

## Landscape Partnership Info Session Q & A

1. Question: Are roads considered to be a fragmenting feature segmenting a potential 500-acre parcel of land?

Answer: It depends. If a project includes parcels on both sides of a major road or highway, they will not be considered as part of the minimum 500 acres. Parcels on either side of small, lightly-traveled roads (those identified in the MassDOT Roads datalayer as having an Average Annual Daily Traffic (ADT) of fewer than 500 vehicles, or for which no ADT was measured, and which are not more than two lanes of travel) may be counted as part of the required minimum contiguous 500 acres (BID page 4). Please include documentation of MassDOT findings to confirm claims.

2. Question: Related to public access, does the public access plan have to be set at the time of application or at close out?

Answer: Plans for public access should be described in your application and must be verified at project-closeout to receive reimbursement.

3. Question: What is the sequence of events from grant application submitted to grant award and contracting?

Answer:

- 1) Applicant submits application by May 10, 2021
- 2) Staff member contacts applicant to perform site visit
- 3) Applications are reviewed and ranked by EEA staff
- 4) Recommended projects are sent to the Secretary and Governor's offices for approval
- 5) Applicants are notified of final decisions
- 6) Awardees are contacted by program manager to complete contracting

4. Question: What makes for a strong project application from a rating standpoint?

Answer: The two rating categories are Partnerships and Stewardship (13 pts) and Project Quality (87 pts). Project Quality is the most significant category and has criteria including water resources, biodiversity, recreational opportunities, etc. Please refer to page 32 of the BID.

5. Question: Can a project close in multiple fiscal years?

Answer: Yes, projects can close in FY21, FY 22, and FY23. See BID page 2, section H.

6. Question: Would you say a bit more about how matching funds can be used with regards to the 50% reimbursement limit?

Answer: Eligible reimbursable costs include land acquisition, title research, recording fees, and surveys. Eligible costs are listed on page 11 of the BID. Non-profits may also receive reimbursement for land pre-purchased for the application no earlier than the BID posting date (BID page 10).

7. Question: How can appraisals be eligible for reimbursement if the costs for them are expended prior to the contract execution date?

Answer: Costs for appraisals prior to an executed contract are not reimbursable (BID page 11).

8. Question: If there is a core 400 acres of land that is connected through protected open space to an additional 100+ acres of land, can we apply for a project to protect those 500+ acres?

Answer: Yes, 500+ core acres that are connected through protected open space are eligible. See the "Project size" section on page 3 of the BID.

9. Question: Can we apply this year for a project that will have parcels that won't close until FY23?

Answer: Yes, see BID page 2, section H.

10. Question: When are full appraisals due for projects closing in FY22?

Answer: Within 60 days of contracting and prior to closing on the parcel to confirm the parcel's value. See BID page 8, section A.

11. Question: When is the next Landscape Partnership BID going to be posted?

Answer: The posting of a future BID is not guaranteed; however, the program is typically announced in winter.

12. Question: Is the grant applicant required to include facilities for public access (parking, trails, etc.)?

Answer: All projects must provide legal public passive recreational access on at least some of the parcels. Project partners must perform preliminary site cleanup as needed, ensure parking and public access are adequate.

13. Question: How much funding is available this year?

Answer: The total budget for the Landscape Partnership Grant Program in FY22 and FY23 is not known at this point in time.

14. Question: If you are also applying for APR funding as a part of the project, do you have to already have the APR application in at the time of the Landscape Partnership grant application?

Answer: Though not required, it is highly recommended to apprise MDAR of an APR application to facilitate the process.