

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GARDNER AWARDED MASSTRAILS GRANT

\$200,000 awarded to complete the design of North Central Pathway Bike Trail Extension

June 28, 2022 – GARDNER, MA – Mayor Nicholson is pleased to announce that the City of Gardner was recently awarded \$200,000 from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Mass Trails Grant Program. This funding will be used to complete the design the proposal to extend the North Central Pathway Bike Trail from its existing location behind the Gardner Veterans Memorial Skating Arena to Route 140 via Park Street.

“I’m very excited to see this project moving forward thanks to the grant funding we have received,” said **Mayor Michael Nicholson**. “This project has been something we have talked about for quite some time in Gardner, and this funding allows us to get it off the ground and brings this proposal one step closer to reality. A lot of people use our bike trail for as a way to enjoy what we have to offer here in the City. I’m excited to see the enhancements that this project will bring and the people it will draw to the area.”

MassTrails provides grants to support recreational trail and shared use pathway projects across the Commonwealth. The award maximum depends on the project type and needs and is generally \$50,000 for local projects and up to \$300,000 for projects demonstrating critical network connections of regional or statewide significance.

Eligible grant activities include project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of recreational trails, shared use pathways, and the amenities that support trails.

Gardner’s grant will be used to complete the design of the North Central Pathway from the Gardner Veteran’s Memorial Skating Arena to the site of the proposed pedestrian multi-use bridge over Route 140 via Park Street. Once constructed, this project, along side the pedestrian bridge and complete streets projects will connect the North Central Pathway from the New Hampshire border, through the Town of Winchendon, and through Gardner to the Town of Hubbardston via the Downtown corridor.

“The trail system has been decades in the making,” said **State Representative Jonathan Zlotnik**. “As it has been built out it has been a great recreational resource and attraction for Gardner and the North County region. These next phases will build on those investments and I’m pleased that the Commonwealth and the City of Gardner are continuing to partner for further development.”

This grant adds on to the \$245,000 that the Commonwealth has already awarded the City of Gardner through the Mass Trails Grant Program for this project, with \$100,000 being awarded last August, and an additional \$145,000 being awarded in February of this year.

“I am pleased to see this funding made available to the City of Gardner. This is a commitment from the Commonwealth, to the community,” said **State Senator Anne Gobi**. “With money from the City, and the State, Gardner can move forward with this important project to benefit

city residents through increased access to the North Central Pathway. This extension will also help to support the local and regional economies.”

Aside from the funding provided by the Commonwealth, the City Council has also voted to appropriate \$185,500 to go toward the project from various free cash expenditures over the past year. The MassTrails Grant Program requires a twenty percent (20%) match for projects awarded funding. As a way to help make the City’s application for this award more competitive, the City Council voted to approve the matching portion of this grant prior to the application being submitted to show the City’s commitment to the project. These votes were all unanimous by the City Council.

“The Commonwealth’s investment in Gardner through the MassTrails Grant shows that our own investments in the city have not gone unnoticed. It is wonderful to see this project moving forward,” said **City Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas**.

Gardner’s grant application was authored by Lyndsy Butler, Assistant Director of Community Development and Planning. At the award ceremony, held in Milton on June 28, 2022, over \$11 million was distributed to 81 different projects across the Commonwealth.

“I’d like to thank the Baker – Polito Administration for their continued investment in communities across Massachusetts,” concluded **Mayor Nicholson**. “I’d also like to thank Assistant Director Butler for her diligent efforts in securing this funding for the City. I’m very excited to see this project move forward and the impact it can have on the region.”

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