



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Rebecca Tepper, Secretary
Grant Announcement**

**BID ENV 26 DCS 14
Posting Date: December 16, 2025**

**Landscape Partnership Grant
FY 2026**

BID#: BD-26-1042-ENV-ENV01-123666

1. Grant Opportunity Summary:

A. PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR: Acquisition of property interests in large, unique, unfragmented conservation and working landscapes, in single or multiple parcels, by two or more entities acting in cooperation.

B. OVERVIEW AND GOALS: In furtherance of the Healey Administration's environmental, economic, and climate change resiliency goals, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) protects, conserves, and restores the biodiversity and natural resources of the Commonwealth. To fulfill this mission, Rebecca Tepper, Secretary of EEA, is making available funding for an FY 2026 Landscape Partnership Grant Program.

This program advances the large-scale connectivity of conservation lands that is necessary to sustain the integrity and resilience of ecosystems and the viability of local farm and forest economies. Its purpose is to facilitate complex large-acreage projects, leverage state financial investments, expand partnerships among federal, state, municipal, and non-profit entities, enhance the stewardship of conservation land, and expand public outdoor recreational opportunities. The program provides funding to assist municipal, state, federal, and non-profit partners, acting in cooperation, in acquiring interests in lands suitable for conservation purposes, including undeveloped lands, farms and forests, water supply lands, unique ecosystems, rare species habitats, and restored lands. The grant is intended to enable projects that stretch beyond the scope of other state land grant programs. The Landscape Partnership Grant Program also supports Governor Healey's climate and clean energy goals by accelerating land conservation, including investing in forest conservation to achieve important natural climate solutions.

C. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS: Purchase of property interests through fee simple acquisition, conservation restriction (CR), agricultural preservation restriction (APR), or watershed preservation restriction (WPR) for a minimum acreage determined by County (see Table in Section 2B). Project's parcels totaling the designated minimum acreage must be contiguous or directly linked by other permanently protected land.

D. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Applications must be submitted jointly by partners from a minimum of two of the following category types: 1) municipalities acting through their conservation commission, agricultural commissions or municipal departments managing water supply land, or another political body established for the purpose of acquiring and managing land and interests for conservation purposes and public benefit; 2) non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations that have been formed for purposes related to land conservation and

stewardship ; 3) state or federal environmental land agencies; and 4.) water or fire districts or other public water suppliers. At least two of the partners in an application must be involved in the project to a significant degree. See also section 2A.

E. APPLICATION DEADLINE: 3:00 pm on Thursday, April 23, 2026

See further detail on deadlines and grant program calendar in section 4.

F. INFORMATION SESSION: An information session will be held virtually on Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 1:30 pm. Please email Vanessa Farny at vanessa.farny@mass.gov by Tuesday, January 20 to receive a link to the meeting. While not required, it is strongly recommended that applicants attend the session.

G. FUNDING AVAILABILITY: Maximum grant award: \$1,250,000 unless increased at the discretion of the Secretary. See also section 2E.

H. BUDGET REQUIREMENT: Applicants selected to receive grant funding must document the use of funds, or contributions from other sources comprising at least 50% of total project costs. See also section 2F.

I. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACT(S): The contract period will begin on the date of contract execution or a specified later date. Multiple contracts may be awarded under a single application, to multiple project partners, upon determination of the review committee. Contracts issued pursuant to this bid must expend 100% of costs associated with the approved project on or before the end of fiscal year (FY) 26 (June 30, 2026), FY 27 (June 30, 2027) or FY 28 (June 30, 2028) per contract terms. See also section 2H.

J. REGULATIONS, STATUTES, OR AUTHORIZATION GOVERNING THIS GRANT PROGRAM: This bid is issued according to the following authorizations: c. 286, §2 of the Acts of 2014 and Chapter 209 of the Acts of 2018 and Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2022. All properties receiving funding through this program will become permanently protected open space under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, dedicated to conservation use in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40, §8C, or agricultural use under M.G.L. c. 40, §8L and Chapter 780 of the Acts of 1977, or conservation under c. 286, §2 of the Acts of 2014. All projects for which grant assistance is provided must be open to the general public on at least a portion of the project, for appropriate passive recreational use. For land under a state environmental land agency, the public access policy of the relevant agency will be followed. See program policies and regulations in Attachment F.

K. CONTACT INFORMATION:

Vanessa Farny
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Boston, MA 02114
vanessa.farny@mass.gov

2. PERFORMANCE AND CONTRACT SPECIFICATIONS

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

All applications must include eligible project partners representing at least two of the following categories:

- **Municipality**, acting through its Conservation or Agricultural Commission, or municipal water department or other department authorized by the Board of Water Commissioners, or another political body established for the purpose of acquiring and managing land and interests for conservation purposes and public benefit.

The receipt of grant funds to a municipal partner is contingent upon the municipal grantee being able to certify that it will comply with the Massachusetts General Laws, including G.L. c. 40A, § 3A, the MBTA Communities Act. Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act is determined by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities;

- **Non-profit, non-municipal public water supplier** or water or fire district;
- **Non-profit 501(c)(3) organization** formed for purposes of land conservation;
- **State or Federal government agency**, including the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG), Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Federal agencies within the US Department of the Interior (USDOI) or US Department of Agriculture (USDA) are eligible partners but may not receive reimbursement funding through this program.

Projects must involve property acquisitions by at least two project partners. Projects that propose a role for a partner that does not involve a property interest, but does reflect a significant financial contribution, and/or a long-term stewardship commitment may be considered eligible at EEA’s discretion.

Fee simple acquisitions by 501(c)(3) non-profits must be encumbered by a CR conveyed to: the conservation commission of the municipality in which the property is located (if acquired by a non-profit), or; a state conservation agency, or; a federal conservation agency, or; another qualified 501 (c)3 non-profit organization unless a waiver for this requirement is granted by EEA.

Eligible applicants must demonstrate capacity to complete complex land conservation deals, including raising sufficient funding for project work and experience with long-term fee property stewardship, and have no unresolved protected open space conversion issues with EEA. For details, review the EEA [Article 97 Disposition Policy](#).

Multiple applications will be accepted from the same entity. Projects are especially encouraged to partner with the municipality/municipalities in which the project is located.

B. ELIGIBLE PROJECT(S)/SCOPE(S) OF WORK:

EEA seeks to further the conservation of suitable land within the Commonwealth to protect habitat, promote hydrological and recreational connectivity, mitigate climate change impacts and promote forests as climate solutions. Applications will be accepted for projects to be completed in FY 2026, 2027 or 2028. Applications may include any combination of the following acquisitions:

1. Land in fee simple for open space, passive recreation, forestry, agriculture or water supply;
2. A perpetual CR, APR or WPR;

The Project must meet the following criteria:

1.) Have a project core with a minimum contiguous acreage based on County as follows:

County/ies	Minimum Acreage
Berkshire, Franklin, Worcester	500 acres
Hampden	300 acres
Bristol, Hampshire, Plymouth	250 acres
Essex	200 acres
Barnstable, Dukes, Middlesex, Nantucket, Norfolk, Suffolk	100 acres

Projects that span multiple Counties must meet the average of the minimum thresholds for those Counties.

Proposed project core lands, whether purchased or a gift, must be contiguous, or connected through other permanently protected land, including land held by 501(c)(3) non-profit land trusts, or land that is currently or will be effectively reconnected by the construction of a wildlife passage structure as part of, or concurrent with, the acquisition project. Fee acquisition of inholdings are eligible for inclusion to satisfy the minimum acreage required only if it can be demonstrated that the acquisition of the parcel will achieve a significant overall benefit such as improved property management and/or stewardship.

