

Appendix B - Open Space and Recreation Funding Mechanisms and Programs

Purpose	Program/Method	Sponsoring Agency	Approximate Funding Maximum	Program Description	Priority for pursuing	Chances of success
Property Acquisition	Municipal purchase	Town of Paxton	Dependent on Town Meeting	This tool is probably the most direct and effective way for a town to achieve the acquisition objectives of its open space plan. Towns may either issue bonds to cover purchases or in some cases include a purchase item in the general budget. Bond issues are quite common and provide communities with the flexibility to negotiate with property owners, knowing that money has already been authorized to complete the acquisition. In practice, towns generally ask for authorization to float a bond to cover open space acquisition, and then once a deal has been negotiated return to town meeting for the actual appropriation.	High	Moderate. Will depend on a vigorous public outreach campaign prior to town meeting and the general referendum
Property Acquisition	Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) Open Space Program	Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC)	None, but program receives only \$1M/year to be spread around the State.	This program acquires scenic areas adjacent to roadways. Funds are not available for recreation projects, though MHD has worked cooperatively with other state agencies and municipalities to assist in adjoining recreation projects. Scenic views and environmental protection are the two areas of program focus.	Low	Low, unless a great scenic resource is involved.
Property Acquisition	Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund	Massachusetts EOEEA DCS	\$500,000	This Program provides up to 50% reimbursement towards the cost of acquisition or improvement of recreation land, including the development of active recreation facilities.	Moderate	Moderate depending on the funds to be made available upon the Program's new startup.
Studies and Construction/Maintenance	Lake and Pond Grants	Massachusetts DCR	\$10,000.00	This program is the successor program to DEP's Clean Lakes Program (Chapter 628). Eligible activities include lake management analysis and planning, public education, and watershed and in-lake management techniques. The program requires a 50% cash match. Applications are due in November of each year.	Moderate	Moderate
Studies and Construction/Maintenance	The National Recreational Trails Act (NRTA)	Massachusetts DCR	\$30,000	Part of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Act, NRTA provides funds for trail projects. Eligible projects include: trail construction, land/easement acquisition, handicapped accessibility, interpretative areas/facilities, and education. Trails must be recreational, e.g. intra-city, on-road bikeways would probably not be eligible. There is no limit on grant funds, but a 50% local match is required (matching funds can be "non-cash"). Motorized and non-motorized trail use must be included in the grant with at least thirty percent of funds going to each activity. Applications are due in October of each year.	Moderate	High with a good proposal
Studies and Construction/Maintenance	Greenways and Trails Demonstration Grant Program	Massachusetts DCR	\$5,000	Greenways and trail projects are at the center of this program. Funding categories include: planning, research, mapping, public education and community outreach, ecological assessment, and trail construction, maintenance and expansion. In recent years focus has been placed on projects that either educate the public or work on river greenways. However, all greenway/trail projects are eligible with the exception of those confined to a single parcel of land. Applications are due in January/February every year and no local match is required.	Moderate	High with a good proposal

Appendix B - Open Space and Recreation Funding Mechanisms and Programs

Purpose	Program/Method	Sponsoring Agency	Approximate Funding Maximum	Program Description	Priority for pursuing	Chances of success
Studies and Construction/Maintenance	Inter-Modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Regional Transportation Improvement Program	Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD), Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)	No maximum.	Funds are available for transportation related open space improvements. A bike path that connects dense areas of housing with employment or shopping centers would clearly fit the criteria. However, the state and the MPO have been relatively flexible about definitions and projects that are slightly less directly related to transportation may be eligible e.g., an open space parcel adjacent to a road programmed for repairs; the parcel provides a roadway rest area and access to walking trails.	Moderate with an appropriate project	Low
Studies and Construction/Maintenance	ISTEA, Enhancement Program	MHD, Central Massachusetts MPO	None, but a \$100,000 minimum is requested by MHD.	Money is provided to a variety of transportation "enhancement" projects. Among those eligible are bikeways, walking paths and rail trails. This is a special dedicated fund that amounts to 10% of statewide spending from ISTEA monies.	Moderate	Low
Non-acquisition programs	Conservation Restrictions (CRs)	Massachusetts EOEEA, DCS	Only technical support available.	Conservation restrictions (CRs) are legal, enforceable agreements, authorized by the state, which are made between a landowner and a charitable organization, or a town. They are used primarily to keep land in a "natural or scenic open condition". Restrictions can be written so that certain uses are permitted and others prohibited, e.g. the current owner may continue to occupy an existing house on the land, but may restrict the construction of any additional houses. Grantors of restrictions may also be able to benefit by reductions in various taxes including property, estate and income.	High.	Depends on property owner
Non-acquisition programs	Assessment Act (M.G.L. Chapters 61, 61A and 61B)	Massachusetts DEM, Department of Food and Agriculture (DFA), and Department of Revenue (respectively).	No public funds available.	These programs work by making available special property tax assessments to owners who agree to restrict their land to a particular use. Chapter 61 applies to lands actively devoted to forestry use, 61A applies to active agricultural lands, and 61B applies to public recreational lands like wildlife sanctuaries and golf courses. Generally properties are assessed at their current use value rather than their highest use. This usually translates into a substantial property tax savings for owners. The program also requires a right-of-first-refusal option to the town when property owners look to sell their land.	Moderate.	Depends on property owner.
Non-acquisition programs	Agricultural Preservation Restrictions	Massachusetts DFA	No public funds available.	This program insures that active farms stay in agricultural production. The state purchases a farmer's development rights. The price paid is the difference between the full market value of the property and its appraised agricultural value. A permanent restriction is then put in place prohibiting all non-agricultural uses on the parcel. The farmer is taxed at the agricultural value rather than the highest use value.	High	Depends on property owner