

Site Readiness Program Guidelines

Program Overview

The 2016 Economic Development Bill authorized \$15M for the Commonwealth Site Readiness Fund, to be administered by MassDevelopment, for the purpose of funding “site assembly, site assessment, predevelopment permitting and other predevelopment and marketing activities that enhance a site’s readiness for commercial, industrial or mixed-use development; provided, that a portion of the funds shall be used to facilitate the expansion or replication of successful industrial parks; and provided further, that a portion of the funds shall be used to support the revitalization of downtown centers.”

Eligible uses of program funding include the five broad categories listed below, each of which is described in more detail starting on page 3:

- Strategic Consulting for Existing Sites and Industrial Parks
- Predevelopment on New Significant Sites
- Strategic Site Acquisition
- Site Preparation and Improvements
- Downtown/Urban Core Revitalization

Application Review Criteria

All applications must include a letter of support from the municipality clearly articulating the proposed funding’s public purpose/ benefit and committing the municipality to the program’s repayment terms.

MassDevelopment will consider the following criteria when reviewing applications. While few sites will satisfy every criterion, applications will be reviewed on a relative basis. Review criteria will be used to assess the likelihood of requested funding to advance a project towards site readiness, future development, and resulting public benefits.

- Community support for industrial development (43D/Priority Development Area designation may serve as an indicator)
- Consistency with the existing municipal master plan and/or regional plans (required for private-sector applicants)
- As-of-right zoning or an affirmative statement from municipality to seek as-of-right zoning
- Regional impact and regional appropriateness

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- Property size and scale of development (the program is targeting a minimum of 50,000 SF of developable space)
- Potential level of private investment on the site
- Benefits enabled (including new permanent and construction jobs created)
- Site access (proximity to highways and/or rail)
- Appropriateness of location (including proximity to housing and known off-site impacts)
- Marketability of the site (active interest a plus)
- Availability of matching funds from landowner and/or local contribution (including, but not limited to, tax increment financing or other financial commitments)
- Demonstrated financial need of private-sector applicants

Grant Terms and Conditions

Grantees will be required to execute a standard grant agreement. Commonwealth grants benefiting specific sites shall be repaid from any net land sale proceeds and/or long-term lease revenue or refinancing proceeds.

In the event that MassDevelopment is unable to recover Commonwealth contributions in full from land or lease proceeds or refinancing, the municipality in which the project is located will be required to obtain a vote of the municipal governing body agreeing to remit, subject to annual appropriation, 15 percent of any “Economic Benefit to the Municipality” if and when such revenues are realized, for up to 30 years or until full repayment. For the purpose of this program, the “Economic Benefit to the Municipality” is defined as the net new revenue from increases in property tax revenue attributable to development on the site that benefitted from the award and other site-related municipal revenues, such as parking revenues or local option taxes.

The Economic Benefit to the Municipality will be calculated by the establishment of a baseline at the time of award using information provided by the municipality to MassDevelopment and will equal the annual revenue less the baseline revenue.

A municipality’s repayment obligation would terminate without full repayment upon either of the following conditions: (i) no redevelopment of the site commences within 30 years of the date of the grant agreement or (ii) the municipality makes full and timely payments each year

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they are due for a period of 30 years following the date on which the Economic Benefit to the Municipality first accrues.

Eligible Uses of Program Funds

Strategic Consulting for Existing Sites and Industrial Parks

Assistance Available:

- Marketing – Including broker consultation, market analysis, and development of marketing materials.
- Pre-permitting/Zoning – Including assistance in reviewing existing zoning, permitting or other regulatory issues as well as in undertaking pre-permitting activities.
- Existing Conditions Analysis – Including infrastructure capacity, site conditions analysis, and traffic studies.
- Master Planning – Including feasibility and planning studies in addition to concept level master planning.
- Workshops and Regional Studies – Including regional marketing seminars and workshops, regional market studies, regional infrastructure assessments (Communities may submit joint applications. Primary applicant must be a public-sector entity.)

Eligibility:

A contribution from the landowner/applicant is encouraged but not required. Except where noted, both public and private entities are eligible to apply. Assistance will be provided on a rolling basis.

Predevelopment on New Significant Sites

Assistance Available:

Predevelopment activities to make large sites ready for development including:

- Site Identification – Including municipality-wide studies focused on large sites.
- Site Assembly – Including property title analysis, surveying, and research of prospective sites with multiple owners. May also include appraisals for future land acquisition.
- Marketing – Including broker consultation, market analysis, and development of marketing materials.
- Pre-permitting/Zoning – Including assistance in reviewing existing zoning, permitting or other regulatory issues as well as in undertaking pre-permitting activities.
- Master Planning – Including feasibility and planning studies in addition to concept level master planning.
- Predevelopment Studies – Studies related to specific site issues including traffic, historic resources, rare species, utilities, etc.

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- Concept-level Design (i.e. 10 percent design) – Including design and pricing of on- and off-site access and infrastructure improvements.

Eligibility:

A contribution from the landowner/applicant is encouraged but not required. Funding is intended to be used for planning, design and pre-permitting work that will prepare large sites to meet the needs of modern industrial and commercial users. Sites of approximately 40-50 acres are sought but sites of all sizes including non-contiguous sites will be considered. Both public and private entities are eligible to apply. Assistance will be provided on a rolling basis.

Strategic Site Acquisition

Assistance Available:

Acquire land to expand or improve marketability of existing industrial parks or industrial sites. Funding focus will be on small-scale acquisitions that could unlock development potential. For example, the acquisition of frontage to make an adjacent land-locked parcel accessible.

Eligibility:

Applicants will need to demonstrate control of land adjacent to the acquisition property. Both public- and private-sector entities are eligible to apply for funding.

Site Preparation and Improvements

Assistance Available:

Prepare well-located, zoned sites with utilities for market through the following types of activities:

- Demolition of obsolete structures
- Environmental remediation including above-ground remediation.
- Construction-level design and pricing for on-site improvements and off-site access and infrastructure capital projects.
- Construction of on-site improvements

Eligibility:

Funding will require a 30 percent contribution from the landowner/applicant. MassDevelopment will fund the remaining 70 percent. Both public- and private-sector entities are eligible to apply for funding.

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Downtown/Urban Core Revitalization

Assistance Available:

- Technical assistance related to enhancing and/or supporting mixed-use development opportunities in downtown settings, including but not limited to industrial uses. Technical assistance services may include marketing, permitting/zoning consulting, or existing conditions analysis.
- Acquisition of land to expand or improve marketability of key downtown redevelopment parcels. Funding focus will be on small-scale acquisitions that could unlock development potential such as the purchase of adjacent property that impedes marketing/site appeal.

Eligibility:

A contribution from the landowner/applicant is encouraged but not required. Public entities are eligible to apply.