Projects that protect active agricultural uses, designated drinking supply watersheds or forested lands are encouraged.

Additional parcels: Parcels within the same landscape but separated by developed land or unprotected parcels not proposed for inclusion with the project may be included as additional acreage, and may contribute favorably to its evaluation, but do not count towards the minimum acreage eligibility. These additional project parcels should be in close proximity to parcels included in the project core. Funding for protection of these additional parcels or counting gifts or bargain sales on such parcels as project “match” is at EEA’s discretion. Applicants must demonstrate that these additional parcels play a role in promoting the benefits of the project. Applicants who have included the value of gifts or bargain-sales of unrelated, unconnected parcels in their share of project costs (e.g “matching parcels”) deemed by EEA to be extraneous to the core landscape may be asked to submit alternative sources of project match, subject to approval by EEA.

Achieving project connectivity:

Roads: It is strongly preferred that project parcels not be separated by roads. However, parcels on either side of small, minimally-traveled roads (not more than two lanes of travel) may be counted toward the required acreage subject to EEA’s evaluation for inclusion. Projects may include parcels on both sides of a major road or highway as part of the minimum project acreage only if the parcels are connected by, or the project includes the installation of, a suitable wildlife passage structure(s) that facilitates movement of wildlife.

Parcels with existing rights-of-way for infrastructure or development held by private third parties, may be included at EEAs discretion, but applicants may be required to extinguish these rights prior to project completion.

Water: Waterbodies, streams and rivers do not constitute a break between project parcels and land area under small and unprotected water bodies (typically less than 10 acres) may be included in the total project acreage. However, land area under a Great Pond (10 acres or larger historically, although they may have diminished over time), or a larger body of water, may **not** count towards the minimum 500 acres; they will be treated as permanently protected land, and can serve to connect other eligible project parcels.

2.) Accommodate public access. Applicants are encouraged to secure public access on all, or a majority of, parcels and accommodations for public access will be considered in the evaluation of the overall project quality. While reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and nature of public use are allowable, public access, where provided, must be permanent and by right. Project parcels acquired in

fee should accommodate public access to the extent feasible and provide opportunities for passive recreational use of the land (e.g. trail recreation, formal nature study or hunting), while public access on parcels for which funding is sought to acquire a CR, APR, or WPR is encouraged and strongly preferred, but not required.

Proposed uses that threaten natural resource values, agricultural uses, or drinking water supply are prohibited by EEA. Grant recipients must identify permitted and prohibited uses for property acquired in fee, and post this in signage and incorporate in a management plan, appropriately.

Examples of permitted uses: *hiking, biking, swimming in a natural waterbody, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, environmental education, community gardens, timber management with approved plan, agriculture, camping.*

Examples of prohibited uses: *athletic fields (baseball, soccer, etc.), pools, play structures, municipal-scale wells, golf courses, solar and wind installations (except as permitted under the APR program), municipal offices or buildings, motorized recreational vehicles (possible exceptions made for pre-existing, established snowmobile trails), dog parks, encroaching private uses.*

3.) Have a minimum of two eligible partners. Project partners must apply in a single application.

4.) Land must be currently unprotected. Land that is already protected for any purpose under Article 97 or under an EEA-approved CR, an APR or WPR is ineligible for funding. Article 97 status is conferred to a property purchased with an EEA grant program (LAND, PARC, Conservation Partnership, or LWCF) or by its acquisition by a government entity for any Article 97 purpose.

Lands enrolled in Chapter 61, 61A or 61B are not classified as permanently protected land and are eligible to receive funding.

5.) Land cannot be already owned by a municipality, an EEA agency (e.g., DCR, DFG), or federal environmental land protection agency *with the following exceptions:* Municipally-owned land that is not Article 97, or with unclear or disputed Article 97 status may, at the discretion of EEA, be included in a project to secure Article 97 status. Applicants must justify the inclusion of any such parcel.

6.) Cannot be already be owned by a 501(c)(3) non-profit environmental or conservation organization or other entity for conservation purposes unless it was purchased no earlier than one year prior to the posting date of this bid document and can be demonstrated the property was purchased with the sole intention of pre-acquiring the land on behalf of the applicant or a partner to accommodate a potential Landscape Partnership grant award. Any exercise of this exemption is at the risk of the non-profit organization. EEA does not guarantee funding as a result of this exemption.

7.) Cannot be located in an Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development-designated Priority Development Area (PDA) as shown in the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan, I-495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan, Merrimack Valley Land Use Priority Plan, Metro North Land Use Priority Plan, Central Massachusetts Land Use Priority Plan, or other regional plan available.

Only approved project costs incurred **after a contract has been executed by EEA** remain eligible for

reimbursement.

Gifts of properties intended to serve as project match may be acquired prior to an executed contract, but **not earlier than the posting date of the Landscape Partnership bid** if the property is proposed match for FY26. Gifts of property intended to serve as project match proposed for FY27 may not be completed earlier than July 1, 2026, and gifts of property intended to serve as project match for FY28 may not be completed earlier than July 1, 2027 to remain eligible in the corresponding year.

For projects spanning fiscal years, reimbursement requests for the first fiscal year may not exceed 50% of the total grant award requested. Grantees may budget to expend less than 50% of the grant award in the first year, to reserve the flexibility to secure grant funding of greater than 50% in the second year if necessary. Total funding requested over both years may not be for more than 50% of project costs up to \$1,250,000.

Article 97 protection:

Property interests acquired with this grant program will become protected open space under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. No major alteration or change in use of properties may take place after the property is acquired.

C. APPRAISAL REPORTS AND CONSTRUCTION BUDGETS:

Appraisals: An appraisal (or market analysis – see below for detail) is required **by the deadlines identified** for all property acquisitions included in the project, including gifts of land or bargain sales proposed as ‘match’ parcels under the partner’s share of project costs. Applicants are encouraged to solicit a preliminary estimate of value for all parcels prior to submitting the application to ensure that the project budget more accurately reflects property values for purchase or gifts.

Appraisals must clearly break out the property value (e.g. fee or CR) to be acquired by each project partner. Appraisals should exclude building value, as the purchase of structures are not eligible for grant funding; buildings on parcels acquired in fee that do not support conservation or passive public recreation, must be removed in advance of seeking reimbursement. The Applicant or one of the project partners must be the client for the appraisal; the owner of the property cannot be the client. **All appraisals must be dated no earlier than one year prior to the application deadline.** All appraisal reports must be prepared and certified by contracted real estate appraisers, certified or licensed and in good standing pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112 and regulations promulgated by the Board of Registration of Real Estate Appraisers. See the [DCS website](#) for the EEA Specifications for Analytical Narrative Appraisal Reports.

Acceptable forms of market value estimates are as follows:

Parcels with an estimated value of under \$350,000:

One certified appraisal report, or restricted appraisal report.

Parcels with an estimated total value of over \$350,000:

One certified appraisal report. **For parcels with an estimated total value of over \$1,000,000 applicants are strongly encouraged to obtain a second appraisal report or review appraisal.**

EEA reserves the right to request additional or review appraisals, as it deems necessary.

Appraisal deadlines:

For property to be purchased or to serve as match for grant funding in FY26 (before June 30,

2026), the appropriate number and type of appraisal (see above) must be submitted with the application.

For property to be purchased or to serve as match for FY27 grant funding (between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027), the appropriate number and type of appraisal must be submitted not later than **July 1, 2026** or 30 days prior to closing on the parcel whichever comes first.

