



Shared Streets and Spaces A Quick-Launch/Quick-Build Grant Program for Cities and Towns

September 4, 2020

1. Program Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a premium on the need for expanded outdoor spaces for people walking, bicycling, and using bus transit to have safe and sufficient space to physically distance themselves from one another, as well as the need for dining and commerce to relocate outdoors to improve safety and confidence for customers wary of the coronavirus. Streets and sidewalks, parking spaces and lots are public spaces that – used safely and well – can be re-imagined and repurposed to serve as a key ingredient in the reopening and economic recovery process, as well as to help make our communities more resilient for the future.

Across Massachusetts, the United States, and the world, sidewalks, curbs, streets, and parking spaces and lots are being re-imagined in innovative ways to meet the need for safer and shared streets and spaces.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Shared Streets and Spaces quick-launch/quick-build grant program will provide grants as small as \$5,000 and as large as \$300,000 for cities and towns to quickly launch or expand improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce in their communities. These improvements can be intentionally temporary, in the style of tactical urbanism, or can be pilots of potentially permanent changes to streets and sidewalks. **Please note that only municipalities may apply for this program as lead applicant.**

Grants will be made expeditiously and on a rolling basis; once awarded, funding will be made available as simply and quickly as possible so that projects can be built and used this summer and fall. MassDOT has allocated \$5 million for this 100-day program: applications will be accepted from June 22 through September 22.

In partnership with the Barr Foundation, the program will also provide technical and other assistance to help Massachusetts cities and towns conceive, design, and execute shared streets and spaces projects and engage their residents and businesses in that process. Information on Shared Streets and Spaces grants and technical assistance, as well as a resource library about shared streets and spaces, can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/shared-streets-and-spaces-grant-program>. Every city and town in the Commonwealth is encouraged to access the resource library and make use of the technical assistance, and to apply for funding. Applying is simple and eligibility criteria are intentionally broad to encourage wide participation.

Proposed projects should advance one or more of the following goals:

- **Shared Streets and Spaces:** Supporting increased rates of walking and/or biking by increasing safety and enabling social distancing
- **Outdoor Dining and Commerce:** Calming roadways, modifying sidewalks and streets, and/or repurposing on- or off-street parking to better support curbside/sidewalk/street retail and dining

- **Better Buses:** Supporting safer and more reliable bus transit, including expanded bus stops and lanes dedicated for bus travel (extra scoring credit will be granted for dedicated bus lanes)
- **Safe Routes to School:** Creating safe routes to schools (and childcare and programs for children and youth), including safer walking and biking networks with lowered vehicle speeds

Although projects of all types and sizes are welcome and will be funded, preference will be given to the following types of projects:

- **Quick Launch/Quick Build:** projects that can be operational within 15-30 days of award
- **Equity:** projects in designated Environmental Justice areas
- **Pilots for Permanence:** projects that show strong potential to be made permanent

As this program is focused on relatively light-touch projects with quick turnarounds, projects that require substantive roadway/ curb reconstruction may be better suited for other programs.

2. What Makes a Successful Project?

Successful projects will be those that can be implemented quickly, flexibly, at low cost, and without substantive reconstruction of roadways. Applicant municipalities are encouraged to consider the use of inexpensive and readily available materials, such as traffic cones, temporary plastic barriers, flexible delineators, planters, and temporary paint¹. Applicants should also consider how, if the project is successful, it could eventually be made permanent.

Eligible expenses can include, but are not limited to, the purchase of materials, labor to implement a project, and costs associated with operating a project. Reasonable costs to cover the time spent by municipal staff to implement a project will be considered sufficient local contribution. Following award of funding under this program, the applicant municipality and MassDOT will work together to define the precise scope of the project.

