

LAND and PARC Grant Workshop Questions and Answers
May 4 and 13, 2021

Question: What is the letter of support deadline for the PARC Grant Program?

Answer: July 21, 2021

Question: Are payments to a third party to hold the Conservation Restriction required with a Community Preservation Act-funded purchase an eligible cost for PARC and LAND?

Answer: No.

Question: Can you share the PowerPoint?

Answer: Yes, the Power Point will be posted on the LAND and PARC grant websites.

Question: If a town has less than 35,000 residents, does it HAVE to apply for a Small Town PARC grant?

Answer: No. If the park is within a ½ mile of public transit and/or there is 100 car parking available, the town may submit an application for the full \$400,000 and compete in the regular PARC category.

Question: If a community has already held its Town Meeting vote and is working on a PARC grant application, can we use a scheduled date Town Meeting vote in the fall where we will vote on the funding?

Answer: Yes, this may be possible, but please submit the previously voted on Town Meeting vote to Melissa to be sure that the PARC grant submission authorization and parkland dedication (the other two vote requirements) are adequately satisfied.

Question: Can other state grants be used for the community's portion of the funding?

Answer: No. State sources of funding cannot be mixed.

Question: ALL land acquired by CPA must have correct deed restrictions filed before final reimbursement, regardless of whether they're associated with this project; must ALL Article 97 property be inspected before final reimbursement, regardless of association with this project?

Answer: No, only sites that have received a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant that have not been visited within the last five years must be inspected prior to final reimbursement. More information on this will be provided after a grant award.

Question: Should we send the wording of the current warrant article before a Town Meeting vote occurs?

Answer: Yes. All LAND grant Town Meeting/City Council votes should be reviewed by Nathaniel Thomas and all PARC grant Town Meeting/City Council votes should be reviewed by Melissa Cryan.

Question: Can the Town Meeting or City Council vote be contingent on the grant being awarded to the community?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is there a required list of land appraisers we should use and is a full narrative report required?

Answer: There is not a required list of land appraisers. The appraisal specifications are posted on the DCS website.

Question: Can you comment on the difference between the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant and the PARC grant?

Answer: There are many differences. A few of them include that LWCF grants are federally-funded grants with a different approval process. PARC grants are state-funded. LWCF grants can fund trail development on LAND grant sites. PARC grants cannot.

Question: Are there state priorities for types of projects this year that we should be aware of?

Answer: LAND grant priorities: Biodiversity protection, landscape conservation, outdoor passive recreation, and stewardship of conservation lands. PARC grant priorities: parks in Environmental Justice neighborhoods, development of new parks, designs that incorporate climate resilience, and access to recreation for all residents, especially those that go above and beyond to provide access to people with disabilities

Question: Is artificial turf an eligible PARC grant application?

Answer: No.

Question: Can a property acquired with a LAND grant be developed with active recreational facilities with the assistance of a PARC grant?

Answer: No – LAND grants must be dedicated to conservation purposes under MGL Chapter 40, Section 8C while PARC grants must be dedicated to recreation purposes under MGL Chapter 45, Section 3 or 14. Moving from one dedication to the other is a conversion and would require legislation.

Question: If a softball field is at a school complex, but falls under the Parks & Recreation Department, is that an eligible PARC project?

Answer: As long as the property is dedicated to park and recreation purposes in its deed and the property is open during the school day, then it is an eligible project.

Question: Is property taken for open space purposes sufficient for PARC grant?

Answer: Land that receives a PARC grant must be dedicated to park and recreation purposes under Chapter 45, Section 3 or 14.

Question: Can a municipality acquire land for conservation at a value greater than appraised value?

Answer: The grant reimbursement is based on the appraised value or the purchase price, whichever is lower. There is a limit that municipalities are allowed to spend on land based on appraised value. Check with counsel for details.

Question: Can stormwater improvements be included in park renovations?

Answer: If they are a part of a recreational improvement, such as parking lot construction, yes.

Question: Is a Veterans Memorial Park with a conceptual design an eligible type of PARC project?

Answer: PARC grants must go towards recreational amenities, so as long as the design is for park improvements, yes. PARC grants cannot reimburse a community for memorials.

Question: In a PARC grant application, if a municipality doesn't have any US Census-mapped Environmental Justice areas, can proximity to low-income housing units / areas count toward this criterion?

Answer: While an application cannot receive points in the EJ demographic categories if it is not located specifically in an EJ area, proximity to low-income housing would be considered in the project quality section.

Question: In PARC grants, is there a certain percentage of the grant that has to be used on planning vs. implementation?

Answer: While there are no requirements, the design portion of the grant (year 1-planning) would typically be capped at 10% of the overall grant award.

Question: If the PARC project is to buy an island with an existing bridge, but the bridge needs to be replaced, could PARC monies be used for the bridge reconstruction?

Answer: If the footings on each side of the bridge are on dedicated parkland, yes, this would be an eligible PARC expense.

Question: Are EV charging stations an eligible PARC expense?

Answer: No, as EV charging stations are not a recreational amenity. They may be placed in the park, but they would not be eligible for reimbursement.

Question: Could you explain again what may need to be voted on by City Council/governments ahead of applying?

Answer: There is no city council or town meeting vote that needs to happen prior to submitting a grant application. We do require a successful vote by December 31, 2021, however, so if you will only have a spring town meeting, please be sure to keep that requirement in mind.

Question: If a project was approved at Town Meeting last year, would the vote be eligible for this year's application?

Answer: Presuming that the specifics of the project have not changed, including the cost, the same vote could work.

Question: Does Melissa ever meet with municipal officials to discuss potential project ideas to see if they would qualify?

Answer: Yes, as long as it's before June 30, 2021 when the open question period closes.

Question: We are having an issue finding an entity that is willing to hold the Conservation Restriction on active recreation land. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer: Some land trusts are willing to hold CRs on active recreation land, depending on the project. Some non-profit recreation leagues will as well.

Question: Can we ask for funds for several parks?

Answer: You may, but the PARC grant policy is to award one grant per community. If you are looking for funding on the same theme in multiple parks, say, resurfacing tennis courts in three parks, that could be packaged into one application.

Question: Is an application spanning three conjoined parcels one application?

Answer: We would accept that as one application.