For property to be purchased or to serve as match for FY28 grant funding (between July 1, 2027 and June 30, 2028), the appropriate number and type of appraisal must be submitted not later than **January 31, 2027** or 30 days prior to closing on the parcel whichever comes first.

A deadline extension for required appraisal(s) is at EEA's discretion.

D. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Each application will be scored using the criteria below. See Attachment B for more detail.

- **Local involvement and stewardship capacity of applicants**
- **Project quality and consistency with program priorities**

A grant application review team composed of EEA staff members will review all applications, conduct site visits and develop funding recommendations.

E. FUNDING AVAILABILITY, BUDGETING GUIDELINES & ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES:

Reimbursement rate:	Up to 50% of total eligible project costs; eligible project costs include the value of any gifts or bargain sales that partners may secure as ‘match’.
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Maximum award:	\$1,250,000 unless increased at the discretion of the Secretary.
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For multi-year projects, reimbursement within the first fiscal year cannot exceed 50% of grant funding award.

Applicants selected to receive funding may not use other state funding sources for acquisition costs on the same property interest, unless it is funding contributed by a state agency participating as a project partner. Use of CPA or Cape Cod or Martha’s Vineyard Land Bank funds is permitted.

Awards may result in a single or multiple contracts for each project. Municipal and non-profit project partners with executed contracts will be reimbursed for eligible expenditures incurred by the grant awardee within the contract period as documented by invoices and cancelled check or wire transfer statements or an attested treasurer’s statement. Grant funding for EEA agencies will be via a capital allocation or Inter-Agency Service Agreement (ISA). Federal USDA or USDOJ agencies are eligible project partners, and may contribute financial, stewardship, ownership, or facilitative resources, but are ineligible to receive reimbursement from this grant program. MassDOT may not receive funding from this grant program.

All contracts shall be subject to available funding, whether through the appropriation and authorization of sufficient funds or the receipt of sufficient revenues. If available funding ceases for any reason, contracted partners will be notified in writing and the contract shall be deemed under suspension and contract performance must halt. A contractor will not be entitled to compensation for any performance provided during the period of contract suspension. EEA may lift the suspension, in writing, if additional funding is received. In the absence of foreseeable available funding, EEA may terminate the contract.

F. BUDGET REQUIREMENT:

A detailed budget for all project component(s) is required. EEA may approve or disapprove individual portions of a proposed budget.

Grant awards may not exceed 50% of total project costs for a maximum of \$1,250,000. Reimbursement requests for individual eligible costs may be up to 100% of the cost, provided the sum of reimbursement requests do not exceed 50% of documented project costs. For two-year grant requests, the total reimbursement request in the first year may not exceed 50% of the grant award.

Municipal and non-profit partners must secure authorization to raise, borrow, or otherwise appropriate 100% of respective project costs in anticipation of a grant reimbursement payment.

Eligible sources of project match funding may include, but are not limited to:

- Foundation grants
- Municipal land, open space, CPA, or agricultural accounts
- Private donations
- Federal agency funds, grants, or loans
- Natural resources damages settlement funds
- Non-profit accounts
- State agency funds (allocations outside of this grant)
- Drinking water protection accounts
- Gifts of property interests, including gifts of partial value via bargain sales
- Other non-state funds approved by EEA

G. PROJECT TERMS:

Awarded projects must abide by the Standard Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions, and/or an Interdepartmental Service Agreement. All contracts are subject to successful negotiation of a Final Scope of Services. EEA does not guarantee that any contracts may result from this bid. It is anticipated that projects could commence when the relevant contract or ISA is executed, or capital allocation completed. Amendment to contracts is at the sole discretion of EEA.

H. ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACTS:

Contracts will end on June 30, 2026 for awards made in FY 26; June 30, 2027 for contracts awarded for FY 27; June 30, 2028 for contracts awarded for FY28. Extension of a contract is at the sole discretion of EEA.

I. DELIVERABLES, OWNERSHIP, AND CREDIT DUE:

Acquisitions resulting from this bid are subject to various requirements depending upon the partner and are detailed below. All projects must be authorized and adhere to regulatory, statutory, or charter requirements of the partner and/or funding source.

Acquisitions by municipalities for purposes other than water supply protection must be held by the Conservation Commission or Agricultural Commission as appropriate.

Acquisitions by a municipal water commission, or other public water supplier, including, water districts or fire districts, must be authorized to acquire the land by the Board of Water Commissioners or Board of Selectmen authorized as such, for drinking water supply protection purposes, and may require DEP approval.

If Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds are used to acquire project lands, adherence to CPA regulations is required, including the conveyance of a CR to an appropriate 501(c)(3) organization within the meaning of M.G.L. c. 184.

Fee simple acquisitions by 501(c)(3) non-profits must be encumbered by a CR approved by the Secretary of EEA. Additional information is available on the [DCS website](#).

APRs must adhere to current Massachusetts [Department of Agricultural Resources' criteria](#) for participation in the APR program.

EEA Project Agreements affirming that property acquired as part of the grant-funded project is protected under Article 97 must be recorded with deed or CR for all non-profit or municipal acquisitions.

All grant contracted acquisitions of property interests must meet deadlines as follows:

- For property to be acquired with **FY26** funding: All due diligence completed by June 1, 2026, or closing, whichever comes first. The property purchase must close by June 30, 2026 to remain eligible for reimbursement.
- For property to be acquired with **FY27** funding: A purchase and sale agreement must be executed and all due diligence completed by April 1, 2027, or closing, whichever comes first. The property purchase and all project components should be completed by June 1, 2027.
- For property to be acquired with **FY28** funding: A purchase and sale agreement must be executed and all due diligence completed by December 31, 2027, or closing, whichever comes first. The property purchase and all project components should be completed by June 1, 2028.

Due diligence must meet the standards of the government agency that will hold an interest in the property, as applicable.

Projects that fail to meet these deadlines may have their funding commitment withdrawn. Extensions are at the discretion of EEA.

J. REPORTING: Grant recipients will be required to submit periodic progress reports.

K. INVOICING: The Landscape Partnership Grant Program is a reimbursement program. Award recipients must submit a billing form with proof of payment for all project costs for which reimbursement is sought. Only approved expenses incurred by the contracted entity during the period of contract, and for which appropriate documentation is submitted, are eligible for reimbursement.

3. Instructions for Application Submission

A. APPLICATION SUBMISSION: Applications must be submitted through the EEA Grant Management System by **3:00 pm on Thursday, April 23, 2026**. Applications will not be accepted after the deadline.

Applicants are required to establish a user profile on the system to apply. **Please allow a few days to establish and verify your profile and navigate the new Grant Management System.**

To create an applicant profile:

Click on "Login to Applicant Portal"

Select "Login/Register"

Select "Create a Business Account"

Follow the instructions provided

For help, see [EEA's Grant Management System User Guide or Instructional Videos](#).

The user profile may require one or more days to receive verification. Once verified, you will receive an email notification and access to the Grant Management System for your organization. This portal will serve as your locale to view all grant information. You may then view the FY26 Landscape Partnership Grant Program funding opportunity and apply.

Applicants may save a draft application and return to modify and/or submit until the application deadline. After the deadline, applicants will not be able to edit, add files or submit materials. Please note that the system user submitting the grant will be the default "Grant Primary Contact" and will receive all relevant notifications and updates to the grant record.

The online application with supporting documents must be submitted on or before Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 3:00 PM. Submissions through the site will be digitally time stamped. EEA shall make no allowance for technical difficulties or inability of the respondents to utilize the online system. No applications will be accepted after the deadline for any reason.

