

LAND & PARC Grant Programs
Information Sessions Questions & Answers
(May 4 and 9, 2023)

Do both the LAND and PARC grant programs require that land purchased with CPA funding be protected with a Conservation Restriction?

Yes, the Community Preservation Act requires that a permanent restriction be placed on any property acquired using CPA funds to ensure that the property continues to be used for the applicable CPA purpose. Both the LAND and PARC Grant Program require municipalities to be in compliance with this statutory requirement, prior to its LAND or PARC grant reimbursement.

Can you clarify who is eligible to secure the appraisal required of a grant application?

The Applicant or one of the Applicant's project partners must be the client for the appraisal; appraisals secured by the owner of the property are not eligible. All appraisal reports must be prepared in accordance with the EEA Specifications for Analytical Narrative Appraisal Reports. See the [DCS website](#) for detailed Appraisal Report Requirements.

Is a park that straddles municipal and DCR land eligible for a PARC grant for improvements on the DCR land?

No. Only improvements on municipal-held lands are eligible for PARC grant funding.

We anticipate pursuing the vote at Fall Town Meeting. The quorum requirements for Fall Town Meeting are different than for Spring Town Meeting. Does that affect the eligibility of the warrant article?

No. We ask for a certified vote that demonstrates the warrant article was passed authorizing the purchase, as well as expenditure of project costs and acceptance of applicable grant.

Our town has fewer than 35,000 residents but anticipates qualifying for the PARC grant by providing parking for 100 cars at the park. Does the parking need to be included in the parkland protected in perpetuity?

No. As long as it is demonstrated that there is parking capacity for 100 or more cars that could reasonably be expected to be there in the future, such as at other publicly owned land, the project would be eligible for the full \$500,000 under the PARC grant.

If a portion of a park is proposed for improvement or development under the PARC grant, is the entire park protected under Article 97, or just the portion of the park that is the subject of the grant?

The entire park is protected under Article 97, regardless of the scale of improvements funded by the PARC grant.

How do I find out if the proposed project is located near an Environmental Justice community?

Please visit the [Environmental Justice dataviewer](#) for that information.

Can other state grant funding be used for projects?

This depends on the total project cost. For projects where costs exceed the maximum grant award and requisite municipal contributions to meet the project cost to qualify for the maximum reimbursement, other sources of state funding may be used. However, state funding may not be used towards total project costs qualifying for reimbursement.

Can private donations be used towards the municipal contribution?

We reimburse based upon the receipt of canceled municipal checks. So, if private contributions are received for a project, they must be donated to the municipality for the project, allowing the municipality to make payments from its account.

Can construction funding be requested in year one of the PARC grant if no design funding is needed?

No. Construction funding is always in year two of the PARC grant. If you don't require any design funding, ask for \$0 in year one and for all of the grant funding in year two. This is due to the budget we have for the program, as well as the uncertainty of the length of the construction season due to grant announcement timelines and winter weather.

Will the LAND or PARC Grant Programs consider multiple applications from a single municipality?

Yes, a community may submit as many applications as they would like. However, the PARC Grant Program limits grant awards to one per municipality. The LAND Grant Program does not.

How much funding is available for the Small Town PARC grant applicants?

\$400,000.

If the only new design is for a 15' handicap ramp, does this require a formal design or is a sketch of planned improvements acceptable?

A sketch would be acceptable, as long as the site design wouldn't include much accommodation for handicapped accessibility.

Do renovation projects require letters from the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)?

Yes, all applications require a comment letter from NHESP and MHC.

Are you looking at increasing future grant award amount caps based on inflation costs (and the resulting high price of land)?

The FY24 LAND and PARC grant maximum reflects an increase of \$100,000 over last year's maximum of \$400,000 for just those reasons!

For PARC grant reimbursement, is an on-site parking lot required, or is street parking sufficient?

It depends upon the site, but if street parking can adequately address the parking needs of the proposed uses, that is acceptable. It will be verified at the site visit.

For the LAND grant, if one appraisal has been conducted and the land has been valued at \$950,000, how many more appraisals are needed, when will these appraisals need to be completed by, and what materials from the appraisals will we need to submit to you?

EEA recommends that a second appraisal or a review appraisal be completed for any properties valued at >\$750,000 as a matter of best practice. We require, at minimum, one certified appraisal report (full narrative) be submitted by the grant application deadline. A second appraisal or review appraisal should be secured as soon as possible to inform negotiations, agreements and a final project budget.

For the PARC grant, do we have to get an appraisal for land already owned by the municipality?

No appraisals are required for land already owned by the municipality. They are only required for acquisition projects.

Our community is looking to make park renovations that will require playground equipment, seating, and trees. Are these covered by the grant?

These are all eligible as they are all recreational amenities.

One of your slides mentioned that equipment and/or good are not covered. Could you clarify what is covered under the grant for a situation like ours?

Equipment and goods that are not eligible would be items to build the project, such as backhoes and temporary fencing.

Purely out of curiosity, why do you need the hard copy?

The hardcopy helps to provide some further assurance that a complete application will be received if problems with the online application platform arise.

According to this link, all OSRPs are either expired, or will this year, I assume the expiry year is incorrect for some of the towns? <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/open-space-and-recreation-plans>

The list of OSRPs and their expiration dates on that website is current as the date listed on the spreadsheet. If you have a question about a specific community, be in touch with [Melissa Cryan](#).

Would a new tennis net be eligible for funding, or is this considered “equipment” and therefore ineligible for funding under the grant?

A tennis net is eligible for funding. The “equipment” referenced as ineligible for reimbursement refers to the personal items required to participate in the activity such as tennis rackets. Tennis rackets would be considered “equipment” and ineligible for reimbursement.

If an OSRP is expiring December 2023, would a new one need to be submitted and approved prior to calendar year 2024 if that is when decisions will be made?

OSRP eligibility is based on when the grant is due, which is July 2023. As long as your community’s plan is up-to-date as of July 2023, you’re all set.

With prices increasing will there be repercussions if costs exceed estimates received and we cannot accomplish all the project components identified in the grant?

A design firm will include a contingency as a part of the cost estimate. If the bids still come in above that, the community should do everything it can to find funds in its budget to pay for the originally contracted for project. If it can't, it should be in touch with the PARC grant manager.

If a parcel purchased with LAND grant funding connects via trails to an existing conservation parcel with parking, does that meet the grant requirement for parking and public access or will new parking need to be constructed on the parcel being acquired by the grant?

It depends upon the property being purchased, the existing trail system and parking, distance to parking and parking feasibility. We want to ensure that the parking would remain adequate for any increase in usership, and that the distance from parking to the property is reasonable for folks who are interested in visiting the parcel to do so. The adjacent property and any trail access it provides to the adjacent parcel would need to be protected in perpetuity for that to be considered as legitimate access to the newly acquired parcel.

Is the requirement for signage acknowledging the source of funding a new requirement? Are costs for signage eligible for reimbursement?

The requirement for signage is not a new requirement. You may include the cost of improvements such as signage & parking as necessary.

For the LAND grant, when is a conservation restriction required? Besides conservation restrictions, are there any other requirements that must be met prior to LAND grant reimbursement?

The LAND grant does not have any requirements for a conservation restriction. However, if CPA funding is used towards the project cost than all requirements of CPA – including the requirement that a CR be recorded on the property - must be completed prior to reimbursement under the LAND Grant program.

There are several other requirements to reimbursement under the LAND grant that are addressed in a separate, mandatory information session coordinated after grant awards are made. These include the parking and public access accommodations, signage, as well as compliance with CPA or LWCF grant program requirements. Please reach out if you would like the full list of requirements.