



# **DIVISION OF CONSERVATION SERVICES**

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**FY26 LAND and PARC  
Grant Programs  
Workshop**



# LAND and PARC Grant Programs

- **Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND)** – acquire conservation land
- **Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC)** – acquire recreation land and/or develop public outdoor recreation facilities



Gray's Beach, Kingston



Holland Glen Forest, Belchertown

# LAND and PARC Grant Programs

## Grant Priorities:

### ► **LAND: Conservation Projects**

- Biodiversity protection
- Landscape conservation
- Outdoor passive recreation
- Drinking water protection
- Stewardship of conservation & working lands

### ► **PARC: Recreation Projects**

- Environmental Justice neighborhoods
- Development of new parks
- Designs that incorporate climate resilience
- Access to recreation for all residents, especially those that go above and beyond to provide access to people with disabilities

# LAND and PARC Grant Information

- Applicants must have an Open Space and Recreation Plan on file with DCS by grant deadline
- Applicants with outstanding conversion issues are ineligible
- Reimbursement rate between 52% and 70%
- Maximum grant award of \$425,000
- Grant funding pending FY26 capital budget approval



Downtown Common, Leominster



# LAND and PARC Grant Information

- Grant deadline: July 8, 2025 at 3:00 pm
- Submit the online application form by grant deadline. **No** hard copies to mail.
- Appraisal requirements
- MHC and NHESP review letters
- Do not purchase land without signed contract!
- Do not begin construction without signed contract!



Medford, Gillis Field

# Eligible Project Costs

## For PARC renovation/ development projects:

- ▶ Engineering
  - ▶ Design
  - ▶ Construction
  - ▶ Construction supervision  
(during year 2)
- This is not an inclusive list – ask if you have specific questions



Market Landing Park, Newburyport

# Eligible Project Costs for Land Acquisition

## **For LAND/PARC acquisitions:**

- Cost to purchase (appraised value or negotiated price, whichever is lower)
- Property survey
- Title search and certification
- Legal fees associated with the acquisition (pending EEA approval)
- Recording fees
- Baseline Documentation Report
- Up to 10% of grant request, with EEA approval, can be for other contractual services, such as consultants to negotiate transaction terms, facilitate due diligence or conduct other services for the project (include sufficient detail in project budget)

# Ineligible Project Costs

- Design only (for PARC grants)
- Appraisals
- Reimbursement for in-kind contributions or donations
- Municipal staff time
- Equipment or goods
- Application preparation costs
- 21E compliance fees
- Brownfields restoration
- **When in doubt, ask!**



VanDyke Park, Sutton



# Selection Process for DCS Grants

- All projects are visited by DCS staff, then scored and ranked (rating system is included in the grant bid package)
- Recommendations are reviewed and approved by EEA's Secretary and the Governor's office
- ***Estimated*** grant award announcement date is November 2025

# Rating Systems

- Two rating systems – one for LAND, one for PARC
- Demographic data is considered
  - ▶ Federal census data
  - ▶ Environmental Justice
  - ▶ Calculated by EEA
- Rating systems included in each grant bid package



Buckland Pool



# Funding Award & Project Timeline

- Votes & contracts executed by December 2025
- We encourage you to plan for a closing after December 31, 2025 – if there is a particular requirement to close earlier, discuss with grant manager
- Project completion deadlines:
  - FY26 acquisition projects: June 1, 2026
  - FY27 acquisition and construction projects: June 1, 2027

# Municipal Votes

- All projects must have a town meeting/city council vote
- The vote must do three things:
  - ▶ Authorize submission of grant application
  - ▶ Approve appropriation of 100% of the total project cost
  - ▶ Dedicate the land to recreation or conservation purposes (depending upon the grant program)
- Sample vote language provided in the application package
- **Send LAND grant draft vote to Vanessa for approval**
- **Send PARC grant draft vote to Melissa for approval**



# Municipal Votes

- Vote can occur after application deadline or after grant decisions have been announced, **but...**
- Projects awarded funding **must have vote by end of the calendar year** – plan accordingly!
- May use some types of federal monies, such as CDBG as local portion of total grant costs
- CPA funds can be used as local share
- Other state grants cannot be used as local share



Skate Park, Greenfield

# CPA Communities

- Community Preservation Act (CPA) requires that land purchased with CPA funds must have a Conservation Restriction recorded on the property
- We ask LAND & PARC grant recipients to make all efforts to comply with this CPA requirement prior to final grant reimbursement regardless of whether CPA funds are used for the project awarded funding

Please strive to ensure all CRs on all CPA funded open space acquisitions are recorded prior to seeking grant reimbursement under PARC/LAND Grants.