Digital files uploaded to the application site must be provided in Microsoft Office compatible format or unlocked Adobe Acrobat.

A few tips:

- Filter and sort programs by Program Name or Agency to navigate to EEA's FY26 Landscape Partnership Grant Program.
- To start an application, click the "Apply" button to enter the application form for the grant program.
- The "Summary" tab will show the general grant program information. The "Policies and Procedures" tab will show the program procedures, custom application questions, and required documentation.
- Click on the "Start Grant Application" button on the top right to enter the grant application form.
- In the "Upload Documentation" section, download, complete, and then upload the required documents using the templates provided. Upload additional supporting documentation or materials within the Additional Documentation upload tool. Please refer to the Required Documents below for materials that you may need to complete your application.
- Once complete, submit your grant application. **No additional project information or documentation changes can be made after submitting.**

B. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS: A complete application package includes:

1. Application;
2. Appraisal report(s). For FY26 acquisitions appraisals are required to be submitted with the application, for FY27 or FY28 acquisitions we encourage those be submitted with the application if available, but will accept on or before the deadlines identified in Section 2C;
3. Project narrative;
4. Letters of Authorization for each project partner. Letters must confirm the project manager is authorized to submit application materials on behalf of the named partner and affirm the total project costs and total funding requested by the partner. The letter must be signed by the appropriate signatory for the partner (e.g. Chief Executive Officer; Chair of selectboard, Mayor, or City/Town Administrator or Manager), and
5. Draft municipal (Town Meeting or City Council) vote(s) that authorize municipal partners to acquire property for conservation and passive recreation and to expend the total project costs. Draft language must be approved by the grant manager. Please identify the date the vote is anticipated in your

application.

6. Maps illustrating project parcels, protection status of connecting/adjacent parcels, habitat values and other relevant resources and features, including water ways, ponds or lakes, as well as roads;
7. Letter from [Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program](#) (NHESP) indicating the presence or absence of rare and endangered species on properties included in the application. To request comments, please submit a Request for State-listed Species Information to the NHESP. See <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/request-rare-species-information> for information on submitting that request online or by mail. The request should include “Landscape Partnership Grant” in the Project or Site Name. There is no charge for this request letter.
8. Letter from Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) indicating the presence/absence of historic or archaeological sites. Submit a [Project Notification Form](#) to MHC; and,
9. Documentation of good stewardship on conservation properties currently owned or managed by project partners.
10. Additional documentation to support application and/or project narrative (e.g., evidence of enrollment in Ch. 61/61A; forest management plan; documentation of planned public drinking water source; etc.)

C. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED IF SELECTED TO RECEIVE FUNDING: If an application is selected to receive funding, each non-state project partner seeking funding will be required to submit the following forms to complete a contract:

- Commonwealth Standard Contract with Commonwealth Scope and Budget Form;
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing; and
- Landscape Partnership Project Agreement.

Respondents should review the Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, Commonwealth Scope and Budget Form, and Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing prior to submission of a Response, available under the Forms and Terms tab of this Commbuys posting, as well as: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/osd-forms>.

D. PROJECT STEPS AND PROCEDURES:

1. Lead partner submits **online application**.
2. DCS arranges **in-person site visits**.
3. **EEA evaluates applications** using Landscape Partnership Grant Program selection criteria. See Attachment B for detail.
4. **Awards are announced**, and grant recipients receive a formal award letter. Applicants not selected to receive funding will receive a brief explanation of why the project was not selected and recommendations for improving future grant program applications.
5. **Contracts issued to project partners are** signed by project partners and executed by EEA.
6. **Municipal partners secure funding authorization (if not already secured)** via vote to (a) authorize the municipality to appropriate, transfer from available funds, expend from its Conservation Fund, or borrow a sufficient amount to meet its contribution obligations as required. A municipality may vote to borrow funds in anticipation of state or federal reimbursement prior to receiving a grant award (M.G.L. C. 44, §8C)] (b) designate the Conservation Commission to hold and manage the property for conservation and passive recreation (M.G.L. C. 40, §8c) or public water supplier to hold and manage the property for drinking water supply protection (M.G.L. c. 40, §39A). Vote language must be reviewed and approved by the Landscape Partnership grant program manager prior to the vote.
7. **Conservation Restriction review:** Parcels that involve a CR held by a municipality or non-profit partner must have a draft CR reviewed by DCS. Draft CRs with CR review application form, should be e-mailed to Denise.Galvao@mass.gov per the instructions on the [DCS website](#). The draft CR should be submitted **no later than 4 months prior to anticipated closing**.

8. **Complete due diligence** to ensure all properties have certified clear title and an accurate metes and bounds survey.
9. **Follow state procurement law.** Municipal and state agency grant recipients must adhere to state procurement laws, M.G.L. C. 30B (Uniform Procurement Act). Municipal acquisition projects fall under Section 16(2)(e), including a requirement for advertising in the Central Register 30 days prior to closing. **Communities using CPA funds for the acquisition are exempt from this requirement.**
10. **Purchase properties** and record all required documents for grant reimbursement.
11. **Prepare properties acquired in fee for public use** including any preliminary site cleanup needed, and to ensure parking and public access are adequate. A sign(s) acknowledging Landscape Partnership Grant Program funding is installed at main entry point(s). Partners may use their organizations traditional sign formats, but should incorporate acknowledgement of Landscape Partnership funding.
12. **Submit a Baseline Documentation Report, Land Management Plan or other Stewardship Plan accepted by EEA** with detail of property conditions at the time of award.
14. **Request reimbursements.** Partners coordinate with lead partner to ensure billing form and documentation of costs is complete and submitted by the deadline.
15. **Reimbursement payments are made** by electronic funds transfer.

4. DEADLINES AND PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

A. RELEASE OF BID: Tuesday, December 16, 2025

B. INFORMATION SESSION: An information session will be held virtually via MS Teams at Thursday at 1:30 pm, January 22, 2026. Please be sure to register in advance by emailing Vanessa Farny at vanessa.farny@mass.gov to receive a link to the meeting. While not required, it is strongly recommended that applicants attend the workshop.

C. APPLICATION DUE DATE: 3:00 pm on April 23, 2026

D. ESTIMATED AWARD DATE: Awards will be announced as soon as is feasible after the grant application deadline. Contract negotiations will begin immediately thereafter.

E. ESTIMATED CONTRACT START DATE: Notwithstanding any verbal representations by the parties, or an earlier start date listed in the Standard Contract Form, and only after an award is issued and a final scope of services has been negotiated, the effective start date of a contract shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

A. TYPE OF PROCUREMENT: Grant

B. USE OF THIS PROCUREMENT BY SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS: This bid is a single department procurement.

C. REQUEST FOR SINGLE OR MULTIPLE CONTRACTORS: This bid may result in multiple contracts.

D. BID DISTRIBUTION METHOD: This bid has been distributed electronically using the COMMBUYS system. It is the responsibility of every Applicant to check COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications to a bid to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Applicants who fail to check for amended bids and

submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential applicants are advised to check the “last change” field on the summary page of bids for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent bid files. The application and answers to questions will be posted on COMMBUYS and the [DCS website](#). Applicants may not alter bid language or any bid component files. Those submitting a proposal must respond in accordance with the bid directions and complete only those sections that prompt an applicant for a response. Modifications to the body of this bid, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this bid are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify response.

E. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BID:

- A. Application form
- B. Landscape Partnership Grant Program selection system
- C. Requirements for use of Community Preservation Act funds in municipal acquisitions
- D. Sample municipal vote
- E. Landscape Partnership program policies and legislation

**Landscape Partnership Grant Program
APPLICATION FORM**

Deadline: Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 3:00 pm

Application must be completed online at:
<https://greenhub.appianportals.com/applicants-portal>

I. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project name: _____

Project partners & contact information

*This application must be submitted by the project contact for the Lead Partner. **All projects must have at least two project partners representing at least two of the following categories:** municipal conservation commissions, water commissions or water departments; non-profit public water suppliers; non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations whose primary purpose includes land conservation, environmental protection, environmental education, or outdoor recreation; government land agencies, including the DCR, MDAR, MassWildlife, MassDOT or US Department of the Interior (USDOL) or US Department of Agriculture (USDA).*

Which organization, municipal or government agency partner is serving as the Project Lead?

*The individual submitting this application will serve as the point of contact for this application and will be responsible for ensuring **all** project partners complete their obligations.*

Please identify partner 2: _____

Authorized Project Manager for Partner 2:

Email Contact:

[Optional] Partner 3: _____

Authorized Project Manager for Partner 3:

Email Contact:

[Optional] Partner 4: _____

Authorized Project Manager for Partner 3:

Email Contact:

[Optional] Partner 5: _____

Authorized Project Manager for Partner 3:

Email Contact:

2. PROJECT DETAILS

Projects must include the minimum contiguous acreage required, as identified in the table in Section 2B and described therein. Additional parcels may be included.

What is the project total acreage? _____

How many project parcels*? _____

* Parcels under the same ownership, and intended for conveyance to the same partner, or for protection under the same restriction (ie. one deed or CR), maybe considered a single 'parcel'.

Project municipality/ies and county/ies

In which of the following Fiscal Years is funding requested? Please ensure the budget submitted clearly identifies the parcels proposed for acquisition in each fiscal year):

FY 2026 \$_____ FY 2027 \$_____ FY 2028 \$_____

What is the total acreage of permanently protected open space that is adjacent or otherwise connected to the parcels proposed for acquisition? _____ acres

Maps attached with this application should clearly identify this acreage and the conservation status of these parcels.

Project description

Provide a 2-3 page narrative description of your project that will assist the evaluation of the overall scope and quality of the proposed project. Please include the following:

- Role of each project partner (e.g. parcels that will be acquired, stewardship responsibilities);
- How conservation of the parcels will benefit the ecological function and natural resources of the region including any connectivity to existing protected open space or the potential for future conservation efforts;
- If any proposed project parcels are not directly adjacent, or well-connected by adjacent protected parcels, how the acquisition of the parcels contribute to project goals;
- A project timeline including anticipated closing dates for all properties and the schedule for completing due diligence, survey work (as applicable);
- Community benefits the project will provide (e.g. drinking water supply protection, flood mitigation, recreational access and/or trail linkages);
- Location of current or future public access. Identify any current recreational uses that will benefit from the property acquisition;
- The risk of development;
- Any quantifiable economic benefits that will be achieved for the local economy;
- Whether this project incorporates any specific Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program goals for the communities involved;
- Proposed future stewardship.

Parcel Information

Complete the following table. For project parcels with property interests with both fee and CR interests conveyed, use a separate line to identify the partner and acquired interest. [Use an Excel spreadsheet if preferred.]

Assessor parcels under the same land ownership within the same municipality that have been appraised jointly as a single property may be counted together under a single “parcel” number if they are being acquired by the same project partner for cohesive management (e.g. a larger parcel subject to a subdivision that has been divided into numerous smaller house lots on assessors plan).

Insert additional rows to	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Parcel #	Assessor's map/lot/parcel

	Municipality							
	Address (if available)							
	Landowner (as named on deed)							
	Acreage							
	Project partner							
	Interest (Fee/C R)							
	Appraised Value							
	Appraisal Date							

Has title research been performed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is eminent domain is anticipated for any parcels? Has the pro-tanto award amount been determined?

*Certified clear title is a condition of reimbursement. If clear title is not available, an acquisition by friendly taking (eminent domain) process may be used to acquire title. Applicants are advised to conduct title research well in advance of anticipated closing date, as title problems can complicate and delay acquisition.

Is any of the proposed project acreage under a negotiated agreement with the landowner (e.g. Purchase and Sale Agreement, or signed option agreement)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, identify the parcel(s), the agreement(s) in place.

For municipal acquisitions:

Do you have town meeting vote/city council approval?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If not, what is the date for the vote?

Note: Project must have municipal authorization prior to May 31, 2026 to receive reimbursement for FY26 awards, by December 31, 2026 for FY 27 and FY28 awards.

Parcel Use Details

Identify parcels in the same order as the Parcel Information table above. Please include parcel numbers in a map(s) so they may clearly be identified.

Parcel #	Assessor map/lot/parcel	Is there a metes/bounds boundary survey? (Y/N)	What is the current property use?	Is the parcel enrolled in Chapter 61 or 61A? (Y/N)	Are agricultural or forestry uses proposed? (Identify use)	Are there structures on the parcel? (Y/N)
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

Insert additional rows to accommodate parcels, as needed.

								Will public access be allowed? (Y/N)
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---

Describe where public access is proposed. If public access is proposed for parcels **without** frontage, describe how the public will access the property, including whether existing rights of access or long-term agreements exist and/or whether there are plans to secure access necessary for public access to these properties.

If structures are located on parcels, identify the parcel, the structure(s), and current and planned use.

(Note: Appraisals should explicitly exclude building value, as the purchase of structures are not eligible for grant funding; buildings on parcels acquired in fee that do not support conservation or passive public recreation, must be removed in advance of seeking reimbursement. CRs should exclude residential structures.)

Are any parcels within a designated Priority Development Area (PDA) **or** a Priority Preservation Area (PPA) located in any of the following areas designated by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities: South Coast Rail Corridor Plan, the I-495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan, Merrimack Valley Land Use Priority Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, identify the designation and plan:

3. PROJECT QUALITY

Biodiversity and resource protection:

What percentage of the project is within MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) BioMap **Core Habitat and/or Critical Natural Landscape**?

_____ %

The Nature Conservancy's [Resilient Land map](#) assigns an average climate resiliency score to identify the importance of the site for climate change adaptation, what is the aggregate resiliency score for the project? _____ SD

Water resources:

How many acres are located within 500 feet of the ocean, a lake, pond, river, stream, or wetland?

_____ acres

How many acres are located within: A Zone I or II, Zone A or B drinking water supply area?

_____ acres

An Interim Wellhead Protection Area? _____ acres

A sole-source, medium-, or high-yield aquifer?

_____ acres

Please make sure to include a map that reflects the designation identified in MA GIS data.

If the project includes forest anticipated for active management or harvest, **is climate resiliency, habitat benefits or watershed protection** reflected in the management plans?

If so, how many acres? _____

Describe the type of plan and acreage subject to the plan. Please include the relevant plan or pages in the application:

Does the project include forest land intended to be managed passively for ecological benefit, with explicit restrictions on timber harvest over the long-term?

If so, how many acres? _____

Describe the type of restriction or stewardship plan and the applicable terms:

Recreational opportunities:

What public recreational opportunities will the project provide? Check all that apply.

Recreational opportunities will be verified by DCS during the site visit.

- ☐ Trail-based activities (ex. hiking, Nordic skiing)
- ☐ Wilderness activities (ex. camping, hunting)
- ☐ Water-based activities (ex. canoeing, swimming, fishing, skating)
- ☐ Educational activities (ex. Organized nature walks, trainings, outdoor classroom)

4. BUDGET

A. Proposed budget: Provide an itemized budget for property acquisitions and associated costs using the budget format provided below.