MassDOT is partnering with the Barr Foundation to provide technical assistance to cities and towns interested in applying for participation in this program. Barr funding will make resources available that municipalities can use for technical and engineering assistance at a time when municipal staff are managing a variety of critical issues. The Barr support will help cities and towns meet the accelerated timeframe of this program while ensuring responsible projects that serve residents, local businesses, and others, as well as adhere to safe physical distancing guidelines. This technical assistance is an available resource; using it is not a requirement to apply for the program.

Eligible project types include changes to streets, curbs, sidewalks, and/or parking (both on- and off-street); illustrative examples are provided below. Proposed projects can draw from any of the categories or individual elements identified here, or introduce alternative ideas. Applications will be scored based on the number of different project elements included, and the functionality, creativity, and capacity to advance the program goals of the overall proposal. Project elements suggested here can be relevant to multiple project types.

¹ Materials purchased using funds from this program become the property of the municipality.

Proposals must include at least one project type and two elements listed below, but any additional elements – provided they together form a coherent whole – will garner extra points.

Project Types:

- **Shared Streets and Spaces:** Support for increased rates of walking and/or biking by increasing safety and enabling greater physical separation on re-imagined sidewalks, streets, and parking and/or travel lanes
 - Converted neighborhood streets for exclusive and/or shared use by people walking and/or biking
 - Expanded sidewalks
 - Safety, traffic calming, and speed reduction measures
 - Modified traffic signals to support safe walking and biking²
 - Protected bicycle lanes, bicycle parking, signage, pavement markings
 - New and/or expanded infrastructure and capital start-up (non-operating) costs for bicycle and scooter sharing networks
 - Accessibility upgrades to curb-ramps, crosswalks, and/or related facilities
 - Contiguous walking and/or biking corridors among neighborhoods and/or destinations
- **Outdoor Dining and Commerce:** Safe and functional environments for curbside or sidewalk retail, dining, and civic programming
 - Repurposed and/or expanded portions of streets, curbs, and/or sidewalks to create more safe space for pedestrians, retail activity, dining, and community programming
 - Repurposed parking areas – on- and off-street – for walking, recreation, outdoor seating, retail and/or dining
- **Better Buses:** Better facilities for bus transportation
 - Dedicated bus lanes (inclusion in any project results in extra credit in project scoring)
 - Transit signal priority
 - Bus stops and related facilities and infrastructure
- **Safe Routes to School:** Creating safer routes and spaces for children and parents to walk or bicycle to school (and childcare and programs for children and youth), and for safe drop-off and pickup
 - Converted neighborhood streets for exclusive and/or shared use by people walking and/or biking
 - Signage, crosswalks
 - Delineated areas for safe child drop-off and pickup
- **Innovation:** Any other project types not identified here that reimagine and repurposes streets, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas for safer walking, biking, retail, dining, and/or other civic purposes will be considered.

Applications may not:

² Changes to traffic signals require plans stamped by a registered Professional Engineer, usually a municipal staff member.

- Detour or suspend public transit service in the area of the proposed project
- Impede the use of travel routes by people with disabilities or violate the Americans with Disabilities Act or the requirements of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board
- Repurpose parks or parkland for transportation purposes.

By and large, proposed projects should be implemented on roadways and/or other public infrastructure owned or controlled by the applicant municipality/municipalities. Nothing about this program will change the control or ownership of any municipal roadway. **MassDOT will consider the inclusion of roadways owned or controlled by MassDOT or by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, but applicants are strongly encouraged to contact MassDOT in advance of submitting an application if a Commonwealth-owned/controlled roadway is part of a proposed project.**