# Other Reimbursement Requirements

- Land purchased with grant funding must have a recorded survey referenced in the deed
- A signed Project Agreement will be required to acknowledge receipt of grant funds, and Article 97 protection
- Grant recipients that have Land and Water Conservation Fund sites in their community will need to complete an inspection form on all LWCF funded properties prior to final reimbursement

# Post-completion Responsibilities

- Grant funded projects are protected under Article 97 – land must remain in conservation or recreation in perpetuity
- Site must be open to all including non-residents and people with disabilities
- Fair fee policy
- Sign requirements
- Parking



# Submitting an Application: Useful Tips

A grant application requires an electronic submission

- Give yourself time to complete the online application form! Form may be saved for up to 30 days in advance of submitting.
- Upload attachments **last**. Label all attachments clearly (the application form may serve as a checklist).
- If finalizing an OSRP, email to Melissa separately.
- Appraisal may be emailed to grant administrator (does **not** have to be attached to online application; **no** hardcopy required).



# Submitting an Application: Useful Tips

- Answer ALL questions
- Don't include unnecessary items  
- review the list of required attachments
- If providing copies of municipal charter, only include relevant section and highlight appropriately
- Focus on the big picture – if one thing is filled in incorrectly, the application will likely still be eligible



Kenefick Park, Springfield



# PARC GRANT

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# Eligible PARC Projects

- Purchase parkland
- Develop new public outdoor recreation facilities
- Renovate existing municipal public parks
- Land must be dedicated to public park purposes and under custody of Park or Recreation Commission or Park Department (Chapter 45, Section 3 or 14)



DeMarco Park, Avon



# PARC Grants

- All cities regardless of size or towns with more than 35,000 residents are eligible for maximum \$425,000 grant award
- Towns with less than 35,000 residents proposing project with access to public transportation or 100 car parking lot are also eligible for maximum \$425,000 grant award
- All other town projects are eligible for maximum \$100,000 grant award (this is referred to as a “small town” grant)
- Small town grant applications will be competing for separate pool of funding
- Letters of support deadline – emailed by July 17, 2025 (not required)
- Two-year grant (for renovation/development projects) – first year for design, second year for construction (can request construction funding only for FY27)

# PARC Application Tips

- Complete answers to all questions
- Appraisal(s) must be submitted for acquisition projects – email to Melissa
- Preliminary design (done prior to application deadline) must be firm enough to generate a solid cost estimate
- Make sure to break budget details into design and construction costs (two distinct FYs)
- Remember to include construction administration costs in year 2



O'Day Playground, Boston

# PARC Application Tips

- Answer the following questions in the project description:
  - ▶ Is this park in an EJ neighborhood?
  - ▶ Does the park design go above and beyond in providing access to people with disabilities? How so?
  - ▶ Is this a new park?
  - ▶ Will there be environmental education on site?
  - ▶ Is water-based recreation offered at the park?
  - ▶ Is the park mapped as a Statewide Land Surface Temperature Hot Spot ?
  - ▶ How does the park design incorporate resiliency?
  - ▶ How were EJ communities outreached to?
  - ▶ Do I have a partner for future stewardship?
  - ▶ How does this project address my OSRP's goals, objectives or action plan items?





# LAND GRANT

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# Eligible LAND Grant Projects

- Land acquisition
  - ▶ Fee simple
  - ▶ Conservation Restriction
- Conservation and passive recreation
- Conservation Commission or Agricultural Commission control
- Collaborations – many communities' work closely with land trusts