Note that while the maximum reimbursement for the project as a whole is 50% (up to \$1,250,000), individual project components may be reimbursed at a higher or lower rate *as long as the balance of funding requested does not exceed 50% of grant request within the first fiscal year of the grant award*. Bargain sales and gifts of property interests should be captured under 'Partners Share'.

Federal partners are not eligible to receive reimbursement.

Expense	Partner involved	Partner's share (e.g. 'match')	EEA share	Total cost
Parcel # ____ (As referenced on the Parcel Information table):				
<i>Example: Fee purchase</i>	<i>Town Land Trust</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>

Parcel/component totals				
Parcel # ____ (As referenced on the Parcel Information table):				
Parcel/component totals				
Parcel # ____ (As referenced on the Parcel Information table):				
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Parcel # ____ (As referenced on the Parcel Information table):				
Parcel/component totals				
Parcel # ____ (As referenced on the Parcel Information table):				

Parcel/component totals				
TOTAL PROJECT COST & FUNDING REQUEST				

B. Funding and match sources: Identify the sources of funding and whether funding has been secured. *Applicants selected to receive funding may not use other state funding sources for acquisition costs on the same property interest, unless it is state funding contributed by a state agency participating as a project partner. Use of CPA or Cape Cod Land Bank funds is permitted.*

Funding source	Project partner recipient	Amount	Secured or pending?
Total project funding secured			

Attachment B: Landscape Partnership Grant Program Project Selection System

A grant review committee will consider each project and make funding recommendations based upon partnership support and overall project quality. The grant review committee considers:

1. Partnership and stewardship

- Municipal involvement and local support
- Whether partners demonstrate good stewardship capacity.

2. Project Quality

- Total project size and its connectivity to existing protected open space
- Contribution to natural resource protection:
- Project acreage that falls within MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) BioMap Core or Critical Natural Landscape designations
- Contribution to climate change resilience
- Contributions to regional habitat linkages
- Protection of parcels within 500 feet of coastal habitats and/or lakes, ponds or rivers
- Contribution to public drinking water supply protection
- Promotes the preservation of active agricultural lands or forested land
- Provision of public passive recreational opportunities
- Project readiness.

LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SELECTION SYSTEM																								
CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION			POINTS																				
PARTNERSHIPS AND STEWARDSHIP – 5 pts																								
Local Support	Project includes a municipal partner: No Yes 0 5			5																				
PROJECT QUALITY – 87 pts																								
Biodiversity and Landscape Protection	Total eligible project acreage exceeds minimum acreage required by: 1-19.9% 20-39.9% 39-50.9% 51% + 2 4 6 8			27																				
	Percent of total project acres within NHESP BioMap Core Habitat or Critical Natural Landscape: 1-19.9% 20.0-39.9% 40.0-59.9% 60.0-79.9% 80.0-100% 1 2 3 4 6																							
	Average TNC Climate Resiliency score? Below Average (<-2.0 to -0.41 SD) Average (-0.4 to 0.5 SD) Above Average (>2 to 0.51 SD) 0 3 5																							
	Total adjacent, protected open space acreage: 1-100 acres 100 – 299 acres 300-499 acres 500+ acres 3 4 6 8																							
Water Resources	Percent of project acreage within 500 feet of ocean, lake, pond, river, stream, wetland: 1-24.9% 25-49.9% 50-74.9% 75-100% 1 2 3 4			9																				
	Percent of project acreage within a drinking water supply area (Zone I/II, A/B; IWPA), or, medium- or high-yield, or sole-source aquifer: 1-4.9% 5-24.9% 25-49.9% 50% or more 0 1 3 5																							
Forested Lands	Acres to continue under forestry management subject to a climate-smart, or other forest management plan addressing climate, watershed or habitat benefits: 1-24.9% 25.0-49.9% 50.0-74.9% 75.0-100% 1 3 4 5			10																				
	Acres to be managed explicitly for ecological integrity in a passive manner, with restrictions on timber harvest reflected in a stewardship plan or imposed through a conservation restriction or deed restriction: 1-24.9% 25.0-49.9% 50.0-74.9% 75.0-100% 1 3 4 5																							
Climate Vulnerability Preparedness	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project Benefits</th> <th>Exceptional Benefit 5 points</th> <th>Moderate Benefit 2 points</th> <th>Limited Benefit 0-1 point</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Habitat Connectivity</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Benefits to water resources including lakes, ponds, rivers or coastal habitats.</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proximity of property to communities, particularly communities with EJ populations.</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Project Benefits	Exceptional Benefit 5 points	Moderate Benefit 2 points	Limited Benefit 0-1 point	Habitat Connectivity				Benefits to water resources including lakes, ponds, rivers or coastal habitats.				Proximity of property to communities, particularly communities with EJ populations.				0 - 15				
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Recreational Opportunities	Recreational opportunities provided (checked on site visit.):			0-16																				
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Activity</th> <th>Good 4 points</th> <th>Limited 2 points</th> <th>Not provided 0 pts</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Trail-based (hiking, etc.)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wilderness (camping, hunting, etc.)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Water-based (canoeing, skating, etc.)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education (organized nature walks, classes)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Activity	Good 4 points	Limited 2 points	Not provided 0 pts	Trail-based (hiking, etc.)				Wilderness (camping, hunting, etc.)				Water-based (canoeing, skating, etc.)				Education (organized nature walks, classes)			
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Education (organized nature walks, classes)																								

Project Readiness	Projects will be rated on readiness based on information in the applications and the site visits	1 - 8
Overall Project Quality	1-10 points will be awarded based on project quality	1 - 10
TOTAL		100
Community Compact Points	Municipal applicant(s) has signed on to related best practices under the Community Compact Agreement	2

Attachment C: Requirements for acquisition projects funded through the Community Preservation Act (CPA)

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) and Cape Cod Land Bank Act state that land acquired with CPA or land bank funds must be bound by a permanent restriction (see excerpt of acts below). The CPA requires that, for fee acquisitions, the municipality convey a Ch. 184 Section 32 Conservation Restriction to a qualified 501(c)(3) organization whose purpose is land and/or water conservation (e.g., land trusts). **Conveyance of a CR to a qualified entity is required for reimbursement under this grant program.**

Points to remember when conveying a Conservation Restriction:

1. Votes to acquire the property and authorizing use of CPA funding, should authorize the conveyance of the CR and indicate that the purchase of the property and conveyance of the CR be a simultaneous closing.
2. The deed to the municipality should provide the flexibility to ensure the municipality may grant the CR to an entity authorized to hold a CR under M.G.L. Ch. 184, Sec. 32.
3. The restriction must be recorded **after** the fee simple deed (even if immediately after), for the unrestricted value (and therefore higher value) of the property to be used for reimbursement calculations under the grant award.
4. Since the funding statute *requires* the restriction, a party seeking a charitable contribution deduction for a bargain sale of property may not be able to use the unrestricted value of the property in calculating the tax benefit.
5. The “proceeds” clause of the conservation restriction, if conveyed at no cost to the grantee, must reflect that the municipality (as the fee owner) receives all of the proceeds of an extinguishment or taking, and the grantee receives none of such proceeds. In the event that the land is ever converted to non-conservation use, the municipality would still be responsible for identifying unprotected property of equal or greater monetary and conservation value and use to replace the converted property as though the land were owned in fee simple.

