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Newton ARPA Investment Parks and Recreation - \$2,500,000

The pandemic dramatically reminded us that getting outside, interacting with nature, playing and exercising is good for the body, the mind, and the soul. In the most challenging time of our generation, Newton's parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and recreation facilities were there for us – to nurture and to comfort, and to host safe and happy gatherings and sports outings.

Our team of professionals in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department (PRC), Public Buildings Department, and Planning and Conservation Department have been working together with members of our community – the Parks and Recreation Commissioners, the Community Preservation Committee members, City Councilors and residents – to identify and bring forward improvements across our city to support active and passive recreation and community engagement in our parks and open/green spaces.

We have worked with residents, community groups and boards and commissions to develop plans to improve our fields, to upgrade our recreation facilities, and to care for our parks.

I am allocating an additional \$2.5 million dollars to accelerate the reinvestment in our parks and recreation areas, including Gath Pool, Crystal Lake, playgrounds, playing fields and open spaces. These additional ARPA funds will supplement the \$300,000 of ARPA funding going towards a new community garden at Spears Park in Nonantum and to support neighborhood pocket parks and traffic islands as well as the \$150,000 of ARPA funds being invested to improve our trails and paths in conservation areas and parks.

The additional infusion of \$2.5 million will be used to accomplish work in a number of areas:

- **Gath Pool:** Parks, Recreation & Culture (PRC) is working with the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to move forward with the design and construction of a new pool, pool deck area and splash pad at Albemarle Park. Construction is slated to start a year from now in Fall 2023. ARPA funds will be used to supplement substantial CPC investments in the new Gath Pool facilities.
- **Athletic Fields:** PRC is working with the CPC on the design/engineering and then construction of major athletic field projects at Albemarle/Halloran Sports Complex, Burr School fields, McGrath Park fields, Forte Park and Oak Hill/Brown fields. These projects will transform tired playing fields for many athletes and a variety of sports teams and leagues into high quality surfaces that will support heightened athletic use with the City's substantially upgraded maintenance program.

- Crystal Lake Beach and Park Improvements: PRC is working with the community to design renovations to the park and the “Left Beach” at Crystal Lake. These improvements will protect the shoreline, improve accessibility, improve resiliency to impacts from climate change, and enable more fun and exercise.
- Park Improvements: This funding will accelerate needed investments at PRC facilities, including courts, playgrounds, pathways and open spaces.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture staff depends on significant public input to shape each of these projects. Information on the many initiatives can be found [here](#).