Punkhorn Parklands, Brewster

# LAND Grant Application Requirements

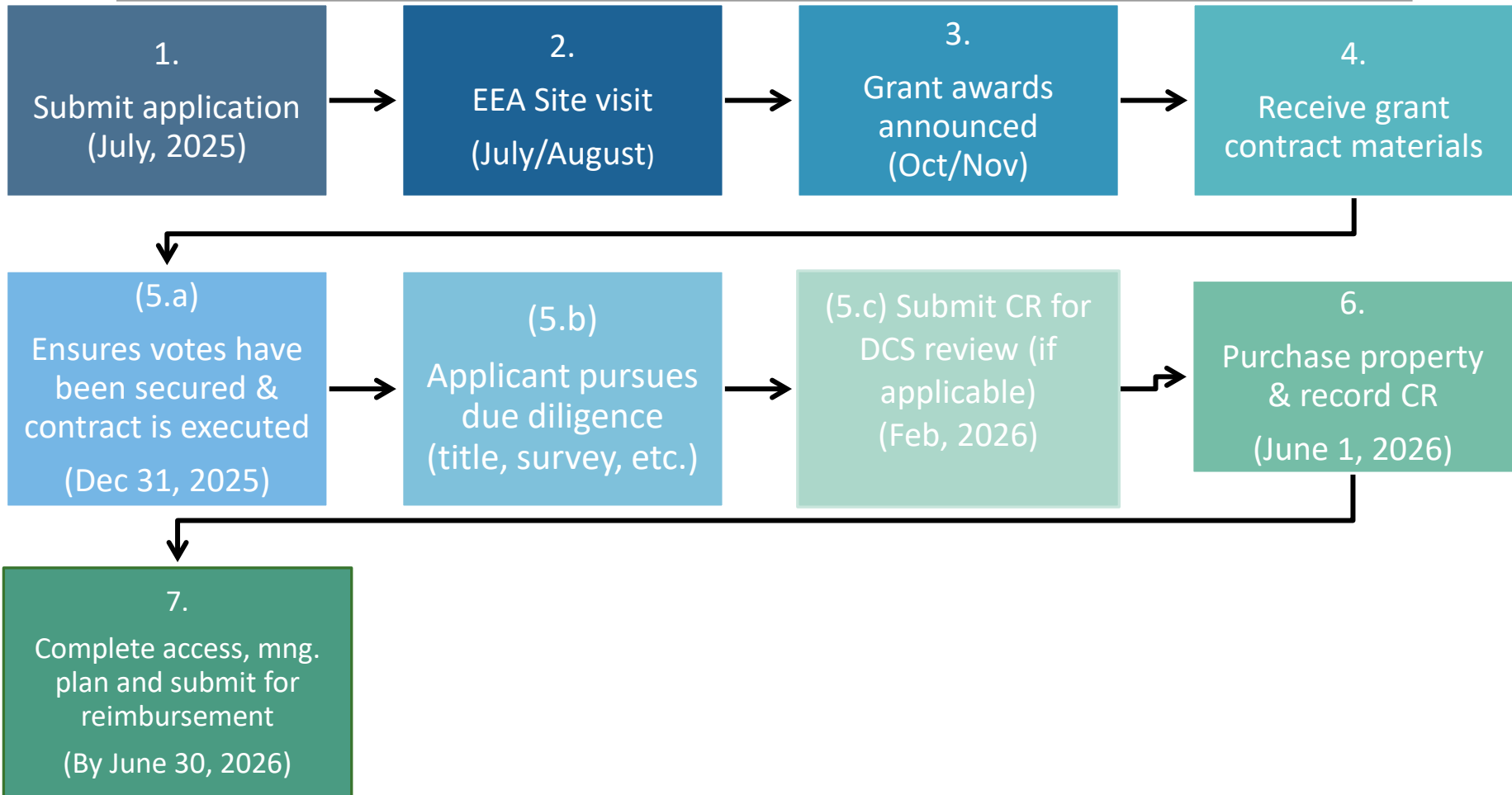
- Appraisals
  - Requirements are on page 5 of the bid document
  - Two appraisals recommended if valuation is >\$1M
- Budget
  - Itemize anticipated expenses
- Project narrative
- Maps
  - Natural resources and landscape context
- NHESP & MHC Letters
- (Draft) Votes authorizing purchase



# Joint Applications

- Multiple municipalities may apply jointly for projects spanning boundaries.
- Land must be contiguous
- A lead contact for project may be designated in a letter signed by all municipalities
- Maximum award reflects \$425,000 per municipality (e.g. \$850,000 for two municipalities)
- Reimbursement rate will be the **average** of the municipalities' rates

# Grant Timeline & Project Requirements



# Other DCS Grant Programs for Land Conservation

- **Conservation Partnership grant** (non-profits)  
Max award: \$425,000 for purchase of land/CRs. **App deadline: July 11, 2025**
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund grant** (municipalities, tribes, DCR, DFG)  
Max award: \$1,000,000 to build/renovate trails, acquire land, renovate or build parks. **App deadline: January**
- **Drinking Water Supply Protection grant** (munic. water departments/non-profit public water suppliers/water districts)  
Max award: \$300,000 for purchase of land/CRs. **App deadline: March**
- **Landscape Partnership grant** (munic. conservation commissions, water departments, non-profits, and state and federal agencies)  
Max award: \$1,250,000 for purchase of land/CRs/APRs. **App deadline: April**

# Contact Information

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Visit DCS online at:

<https://www.mass.gov/grant-programs-offered-by-the-division-of-conservation-services>

**Open question period ends on June 26, 2025**  
**Have your questions answered before then.**