Community Preservation Act

Section 12 of the Chapter 44B Real property interest; deed restriction; management

(a) A real property interest that is acquired with monies from the Community Preservation Fund shall be bound by a permanent restriction, recorded as a separate instrument, that meets the requirements of sections 31 to 33, inclusive, of chapter 184 limiting the use of the interest to the purpose for which it was acquired. The permanent restriction shall run with the land and shall be enforceable by the city or town or the commonwealth. The permanent restriction may also run to the benefit of a nonprofit organization, charitable corporation or foundation selected by the city or town with the right to enforce the restriction. The legislative body may appropriate monies from the Community Preservation Fund to pay a non-profit organization created pursuant to chapter 180 to hold, monitor and enforce the deed restriction on the property.

(b) Real property interests acquired under this chapter shall be owned and managed by the city or town, but the legislative body may delegate management of such property to the conservation commission, the historical commission, the board of park commissioners or the housing authority, or, in the case of interests to acquire sites for future wellhead development by a water district, a water supply district or a fire district. The legislative body may also delegate management of such property to a nonprofit organization created under chapter 180 or chapter 203.

Chapter 293 of the Acts of 1998: AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CAPE COD OPEN SPACE LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM

Section 3. Any real property interest in open space purchased with land bank funds shall be retained in natural, scenic, or open condition and shall be bound by a permanent deed restriction limiting the use of the interest to the purpose for which it was acquired. Said deed restriction shall run with the land...

Attachment D: Sample Municipal Vote

Each municipal partner should draft its warrant article or city council order. It is strongly recommended that the warrant article or city council order is prepared with the guidance of city/town counsel, and in consultation with the treasurer and/or accountant to ensure that the appropriate sections of funding sources to be referenced are noted in the warrant article. The format for the vote will vary with the type of project, source of funding, etc. However, all votes should include the following elements:

- I. Authorization to expend an amount equal to the full acquisition and/or development costs of the municipal partners component of the project. The full costs must be raised or appropriated through current tax levy or borrowed.
- II. Indication of the source of funding (Conservation Fund, Community Preservation Act Fund, general fund, borrowing, etc.). M.G.L. Chapter 44, sections 7, 8C, and 12(a) on Municipal Indebtedness, allows cities and towns to borrow in anticipation of funding and requires that a grant agreement be executed before the treasurer actually obtains the borrowed amount. This assures DCS that the municipality has 100% of the total project cost, and assures the municipality that the project need not be completed if the proposal does not receive grant assistance. For further advice, please contact the Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services at (617) 626-2300.
- III. Indicate that the land interest is being acquired either for conservation and passive outdoor recreation purposes (Chapter 40, Section 8c) or, in the case of land purchased for park or playground, for active recreation purposes (Chapter 45, Section 3 or 14, for example) and will be in the care and control of the appropriate commission or department.
- IV. Authorization for the appropriate commission (conservation commission, or recreation commission if park or playground) to seek funding under the Landscape Partnership grant program, and enter any necessary contracts thereto.
- V. If a property taking is anticipated, the conservation commission must request, in writing, that the selectmen or city council take the property via eminent domain.
- VI. The vote may also allow the subsequent conveyance of a Conservation Restriction on the property.
- VII. The vote may also include language permitting a license or lease agreement to manage the property consistent with this grant program for maintenance, etc.

The following is a sample vote authorizing the acquisition of conservation land using DCS financial assistance. This is intended only as a point of reference. **Municipal Counsel should always be consulted when drafting Town Meeting warrant articles or City Council orders.** The draft article or order should be submitted to DCS for review prior to the Town Meeting or City Council to ensure compliance with the grant program.

Sample for Conservation Acquisition Project – Town Meeting Warrant Article

To see if the CITY/TOWN will vote to appropriate, and authorize the Treasurer with the approval of the Selectmen [describe method of appropriation and/or borrowing according to M.G.L. Chapter 44, note particularly Section 8C], to borrow the sum of \$TOTAL PROJECT COST, for the purpose of purchasing for conservation and passive recreation purposes, by eminent domain or negotiated purchase or otherwise, a certain property together with buildings thereon, known as the PROPERTY NAME consisting of XXX acres, more or less, as shown on a plan entitled "Plan of Land in MUNICIPALITY made by SURVEYING FIRM dated XX/XX/XX"; that said land be conveyed to said CITY/TOWN under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 8c, and as it may hereafter be amended and other Massachusetts statutes relating to Conservation, to be managed and controlled by the Conservation Commission of MUNICIPALITY, and the Conservation Commission be authorized to file on behalf of MUNICIPALITY any and all applications deemed necessary for the Landscape Partnership grant and any other grants and /or funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts deemed necessary and/or any others in any way connected with the scope of this Article, and the CITY/TOWN and the Conservation Commission be authorized to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary on behalf of MUNICIPALITY to affect said purchase.

Sample Vote Language for Community Preservation Act Projects

To see if the Town [or City] will vote to raise, borrow and/or appropriate \$Total Project Cost for the acquisition by gift, negotiated purchase or eminent domain of a parcel of land of approximately +/-acres owned by OWNER as described on Assessors Map , Parcel , to be managed and controlled by the Conservation Commission of the Town [or City] of XXX in accordance with Chapter 40, Section 8C for conservation and passive recreation purposes, and to meet said appropriate with funds transferred and/or borrowed in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 293, the Community Preservation Act and to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to issue any bonds or notes that may be necessary for that purpose, as authorized by M.G.L. Chapter 44, or any other enabling authority, and that the Town Manager [or Board of Selectmen or City Council or Mayor] be authorized to file on behalf of the Town [or City] of XXX any and all applications deemed necessary under the Self-Help Act (M.G.L. Chapter 132A, Section 11) [or LWCF or USH] or any other applications for funds in any way connected with the scope of this acquisition, and the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen [or Mayor and the City Council] and the Conservation Commission be authorized, as they deem appropriate, to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments including the conveyance of a perpetual conservation restriction in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 184 as required by Section 12(a) of Chapter 44B or Chapter 293 Section 10 of the Acts of 1998 as amended, as may be necessary on behalf of the Town [or City] of XXX to affect said purchase. Said conservation restriction may be granted to the [Name of Grantee] or any other organization qualified and willing to hold such a restriction.

Attachment E: Legislation Guiding this Grant Program

Chapter 286 of the Acts of 2014, Sec. 2

2000-7058.. For the landscape partnership grant program to assist not-for-profit corporations and cities and towns acting through their conservation commissions or water departments, in cooperation with the departments of conservation and recreation, fish and game and agricultural resources, to acquire interests in land to permanently conserve and steward large, landscape-scale land conservation projects, and to assist cities and towns in local zoning and planning efforts; to further conservation and connectivity of working farms, forests and open space and prevent low-density sprawl development; provided, that the not-for-profit corporation shall be formed for 1 of the purposes described in section 4 of chapter 180 of the General Laws and the corporation shall be considered an exempt organization within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; provided further, that the grants shall be expended in the completion of an approved project by an eligible corporation, city or town in the approved acquisition of land and interests in land for permanent conservation purposes pursuant to Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution or sections 31 and 32 of chapter 184 of the General Laws and for associated costs, including planning, study, due diligence, title, environmental site assessment, appraisal services, interest on loans, provided that the rate does not exceed the current average market rate, site restoration and for stewardship, including baseline documentation report creation and long-term stewardship monitoring agreements and for technical assistance in the development of city and town by-laws for natural resource protection zoning purposes and related city and town conservation purposes and for study, inventory and related work in preparation for and assessment of marketable ecosystem services provided by the project lands; provided further, that grant funds shall be expended in the completion of an approved project by an eligible corporation, city or town for a project previously approved by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs under this program in an amount that the secretary shall determine to be equitable in consideration of anticipated benefits from the cost of the project, provided, however, that in no event shall the amount exceed 50 per cent of the total cost of the project as approved by the secretary; provided further, that all projects shall provide appropriate public access as determined by the secretary;...