3. Program Details

- Successful applications will be ones that advance the following Program Goals:
 - To calm roadways, modify sidewalks and/or streets, and/or repurpose on- or off-street parking where needed to better support curbside/sidewalk/street retail and dining
 - To create safe connections to essential destinations and workplaces, including new and expanded facilities for bus transportation
 - To create safe, family-friendly neighborhood walking and biking networks that reduce crowding and provide opportunities for physical activity, including lowering vehicle speeds for safety
 - To create safe routes to schools and other facilities for children and youth, including walking and biking networks with lowered vehicle speeds
- Projects ranging in cost from \$5,000-\$300,000 will be considered, based on speed of implementation and project scope.
- Proposals will be accepted for 100 days on a rolling basis, beginning on June 22, 2020, and municipalities will be notified of funding decisions within 14 business days of the closest business day to proposal submission. MassDOT will continue to accept applications until September 22, 2020.
- Projects are expected to be mostly or completely implemented by Friday, October 9, 2020, and preference will be given to projects that can be operational within 15-30 days of award. MassDOT will also consider projects with longer time-horizons if they are exemplary and the applicants can justify the additional time needed for project development and implementation.
- Every application must be led by a municipality, which must control the roadway(s) and other infrastructure needed to implement the proposed project (see Page 3 for discussion of Commonwealth-owned roadways).
- No more than three proposals will be accepted with the same municipality as lead applicant. Proposals can include multiple contiguous projects, which will then be scored as a single proposal. Municipalities may sign on to the applications of other municipalities as supporters without limit.

- Municipalities may also work together to propose cross-municipality projects, provided one municipality acts as the lead applicant.
- Applicant municipalities must secure all necessary local approvals prior to funds being awarded under this program, including but not limited to sign-off on the proposal concept(s) by the relevant public safety entities.
- At the completion of a project, a report detailing the project, lessons learned, process of implementation, whether it met anticipated goals, whether it was widely used, whether there were any safety concerns, public and business feedback received, and whether it will be made permanent (if not, why not?), along with photographs, should be submitted to MassDOT. MassDOT may work with municipalities to evaluate particular successes or lessons from the projects. Unless otherwise noted, final reports should be submitted by December 30, 2020.
- Municipalities are encouraged to work in partnership with other entities, such as local businesses, civic organizations, chambers of commerce, schools, camps, and other childcare or youth-oriented facilities, Transportation Management Associations, houses of worship, and community centers to develop and implement proposed projects.
- Applicant municipalities are encouraged to work with their local Regional Planning Agency and Regional Transit Authority in support of a proposed project.
- Project costs incurred prior to the issuance date of a Notice to Proceed given under this program will not be considered eligible expenses. Municipalities may apply for funding to augment projects currently underway, so long as the funding requested under this program supports the specific goals of this program and will not be used to fund the base, in-process project.
- All materials should be submitted to sharedstreets@dot.state.ma.us.

4. How to Apply

Proposals can be as short as a few pages and should be no more than ten written pages, and should include maps or illustrations of the project. Proposals should be signed by the Mayor, Town Administrator, Town Manager, or Chair of the Board of Selectman of the lead applicant municipality.

Proposals should include the following information:

- A project goal of 1-2 sentences
- Explanation of the benefits of the project and how it will meet the goals of this program
- A description of the project and the project location
 - GPS coordinates for the project location
- Confirmation of ownership/control of the relevant municipal infrastructure, as well as indication of whether any Commonwealth-owned infrastructure is integral to the proposed project
- Demonstration of compliance with safety and accessibility-related regulations (ADA and MAAB)

- Explanation of whether the project is intended to be temporary or to pilot a potentially permanent change (preference will be given to projects with the potential to be lasting)
- Description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant(s)
- A project timeline, with milestones, and a project budget

5. Scoring Criteria

- Proposed project meets Program Goals (Page 5)
- Proposed project includes required Project Type(s) and Project Elements (Pages 2-3)
- Extra Credit for Quick Launch: Proposed project can be implemented within expeditiously (within 15 to 30 days)
- Extra Credit for Permanence: Proposed project shows strong potential to be made permanent
- Extra Credit for Equity: Proposed project is in a Census Block Group identified by the relevant Regional Planning Agency as an Environmental Justice area
- Extra Credit for Bus Lanes: Proposed project includes a dedicated bus lane

All questions should be sent to sharedstreets@dot.state.ma.us.