

Town of Norwood

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Town of Norwood Awarded \$50,000 MassTrails Grant for Bernie Cooper Riverfront Park

NORWOOD – General Manager Tony Mazzucco, Planning and Economic Development Director Paul Halkiotis and Conservation Agent & Environmental Planner Holly Jones are pleased to announce that the Town of Norwood is a recipient of a 2022 MassTrails grant.

Norwood was awarded \$50,000 to help fund a full engineering design of the Bernie Cooper Riverfront Park in South Norwood. Norwood's 2022 Special Town Meeting allocated the funds for engineering and construction of the park from Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds as well as general funds. This grant will reimburse a portion of the allocated funds.

The Bernie Cooper Riverfront Park, sometimes formerly referred to as the "Saints Lot" for its location behind Saint John Avenue, Saint Joseph Avenue and Saint Paul Avenue, was purchased by the town in 2020 using CPA funds for Conservation and Recreation.

The nearly 7-acre lot lies next to Eliot Field and the Balch Elementary School and is bordered by the Neponset River and Hawes Brook. It is also less than a half-mile from the Coakley Middle School, Hawes Pool and Endean Park and is served by a bus route on Washington Street.

A community design process in the summer of 2021 resulted in a conceptual design and construction budget for the park. Residents overwhelmingly favored a wheelchair-accessible and natural trail design that would help visitors feel immersed in nature. The design also features green stormwater designs, river overlooks, and a nature play area and outdoor classroom on the side closest to the Balch School.

"We are thankful to residents for supporting the creation of the Bernie Cooper Riverfront Park at this year's Town Meeting and look forward to putting this grant toward the planning and construction of the park," Jones said. "We are grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration and the MassTrails program for this funding, and are excited for the Norwood community to be able to enjoy all this park will have to offer in the future."

The Bernie Cooper Riverfront Park is one of [81 trail improvement](#) projects across the state to receive part of \$11.4 million in funding. The MassTrails Grant Program supports projects that build public-private partnerships to maintain and improve existing trails and construct new ones across the state. This year's projects will help communities develop new multi-use trails, expand accessibility, create connections between towns and existing trails, support the construction of boardwalks and bridges, design and install new signage, and acquire new land for trails.

The town may also receive up to \$717,000 in funding reimbursement for the construction of the park from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The state has recommended this project for funding to the Department of the Interior where it is being reviewed as part of the federal funding process.

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A conceptual design created for the Bernie Cooper Riverfront Park. (Image courtesy Town of Norwood)

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