MGL Ch. 236 of the Acts of 2002, Sec. 2

2000-2012.. For the purpose of protecting the ecological integrity of the commonwealth's privately held and managed forestlands pursuant to the forest vision plan, so-called, including, but not limited to, acquisition of interests in land, research, planning, and monitoring; provided, that projects and funding shall be approved by the secretary of environmental affairs; provided further, that projects may be carried out in cooperation with other governmental agencies, private land owners, and conservation organizations according to management agreements approved by said secretary...

MGL Ch. 312 of the Acts of 2008, Sec. 2A

2000-7016.. For the conservation partnership grant program to assist not-for-profit corporations in acquiring interests in lands suitable for purposes of conservation or recreation; provided, that the corporation shall be formed for one of the purposes described in section 4 of chapter 180 of the General Laws and the corporation shall be considered an exempt organization within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; provided further, that grant funds shall be expended to reimburse an eligible corporation for money expended by it in establishing a project approved by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs under this program in an amount that the secretary shall determine to be equitable in consideration of anticipated benefits from the project, but in no event shall the amount of the reimbursement exceed 50 per cent of the cost of the project; provided further, that no reimbursement shall be made under this item to a corporation unless a project application is filed by the corporation with the secretary setting forth the plans and information that the secretary may require and approved by the secretary, nor until the corporation shall have certified, in a manner approved by the secretary, its ability to provide an amount equal to the total cost of the project, nor until the project has been completed, to the satisfaction of the secretary, in accordance with the approved plans; provided further, that all projects shall include the grant by the corporation of an appropriate perpetual conservation restriction, within the meaning of sections 31 and 32 of chapter 184 of the General Laws, to the city or town in which the project is located, to be managed by either its conservation or its recreation commission, or a state agency, or both; provided further, that all projects shall provide appropriate public access as determined by the

secretary; and provided further, that the secretary may adopt rules and regulations to carry out this item.

2200-7017.. For grants to cities, towns and districts for the acquisition of lands and waters and easements by those cities, towns and districts to protect and conserve groundwater aquifers and recharge areas, surface water supplies and watershed areas, and surface or underground lands adjacent to those resources, for the protection of water that is determined by the department of environmental protection to be of potential use for water supply purposes; provided, that any grants approved by the department and provided to cities, towns and districts from this item may be for up to 60 per cent of the eligible costs of the projects

2300-7010.. For the acquisition of land and interests in land by the department of fish and game and for associated costs, including planning, study, due diligence, title and appraisal services, site restoration and stewardship for the purpose of protecting the native flora and fauna communities and for associated costs; provided, that the commissioner of fish and game may develop and utilize scientifically-based evaluation criteria to identify and select the most biologically significant areas throughout the commonwealth including, but not limited to, specific parcels, and that these lands may be purchased after being selected by this process and approved by the commissioner of fisheries and wildlife; provided further, that funds may be expended on the development and implementation of a stewardship program on lands under the care and control of the department of fish and game and its divisions, either in fee simple or through conservation easement, including but not limited to resource and land use monitoring, baseline documentation report creation, signage, boundary marking and monitoring, stewardship planning, stewardship personnel, stewardship database development, ecological monitoring, and enforcement of conservation restrictions or detection and resolution of encroachments on land owned in fee simple, and repair of damage related to illegal off-road vehicle trespass; provided further, that funds may be used for inventory, restoration and reclamation of recently acquired land, including demolition of structures, removal of debris, eradication of non-native species, and other services essential to these reclamation efforts

2500-7012.. For a program to acquire agricultural preservation restrictions under sections 23 to 26, inclusive, of chapter 20 of the General Laws; provided, that any person or entity that receives funds from this item shall be encouraged to participate in any programs of the department of agricultural resources that may be suggested by the commissioner of agricultural resources; provided further, that funds may be used for implementation of a stewardship program on APR lands including, but not limited to, resource and land use monitoring, boundary delineation and monitoring, stewardship planning, ecological monitoring, and enforcement of agricultural preservation restrictions on existing and newly acquired APR properties; as well as the creation of new opportunities that seek to enhance the sustainability and viability of APR properties

2800-7011.. For the acquisition of land and interests in land by the department of conservation and recreation and for associated costs, including planning, study, due diligence, title and appraisal services, site restoration, stewardship, and costs associated with the defense of eminent domain takings for the purpose of protecting significant natural and cultural resources of the commonwealth and enhancing the department's system of forests, parks and reservations; provided, that funds may be used for development and implementation of a stewardship program on lands under the care and control of the department of conservation and recreation including, but not limited to, resource and land use monitoring, signage, boundary delineation and monitoring, preparation of baseline documentation, stewardship planning, ecological monitoring, and enforcement of conservation restrictions or detection and resolution of encroachments on land owned in fee simple, and repair of damage to property related to illegal uses, including off-road vehicle trespass; provided further, that funds may be used for inventory, restoration and reclamation of recently acquired land, including demolition of structures, removal of debris, eradication of non-native species, and other services essential to these reclamation efforts;...

2800-7022.. For the purpose of protecting and conserving the ecological and economic integrity of the commonwealth's privately held forestlands, including but not limited to acquisition of interests in land including easements, agreements, rights of first refusal and covenants; for a forestry conservation restriction program to acquire conservation restrictions under section 31 of chapter 184 for private working forests actively devoted to sustainable forestry, and classified as forest land under section 2 of chapter 61 of the General Laws, in order to encourage sustainable forestry, protect prime forest land, and help the viability and affordability of sustainable forestry; provided, that working forest conservation

restrictions shall be held by the department of agriculture or the department of conservation and recreation or the municipality in which the land is located; provided further, that projects shall be rated based on the suitability of land to grow forest products, the fair market value of the land as determined by independent appraisers, proximity to other protected working forests, management history of the project to serve as a model of sustainable forestry and the degree to which the conservation restriction would serve to preserve and make affordable the practice of sustainable forestry in the commonwealth; and for grants to public and non-public organizations and private landowners for education, technical assistance, forest stewardship practices, enhancement of ecosystem services and carbon sequestration, estate planning, interests in land or associated land acquisition costs; grants to private forest landowners, forest businesses and non-profits for the forest viability program for enhancing sustainable economic benefits of forests, including business plans and implementation grants and no-development covenants to be held by the department of agriculture or the department of conservation and recreation, including but not limited to forest management plans for private landowners; provided, that projects and funding shall be approved by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs; and provided further, that projects may be carried out in cooperation with other governmental agencies, private landowners, and conservation organizations according to management agreements approved by the secretary.

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2000-7072.. For grant programs for land, soil, water and natural resource conservation; open space preservation; watershed remediation; coastal resource protection, including securing access to protected coastal lands and lands to provide for the inland migration of coastal habitats; recreation; environmental equity and wildlife and endangered species protection including, but not limited to, the local acquisition for natural diversity grant program, the parkland acquisition and renovation for communities grant program, conservation partnership grant programs, including programs to support landscape-scale land conservation projects, the drinking water supply protection grant program, grant programs to assist and provide funding to conservation districts, grants to support projects and initiatives that promote carbon sequestration and climate change resiliency through sustainable forestry and salt marsh restoration, including associated educational initiatives, and grants to support local, regional and state land use planning and management capabilities to advance smart growth efforts, all pursuant to rules or regulations adopted by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs to effectuate this item;...