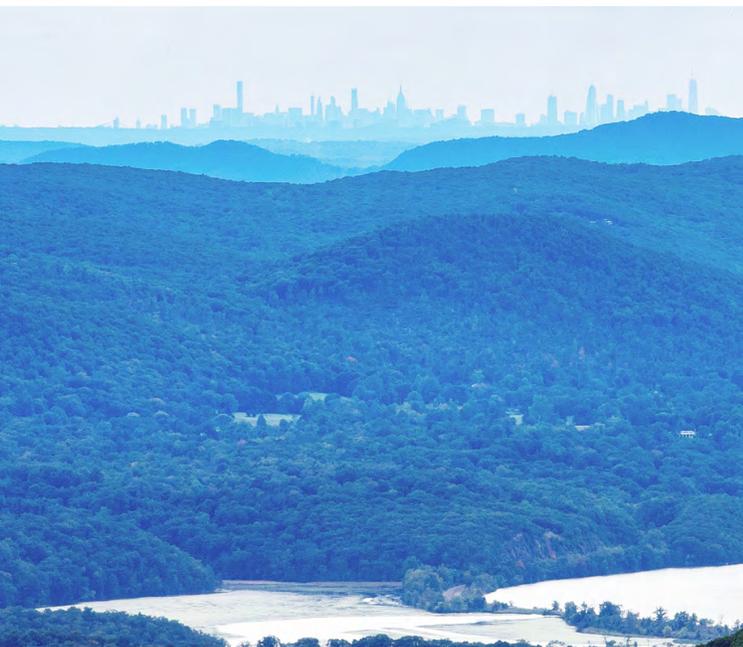
The first step in pursuing the establishment of a Community Preservation Fund (CPF) is to determine:

Does my community have authorization from Albany?



At the time of writing, the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act (CPA) authorizes towns and villages in the following counties to establish a CPF through a real estate transfer tax (RETT):

- Westchester County
- Putnam County
- Ulster County



The following municipalities in the Hudson Valley have independent authority to, but have not established, a CPF:

- Town of Fishkill, Dutchess County
- Town of Northeast, Dutchess County

The following municipalities in the Hudson Valley have established CPFs:

- Town of Warwick, Orange County
- Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County
- Town of New Paltz, Ulster County
- Town of Chatham, Columbia County
- Town of Marbletown, Ulster County
- Town of Gardiner, Ulster County

If you don't have authorization, here's what you can do:

- **Talk to an advocacy group.** Organizations like Scenic Hudson, the Trust for Public Land, the Nature Conservancy, and your local land trust can help you understand the necessary components to gaining CPF authority in your municipality.
- **Seek out a champion within your town or county.** Before speaking with your state legislators, identify a local legislator who will support your efforts. Your Town Supervisor, Village Mayor, or county legislator may be able to capitalize on their networks and/or bring power and influence to your authorization request.
- **Talk to your state senator/assemblyperson.** A legislator or legislators must introduce a bill asking for independent CPF authorization for your municipality from the state. Working directly with your local legislator may be an efficient way to get a bill introduced, and your legislator may even sponsor the bill.
 - >> Reference [Senate Bill S6235](#) as an example of legislative language that was successful. This bill, sponsored by former Senator Jen Metzger of the 42nd district, passed in 2019, adding Ulster County to the Hudson Valley CPA.
 - >> The entire process to get CPF authorization will likely take a year or longer. First, the bill must be introduced, then pass multiple committees in the state legislature, then pass via floor vote in both the House and the Senate, and finally be signed by the Governor.



SECTION II: GETTING READY

If/when you have authorization from the state, take stock of or begin to execute the following components of a successful CPF effort. Getting a successful CPF should be thought of as two separate activities: 1) working with your municipality to get a measure on the ballot, and 2) working in your community to get voters to vote “YES” on your referendum.

SECTION II-A: LOCAL PLANNING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT EFFORT

- **PEOPLE** – Identify a coalition of people that have local and national expertise. This coalition will be comprised of everyone from local volunteers to the staff of organizations that know how to develop and execute Community Preservation Project Plans (CPPs) and CPFs.
- **COMMITTEE** - Form a dedicated committee that will undertake this project and see the CPF through to Election Day. Committee members can be members of the municipal governing body, planning and zoning board members, Climate Action Council or other environmental committee board members, farmers, members of the historic preservation commission, and others with an interest in community preservation efforts.
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** – Start talking to community members about your desire to implement a CPF in your community. Provide details about the endeavor, including the work involved and the positive things a CPF will do for them.
- **EXISTING PLANS & STUDIES** – Compile relevant plans, policies, studies, or other documents your municipality or county has already created. The following are just a few of the resources you may already have that can help you craft your CPP:
 - >> Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)
 - >> Historic Resource Survey or Preservation Plan
 - >> Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)
 - >> Open Space Inventory or Protection Plan
 - >> Farmland Protection Plan
 - >> Other
- **PRIORITIZATION** – In order to list and evaluate the projects and parcels necessary to protect community character in your CPP, your community may want to develop a tool to identify priority areas and/or parcels. This can be done by referencing existing maps developed for your community, or you can utilize Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping software to prioritize based on certain criteria that can be identified through community surveys. Computer-based GIS tools can produce maps that illustrate the natural and cultural resources present on every parcel within your community, allowing you to then rank the parcels from most resources present to least.



SECTION II-B: "VOTE YES" CAMPAIGN

In addition to furthering the steps outlined in Section II-a, you must consider the following in order to prepare for a successful campaign:

- **SUPPORT** - Having an ally on your municipal board will strengthen your campaign. Partnership with your Town Supervisor or Village Mayor will demonstrate local, political support and open doors to networks of other potential supporters and volunteers. Keep in mind that your municipal board will also be voting on the necessary local laws to get the CPF on the ballot, so without their support, you will not have a campaign.
- **COSTS** - Your community will more than likely be unable to cover all of the costs associated with the subsequent "get out the vote" campaign, so you must seek external, private support.
- **TIMING** – Are there any important election cycles ahead? Timing your campaign so that your CPF is on the ballot with other important elections like presidential or gubernatorial races will ensure that your ballot referendum will get more visibility on Election Day. Major elections with high turnouts favor the passage of CPF referenda.

If your community does not have the resources (staff, money, expertise, etc.) to do the work outlined above, the following websites, guides, and organizations may be able to assist you:

[Creating a Natural Resources Inventory: A Guide for Communities in the Hudson River Estuary Watershed](#) and [Creating a Natural Resources Inventory: Tools for Conservation in Your Community](#)

[Local Open Space Planning Guide](#)

[Hudson River Estuary Grants](#)

[Conservation and Land-Use Planning in the Hudson River Estuary Watershed](#)

[Hudson Valley Natural Resource Mapper: A Tool for Viewing Natural Features in the Hudson River Estuary Watershed](#)

[Conservation Planning Guidance](#)

[Conservation and Land Use Webinars](#)

[Conserving Natural Areas and Wildlife in Your Community: Smart Growth Strategies for Protecting the Biological Diversity of New York's Hudson River Valley](#)

[Conservation Advisory Councils and Boards Guide](#)

[New York Natural Heritage Program - Data Request](#)

Municipal CPF Authority

Hudson Valley, NY

