

MA Farmland Action Plan – Drop-In Session for Potential Partners

Notes from online discussion on 6/2/2025

Context

On Monday, June 2, 2025 at 1pm Katharine Otto hosted a drop-in session for potential partners (people who may help with implementation of the plan). The meeting had no presentation – instead the content was guided by questions and comments from attendees. It was organized as an easy way to connect in, anticipating that recent discussions and new resources may have sparked additional thoughts. The primary audience was potential partners.

Facilitator – Katharine Otto, Farmland Action Plan Coordinator, MDAR. Katharine.s.otto@mass.gov

The following is a brief summary of the conversation that occurred during the drop-in session.

Some notes regarding the comments and questions:

- Some have been edited or combined.
- Comments have been collated by topics, in no particular order
- These comments are from voluntary participants in open discussion. These comments may or may not align with positions of MDAR or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Discussion notes

The following is a brief summary of some of the conversation that occurred in the chat box during the meeting as well as some of the oral comments. It includes links and resources shared with participants.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

- How can CLTs fit in with the rest of the partners?
- Acquiring properties and placing them into trust so can then provide farmer access
- History of CLTs being formed out of the civil rights movement so support underserved communities
- How can we incorporate a CLT model into farmland work, including democratically elected board at local level to provide oversight?
- Explore ground lease models
- Is there a central organization for CLTs? The [Shumacher Center](#) is working on a guide to CLTs. Some connected to Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition.
- Potential to connect Ag Comms to CLTs
- Potential to connect to Community Development Corporations

Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding

- Many are aware of the ability to use [CPA](#), but need more education

Farmland of Local Importance

- Important tool

Supporting Ag Comms

- MDAR contract to support Ag Comms is progressing, with lots of responses to their recent survey
- www.mass.gov/info-details/agricultural-commissions

- Ag Comm enabling act (Section 8(L) includes acquiring land and setting up ag fund

No-Net-Loss

- What is meant by this? Freeze or hold on ag land sales? Option for to buy land for the town if the land is being sold for development?
- How could you bring other land into farmland to mitigate?

Matrix tasks

- Tasks often about changing the system – how do we shift the needle?
- Importance of “why” – not just jump to a solution – when looking at tasks. May sometimes need to adjust the task in the matrix to more accurately reflect what can be done to address the issue

Future Drop-In Sessions

- Intent to hold approximately monthly for partners
- Monthly or bi-monthly for other interested individuals

Other

- Assisting indigenous groups in getting access to land
- Connecting people and resources
- How do we continue to move forward together?
- Guide to the website, including where to find previous meeting notes