GREENSPACE EQUITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

DNR Land Acquisition and Planning (LAP) Unit

December 20, 2024

Meeting Agenda

- Call to Order, Introductions, Roll Call
- Overview
- Considerations
- Next Steps
- Public Comments
- Adjournment

Introduction

- Stephanie Benavides
  (Greenspace Equity Program Administrator)
- Board Member Introductions
- Role of Advisory Board
- Review of Statutory Requirements

Role of Advisory Board

➤ The purpose of the Board is to serve as a consultant to the Department in the implementation and administration of the Program (Natural Resources Article §5-9D-05(b))

➤ The Department shall consult with the Board in the implementation and administration of the Program, including the review and comment on grant applications (Natural Resources Article §5-9D-05(g)(3))

Review of Statutory Requirements
(Natural Resources Article §5-9D-02)

➢ The purpose of the Program is to enhance the public health and livability of overburdened communities and underserved communities by implementing projects to preserve, create, and enhance community greenspace.

➢ At least 50% of the grants awarded each fiscal year shall be awarded to projects that include land acquisition; but if the total amount of funds requested for land acquisition is less than 50% of funds available for a given year, the remaining funds may be awarded to projects that do not include land acquisition.

➢ In awarding grants, the Department shall consider:

- The extent to which the project engages and is supported by residents, organizations, and businesses located in the overburdened community or underserved community in which the project will be located or that is served by the project.
- The amount of financial or in-kind contributions for implementation of the project, if any.
- The degree to which the project demonstrates partnership and collaboration among local governments, land trusts, nongovernmental organizations, and community organizations; and enhances the public health, livability, and greenspace in the overburdened community or underserved community in which the project will be located or that is served by the community.
- The geographic diversity of the state.

Overview

➢ Rubric Explanation

➢ Breakdown of Applications Received (Types of Projects)

➢ Review Process (General Outcome)

Rubric Explanation

- Criteria
  - Project Type (Acquisition / Development)
  - Area Served (Overburdened / Underserved)
  - Project (Community Greenspace)
  - Collaboration and Engagement
  - Enhancements
  - Considerations (Public Use/Access, Ability to Maintain, etc.)
  - Additional Costs

Breakdown of Applications Received (Types of Projects)

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Acquisitions v. Development Projects

Total of 40 applications ($11,405,194) – 36 eligible

➢ 4 Acquisitions ($2,293,000) – 1 eligible
- Baltimore City x 1
- Prince George's County x 2
- Worcester County x 1

➢ 36 Development ($9,112,194) – 35 eligible
- Community Gardens x 5
- Community Gathering Open Space x 8
- Community Woodland x 1
- Green Network x 1
- Park x 5
- Trail x 8
- Urban Farm x 2
- Multiple Elements x 7
- Organized Sports Elements x 4

Breakdown of Applications Received (Types of Projects)

Areas Covered

- Allegany x 2
- Anne Arundel x 2
- Baltimore City x 7
- Baltimore County x 1
- Caroline x 1
- Carroll x 1
- Charles x 1
- Dorchester x 3

- Frederick x 1
- Garrett x 6
- Kent x 1
- Montgomery x 4
- Prince George's x 4
- Wicomico x 1
- Worcester x 1

Review Process
(General Outcome)

Factors Affecting Review

➤ Timeliness
- 1 late application not considered

➤ Attachments / Supporting Documents
- 3 acquisitions missing appraisals

➤ Missing Elements
- 16 applications received without specific information related to collaboration and/or engagement
- 20 out of 40 applications missing necessary elements, such as SDATs, deeds, area maps, site plans, evidence of qualified organization, signatures

Review Process
(General Outcome)

Allocated Funding - $5,000,000

➢ Requested Projects
- 36 applications (scored)
  - $9,735,194
- Acquisitions (1)
  - $733,000
- Development (35)
  - $9,002,194

➢ Preliminary Selections ($4,603,992)
- 1 Acquisition
- 1 Urban Farm
- 3 Community Woodlands
- 4 Community Gardens
- 5 Parks
- 8 Community Gathering Open Spaces
- 9 Trails

Considerations

- Limitations
- What facilities/costs are eligible?
- Other options for acquisition projects?
- Review comments/questions received from Board members
- Other questions/comments for consideration?

Considerations

- Limitations
  - Definitions not specified in legislation
    - Setting precedence on organized sports elements
    - Trail length/viability
  - Commercial elements with community gardens/urban farms
    - Farmer's Markets
    - Plot sizes
    - Selling produce to other entities
  - Ensuring public access
    - Local access v access for people outside of the town

Considerations

- What facilities/costs are eligible?
  - Sports Related Facilities
- Other options for acquisition projects?
  - Require one appraisal instead of two
  - Set aside some funding for grants to fund appraisals for future projects
  - Hold back some FY 2025 funding for an acquisition grant round
  - Establish a workgroup with a few Board members to develop recommended options to increase acquisition applications
- Review comments/questions received from Board members
- Other questions/comments for consideration?

Next Steps

➤ Follow up with applicants
- Early January
- Obtain missing documentation

➤ Finalize selection for projects to recommend for funding
- Send notification to applicants of selection
- Submit selected projects to State Clearinghouse for review
- Schedule selected projects for Board of Public Works approval

➤ Identify updates needed for next application round
- Budget sheets
- Monitoring reports

LAP Contacts

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